The Nexus Between Territorial Border Controls, Informal Cross Border Trading and Economic Security in Zimbabwe: The Case of Beitbridge Border Post

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ABSTRACT

Informal cross border trade is central to the lives of many Zimbabweans, with informal trade across the Zimbabwean-South African border being of particular importance. This entails travelling through the Beitbridge border post on the Zimbabwean side, with Zimbabwean informal traders purchasing items in South Africa for resale in Zimbabwe. In doing so, they contribute not only to their own economic security but likely to the economic security of other Zimbabweans deeply affected by the ongoing crisis in the country. Often times, when examining the lives of Zimbabwe's informal traders, the border post is not subjected to sustained focus and analysis. Yet, border posts (like the Beitbridge border post) are complex social institutions which configure the lives and livelihoods of cross border traders in multiple ways, and which informal traders often have to negotiate their way through.

In this context, this thesis provides a critical analysis of border control management at the Beitbridge border post with particular reference to the activities of Zimbabwean informal cross border traders. The Beitbridge border post, like all border posts, has multiple functions. As a territorial border post, it seeks to maintain the national sovereignty of the Zimbabwean nation-state, and it monitors and controls the movement of people and goods in both directions. Currently, it is doing so at a time when the vast majority of Zimbabweans are suffering from varying levels of economic insecurity. The extent to which these functions are performed, and the manner in which they are performed, depends fundamentally on what takes place at the Beitbridge border post. This refers to the performance of both human subjects (border control officers of various kinds) and inanimate objects (such as scanners and cameras), both of which enact agency. Combined with these is the agency of cross border traders, who are compelled to navigate their way in and through these dimensions of the border control system.

The thesis examines this by drawing heavily upon Actor-Network Theory. It is based on research undertaken at Beitbridge border post, involving 50 interviews with primarily current and former border control officers as well as informal cross border traders. Findings of this study show that deficiencies in border control management and border porosity at Beitbridge have led to a flourishing of informal cross border trade and, in turn, contributed to economic security in Zimbabwe, including during the time of Covid-19.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my children Cheryl and Tyler, who keep me motivated to accomplish more, setting the bar high, so they can follow in my footsteps.

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I was also motivated and always found strength to carry on from the famous words recited by Nelson Mandela written by Marianne Williamson:

> Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness that most frightens us. We ask ourselves, 'Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous?' Actually, who are you not to be? You are a child of God. Your playing small does not serve the world. There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you. We are all meant to shine, as children do. We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us. It's not just in some of us; it's in everyone. And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others.

ACRONYMS/ABBREVIATIONS

ACM – Automated Cargo Management

AIDS – Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome

ANT – Actor Network Theory

ASYCUDA – Automated System for Customs Data

AU – African Union

BBEMS – Beitbridge Efficiency Management System

BTI – Bertelsmann Transformation Index

BCM – Border Control Management

CA – Communal Area

CBM – Coordinated Border Management

CET - Common Extended Tarrifs

CCTV – Closed Circuit Television

CID – Criminal Investigation Department

CIO – Central Intelligence Organisation

COMESA – Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa

COMESA – Common Market fot East and Southern Africa

COVID 19 – Corrona virus 2019

CRiM – Customs Risk Management

CZI – Confederation of Zimbabwe Industries

DRC – Democratic Republic of Congo

EAC – East African Community

EMA – Ministry of Health, Environmental Management Agency

ESAP – Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP)

EU – European Union

FTAZ – Financial Traders Association of Zimbabwe

FTLRP – Fast Track Land Reform Program

GATT – General Agreement on Tarrifs and Trade

GREGAFRICA – Global Ecomic Governance Africa

GDP – Gross domestic product

GNU – Government of National Unity

GPA – Global Political Agreement

HIV – Human immunodeficiency viruses

ICBT – Informal cross border trade

ICRC – International Committee of Red Cross

ILO – International Labour Organisation

IMF – International Monetary Fund

MCAZ – Medicine Control Authority of Zimbabwe

MDC – Movement for Democratic Party

MDGs – Millennium Development Goals

MSME – Micro Small and Medium Enterprises

NCA – National Constitutional Assembly

NGO – Non Governmental Organisation

NTBs – Non-Tariff Barriers to Trade

OECD – Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

PF ZAPU – The Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU)

PICES – Prices Income Consumption

PTA – Preferential Trade Agreement

RBZ – Reserve bank of Zimbabwe

RECs – Regional Economic Organisations

SADC – Southern African Development Community

SAPS – Structural adjustment programmes

SARS – South African Revenue Authority

SEDCO – Small Enterprises Development Corporation

STR – Simplified Trade Regime

STS – Science and Technology Studies

SI – Statutory Instrument

TFA – Trade Facilitation Agreement

TFTA – Tripatite Free Trade Area

UK – United Kingdom

UNIFEM – United Nations Development for Wemon

US – Unites States of America

VAT – Value Added Tax

VDP – Value of duty purpose

VID – Vehicle Inspection Department

WB – World Bank

WCO – World Customs Organisation

WFP – World Food Programme

WTO – World Trade Organisation

ZANU-PF – Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front

ZEC – Zimbabwe Electoral Commission

ZEPURA – Zimbabwe Economic Policy Analysis and Research Unit

ZIMRA – Zimbabwe Revenue Authority

ZNA – Zimbabwe National Army

ZNCC – Zimbabwe National Chamber of Commerce

ZRP – Zimbabwe Republic Police

ZWB – Zimbabwe Women Bureau

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

1.1 Introduction

Informal cross border trade between South Africa and Zimbabwe has spiralled over the past two decades due to the economic crisis that has engulfed the Zimbabwean nation. With high unemployment, high inflation, shortages of foreign currency, shortages of goods and commodities, high levels of poverty, and food insecurity, Zimbabwe has witnessed an upsurge in the number of informal cross border traders as the economy of Zimbabwe has become more firmly based on a well-diversified informal economy. Consequently, the Beitbridge border post (along the South African border) has become a hub of informal cross border trading activities, which involves questions around border control management and the socio-economic security of the informal cross border traders (and their families). In this context, this thesis seeks to understand the relationship between territorial border controls, informal cross border trading and socio-economic security in Zimbabwe with specific reference to cross border trading at the Beitbridge border post along the Zimbabwean-South African border. This introductory chapter focuses on the background to the study, problem setting, research questions, justification and context of the study. The chapter also presents the description of the research procedures, processes and modus operandi used by the researcher in the collection of data for this study.

1.2 Context of Research

Before the attainment of Zimbabwean independence in 1980, the wide inequality along racial lines under colonial rule benefited the white settler population in economic, political and social terms. To address this situation, the post-colonial government of Zimbabwe followed a social welfarist path in the 1980s. In this regard, Shizha and Kariwo (2011) note that the main principle underlying the Zimbabwean government's policies and programmes was "Growth with Equity". The rapid expansion and provision of services like education and health was central to this endeavour. Nevertheless, massive public expenditure on these social goods placed significant pressure upon the national budget, leading to the implementation of neo-liberal austerity measures from the early 1990s under the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP). As Bond and Manyanya (2003:32) note, ESAP "failed as…inflation averaged more than 30% during the period [the 1990s] and never dropped anywhere near to the 10% goal." Overall, ESAP compromised economic growth, which involved the downsizing of the formal economy and the closure of many

companies. Raftopoulos and Phimister (2004: 357) point out that "Zimbabwe's severe loss of employment followed the global imperatives of the structural adjustment programme."

The involvement of the Zimbabwean army in the war in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and the unbudgeted pay-outs to war veterans demanding recognition of their participation in the war of liberation (from the 1970s), both taking place in the late 1990s, also drained the national fiscus and added further woes to the national economy (Raftopoulos, 2009; Munangagwa, 2009). There has been even further – and more substantial – economic decline since then, particularly from the year 2000 because of the fast-track land reform programme and the major disruption to the commercial agricultural economy (which is deeply intertwined with manufacturing industries both downstream and upstream). As Bolt (2015:17) highlights: "In the short term, the consequent destruction of the commercial agricultural sector sent the Zimbabwean economy into a further tailspin." There have been signs of economic recovery in recent years particularly in the agricultural economy as fast track farmers now make significant contributions to the production of key crops such as maize and tobacco. However, the national economy, particularly industries in the formal economic sector, remains under serious strain and contraction.

Overall, then, the economic malaise in Zimbabwe since the 1980s has existed for a vast array of reasons, with improperly formulated state policies, mismanagement of public funds and the party-politicisation of the state being quite central in this regard. The aggregated effects of this are manifested vividly in both national statistics and in the lives of ordinary Zimbabweans. For example, the African Economic Development Institute (2009) states that, while in 1995 the inflation rate stood at 22.5%, in 2000 it was at 58.4% and in 2007 it was at 6,723.7%. The Institute also adds that by July 2008 it had reached the astronomical figure of 231 million %. The inflation rate stabilised under dollarisation of the currency between 2009 and 2016. However, throughout this period and after, industrial production and formal employment in urban centres have remained exceedingly low, with ongoing retrenchments and declining real wages being the order of the day.

With the vast majority of adults in the working age group unemployed, citizens of Zimbabwe (and particularly those in urban areas) have been compelled to enter the informal economy. On the broader shift globally to informal means of livelihoods, Bernstein (2007:39) highlights that: "Many people are forced to diversify their forms, and spaces, of employment (and self-employment) to meet their simple reproduction needs as labour ("survival") of employment." In the case of

Zimbabwe, this has regularly entailed involvement in informal trading which acts as "a cushion or fall back plan for citizens" (Akinboade, 2005: 257). Of particular significance to this thesis is the diversifying mode of livelihood known as informal cross border trading.

Mazingi and Kamidza (2011:327) note that, at independence in 1980, Zimbabwe's urban informal economy was relatively small, accounting for less than 10% of the labour force, mainly the urban poor. Since then, particularly from the time of ESAP, the informal economy has grown exponentially. The vacuum in terms of local industrial productivity has meant that cross border traders in particular are "serving the needs of Zimbabwean consumers either by providing cheap goods or goods that would otherwise be unavailable in the country" (Chikanda and Towedzera, 2017: 26). By also providing income for traders, this shows that cross border trading plays a pivotal role in enhancing economic security for both traders and consumers of imported goods. As Golub (2015: 179) states with regard to African countries generally, "[i]nformal trade can involve two types of illegality, in the goods themselves (for example narcotics) or in the manner of evasion of custom duties and regulation." Both types of informality exist along Zimbabwean borders, including the Zimbabwe-South Africa border.

There is a basic body of literature on cross border trading in Zimbabwe raising diverse issues. Mazengwa (2003:22) for instance provides an "overview of the demographics of traders, the socioeconomic and political environment in which they operate and the nature of their supply relations." Pophiwa (2006:70) focuses on smuggling activities along the Zimbabwean-Mozambican border and how the Penalonga and Nyaronga people conduct informal cross border trading, including for immediate consumption of goods (i.e. for non-commercial purposes) to improve the welfare of their families, as prices of commodities in Zimbabwe began to sky-rocket. In research carried out by Muzvidziwa (1998), findings show that 85% of the sample's cross border traders noted that they were in difficult circumstances when they started operating. However, within a year, they had managed to raise incomes that took their households out of these difficulties. In this respect, a number of scholars have written extensively on Zimbabwean cross border trade as a mechanism for poverty reduction, and these include Garatidye (2014) and Kachere (2013). In the case of Garatidye, there is a particular focus on the significance of female cross border traders and their contribution to tackling the well-entrenched femininisation of poverty while also enhancing household-based income. Jamela (2013) and Chiliya (2012) both

investigate the daily challenges and prospects faced by cross border traders, with Jamela detailing the specific challenges of women traders.

Despite the fact that cross border trading by necessity entails crossing a border, both outward and inward, and multiple times, there is only a limited focus in the prevailing literature on what happens at Zimbabwean border posts. Chakanda and Towedzera (2017) note that the significant number of cross border traders who move across the Zimbabwean borders with South Africa, Botswana, Zambia and Mozambique place major demands on the workload of immigration and customs officials, including at the Beitbridge border post (and the Musina border post on the South African side). It is the case that entries and exits along the Zimbabwean border are multiplying and that, simultaneously, border posts are becoming more porous. On this issue, the *Zim Economist* (2016) states that Zimbabwe has 18 formal borders – but, to make matters more problematic, there are now 51 informal borders where Zimbabwean traders literally walk across the border. Even at the formal borders, though, the systems of control are overburdened and entry and exit processes are subject to negotiation with officials.

Given the crucial increase in cross border trade in Zimbabwe, the border control system has significant weaknesses. Pophiwa (2010:69) highlights that a study conducted by Save the Children UK, focusing on irregular cross-border patterns, established that "in 2003 only 17% of the border was monitored and protected by the authorities on either side," that is, in relation specifically to the Zimbabwean-Mozambican boundary. In research carried out at five major borders that include Plumtree (along the border with Botswana) and the Zimbabwean-Zambian border, Shayanowako (2013:8) identifies the various state units and agents involved in border control management which include Zimbabwe National Army (ZNA), Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP), Zimbabwe Revenue Authority, Ministry of Health, Environmental Management Agency (EMA) and Ministry of Agriculture among others. However, there is no consistency as to which units exist at which borders and, further, no one unit seems to have unchallenged and overall control of the entire border management system.

The border control operations are loosely knit and not well co-ordinated. A number of years ago, Irish (2005: 4) argued that "[t]hese [state] individuals are motivated by their respective departments' own priorities which do not always correspond with their other colleagues". Disjointed operations between state units have rendered Zimbabwean borders relatively porous,

making it easy for cross border traders to weave their way through even formal border crossings without adhering necessarily and at all times to formal regulations and channels. In this respect, in the early 2000s, approximately 3% of cargo that passed through the Beitbridge border was physically checked and searched (Irish, 2005:5). The implication of these border control tendencies is that illegal goods may pass through the Zimbabwean border posts unnoticed. In this context, in examining cross border trading, this thesis focuses on border management and controls along the Zimbabwean border at Beitbridge and the ways in which this may enhance or inhibit economic security for cross border traders in particular.

Theoretically, the thesis draws upon Actor Network Theory. The Actor Network Theory, as propounded by Bruno Latour, Michel Callon, and John Law from the mid-1980s, claims that "modern societies cannot be described without recognising them as having a fibrous, thread-like, wiry, stringy, ropy, capillary character [i.e. networks] that is never captured by the notions of levels, layers, territories, spheres, categories, structure, systems" (Latour, 1997:2). Even though formal and institutionalised border controls exist, networks transcend national territories and they have an array of nodal points (or interfaces) at which actors interact and transact. Border posts, as a spatially-localised form of state power, are clearly one key nodal point amongst others in cross border trading networks, and they may or may not be the most powerful or influential. Power is in fact dispersed within and throughout these networks, with actors (such as traders) able to negotiate transactions at each and every nodal point. The Actor Network Theory also recognises that each and every nodal point is not a fixed, homogenous and coherent whole but is marked by micro-level confusions and contestations which add complexity to social networks.

The Actor Network Theory, when applied to border posts as a nodal point, claims that (border) security is an aggregated outcome of actors within a system, including the equipment and physical 'stuff' actors use. Dijstelbloem and Broeders (2011: 11) note that "[c]entral to this notion is the idea that the division between the social and the technological (or as Latour would say: between humans and non-humans) is not a 'natural kind' but the result of a division of labour in which both humans and non-humans perform the tasks they have been delegated." The border nodal point, involving border management and security, entails a socio-technological (and infrastructural) system. Managing and securing a border post, and channelling people and goods across the border, is handled by different state officials with different forms and levels of professionalism, training

and expertise, and using dedicated equipment and data bases for processing people and goods. As with humans, equipment and infrastructure also 'act' to secure borders. This means that 'the social' and 'the technological' are on equal footing, or as Boychenko (2019:192) postulates: "Actor-Network Theory incorporates what is known as a principle of generalised symmetry," that is, what is human and non-human.

This brings to the fore the relevance of non-human materials in border management, indicating that the bureaucratic-political project of border posts is shaped by the agency of material factors, including scanners and biometric entry-exit databases. Indeed, Frowd (2014: 229) concludes that "security is therefore not only the result of institutional or professional interplay but it is also an outcome of material processes." The architectural arrangements of border posts also come into play, as these posts are imbued with certain authorised structures of built landscape and space within which traders and others engage with the broader socio-technological systems. Border posts thus occupy a state-constructed space within which traders manoeuvre and negotiate, and about which they only become familiar over time. Nevertheless, it never becomes their space.

Hence, the Actor Network Theory is crucial in going beyond treating the border post as a 'black box' through which people and goods simply pass. In-and-of-themselves, border posts need to be subjected to intense analytical scrutiny. In pursuing this with regard to cross border trading through the Beitbridge border post, it is hoped that this thesis will make an important analytical contribution to the cross border trading literature on Zimbabwe.

1.3 Thesis Objectives

The main objective of the thesis is to analyse the relationship between territorial border controls, cross border trading and economic security in Zimbabwe, with specific reference to Beitbridge border post. The main subsidiary objectives, all in relation to Beitbridge border post, are:

a) To analyse the contribution of informal cross border trade crossing Beitbridge border post to the economic security of informal cross border traders.
b) To analyse the contribution of informal cross border trade crossing Beitbridge border post to the economic security of Zimbabweans.
c) To examine the practices and navigation of informal cross border traders at Beitbridge border post.

d) To examine the practices and problems of border control management at Beitbridge border post.

1.4 Research Methodology

The research for the thesis involved a purely qualitative methodology. Chinelo (2016: 8) defines research methodology as the systematic and theoretical analysis of the methods applied to a field of study. It therefore deals with the analysis of the body of methods and various principles associated with research within a branch of knowledge. Methodology is holistic in character as it encompasses all related key concepts such as a research design, a research approach, sampling procedure and data collection methods among others.

This particular research is primarily based on a case study research design (focusing on Beitbridge border post) supported by a number of qualitative research methods such as key informant interviews, semi-structured interviews and qualitative observation. This approach was used to excavate the intricacies and vitality of informal cross border trade and border control management systems at Beitbridge. The use of varied research methods facilitated triangulation of methods that increased the validity and reliability of the research findings. The research methods used to collect data for this research gave respondents the liberty to express freely their experiences and perspectives in order to understand their multiple social worlds.

1.4.1 Ontology and Epistemology (Constructivism)

Al-Ababneh (2020:75) notes that the selection of a research methodology – as a strategy, plan of action, process or design lying behind the choice and use of particular methods and linking the choice and use of methods to the intended research objectives – emerges from a philosophical stance, which is related to ontology (the nature of reality) and epistemology (the nature of knowledge). The choice of the research design and research methods (the techniques or procedures used to gather and analyse data) for this thesis hence arose from a particular ontological and epistemological point of view.

Allison and Hobbs (2006) note that the ontological consideration is about: What is the nature of the knowable, or what is the nature of reality? Broadly speaking, there are three distinct ontological positions (and associated epistemological claims): positivism-realism, idealism (constructivism) and materialism (Snape and Spencer, 2003). Positivism-realism claims that there is an external

reality independent of people's sensory and cognitive perceptions, whereas idealism maintains that reality can only be identified and understood via socially-constructed meanings – these, at least, are the extreme versions of the two positions.

Epistemology is concerned with the nature of knowledge and ways of knowing and learning about social reality, or with what is (or should be) regarded as acceptable knowledge in a discipline (Bryman and Bell, 2013). For positivist-realists, empirical facts are governed by laws of cause and effect, such that the epistemological claim focuses on the *explanation* of social reality via the identification of causal relations. For idealists (constructivists), the epistemological focus is on *understanding* the world (or worlds) as constructed, interpreted, and experienced by people in their interactions with each other and within wider social systems (Maxwell, 2006; Robson, 2002). Materialism (a form of realism founded on Marxism) speaks about the ontological existence of underlying casual powers and relationships which generate the world as experienced and interpreted – epistemologically, identifying these generative mechanisms and processes become crucial.

This thesis adopts, methodologically, a constructivist approach because of its focus on human agency (as an actor-centred methodology consistent with Actor Network Theory). This study focuses on cross border traders and border control management agents in particular, as part of a wider network of cross border trading; and it seeks to identify and understand their experiences, perspectives and practices vis-à-vis the social phenomenon of cross border trading. Further, the interactions between cross border traders and border control officials is central to this, including the ways in which these social interfaces are negotiated interfaces enacted on a daily basis over time. In this way, social constructivism takes a critical stance towards the taken-for-granted ways of understanding the social world by demonstrating how 'the' social world arises historically (Burr, 2015:2) in multiple ways as experienced and discursively interpreted (Creswell, 2013; Andrews, 2012; Grover, 2015).

It should be noted that there are different versions of constructivism, including versions which do not reduce reality to human interpretations and human agency. In other words, 'structure', and some recognition of objective reality, is incorporated into certain versions of constructivism. The version of constructivism used for this thesis leans in this direction, as will be become clearer in chapter two where the analytical framing is set out.

1.4.2 Qualitative Case Study

The research made use of a qualitative case study. The notion of a case study has been defined from various perspectives (Crowe et al., 2011; Baxter and Jack, 2008). Beverland and Lindgreen (2010:57) define a case study as an exploration of a 'bounded system' (bounded by time and place) or a case (or multiple cases) over time through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information rich in content and context. Yin (1994: 13) considers a case study as "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident." Common to all definitions is that a case study involves an in-depth investigation of a phenomenon in a real-life context. This means that, instead of necessarily offering statistical representativeness, a case study provides the opportunity to study a phenomenon within its context and thereby develop a deep comprehension of how it relates to its context.

Zaimal (2007:1) notes that a case study design entails selecting a small geographical area or a very limited number of individuals or practices as the subject(s) of study. For this thesis, the case study approach involved identifying a particular geographical site (notably, Beitbridge border post) and closely examining a limited range of actors and activities pertaining to cross border trade, border control management and socio-economic security. In some case studies, as is the case with this one, there is a sensitivity as well to temporal dynamics or the unfolding of events over time with regard to the social phenomenon under investigation. Thus, a longitudinal study (or at least historical depth) also underpins this examination of cross border trading at Beitbridge border post. The Beitbridge border post was selected as a single case because it handles extremely large volumes of traffic and is considered one of the busiest land border posts in Southern Africa (Confederation of Zimbabwe Industries [CZI], 2015), as up to 35,000 pedestrians cross at the border post every day.

As the study involved a qualitative case study design, it is not particularly concerned about generalisability. Rather, it is focused on providing a deep understanding of the research problem in its unique context (Ulin et al., 2004). Beitbridge border post was not selected for study amongst all Zimbabwean border posts on a random basis, and hence there is no claim that generalised conclusions about Zimbabwean border posts are forthcoming from this thesis. However, it is likely

that the thesis' conclusions speak to social and political processes that are embedded in some form, and to some degree, in all other border posts.

In this respect, Yin (1994) identifies three types of case studies, namely, exploratory, descriptive, and explanatory case studies. In the first instance, this thesis entails an exploratory case study, given the limited research (Stjelja, 2013:12) available on border control management along Zimbabwe's border in relation to cross border trading. Yin (1994) further notes that research which focuses on the 'what' question is exploratory in nature, while studies that consider the 'how' and/or 'why' questions are more explanatory in character. In undertaking this exploratory study, I also sought to describe and explain (or understand, as per constructivism) the dynamics of cross border trading and border management. With a specific focus on the Beitbridge border post, the research analyses in detail whether (and how) the Zimbabwean border control management system inhibits or enhances the activities of cross border traders.

1.4.3 Qualitative Methods

Frayer (1991:3) notes that "[q]ualitative researches are … concerned in their research with attempting to accurately describe, decide and interpret the meaning of phenomenon occurring in their social context." Thus, qualitative research obtains data in its naturalistic form and detailed information is gathered in the real-context in which it exists (Pharm, 2010). In this regard, cross border trading and border controls are best investigated in the social context in which they occur, that is, by studying events and processes as they exist at a particular border post (i.e. Beitbridge).

Data was collected from December 2019 to August 2020, with the first set of interviews 'targeting' border control agents mainly, but also a few experts in the field as well as the opinions of informal cross border traders. To conduct these interviews, the researcher had help from a research assistant, which allowed data to be collected from various respondents simultaneously. The same set of questions were used, though follow up questions might arise for probing purposes, to obtain more information where necessary. Initially, 21 interviews were conducted, and a follow up set of interviews (focusing on informal cross border traders mainly) were later conducted to enhance the understanding of the lived experiences of the cross border traders, including in the face of the Covid-19 pandemic. In total, 50 interviews were undertaken and an overview of these interviewees appears in Table 1.1 below, as well as another table (Table 1.2) with a list of all participants and their organisations (ZIMRA refers to Zimbabwe Revenue Authority, which normally has agents

at border crossings) alongside their interviewee numbers – R1 means respondent 1 and so forth. This R1 to R50 system is used in the later empirical chapters to identify specific interviewees.

Table 1.1 Breakdown of Respondents

Designation	**Number**
Informal Traders	31 Participants - 19 females - 12 males
Current ZIMRA Officials	9 Participants - 7 males - 2 females
Former ZIMRA Officials	2 Participants - 2 males - 0 females
Experts	5 Participants - 3 male - 2 female
President's Office Officials (CIO)	3 Participants -3 males
Total	**50 Participants**

Source: Fieldwork.

Table 1.2 List of all Interviewees

Respondent (R)	Position
R1	ZIMRA official
R2	Former ZIMRA official
R3	Informal cross border trader
R4	ZIMRA official
R5	Expert
R6	Expert (Former University Lecturer)
R7	ZIMRA official
R8	ZIMRA official
R9	Expert from University of Zimbabwe
R10	Former ZIMRA official
R11	Informal cross border trader
R12	Agent from the President's Office (CIO)
R13	ZIMRA official
R14	Expert in Border control Management
R15	ZIMRA official
R16	ZIMRA official
R17	ZIMRA official
R18	Expert (University Lecturer)
R19	ZIMRA official
R20	Agent from the President's Office (CIO)
R21	Agent from the President's Office (CIO)
R22	Informal cross border trader
R23	Informal cross border trader
R24	Informal cross border trader
R25	Informal cross border trader
R26	Informal cross border trader
R27	Informal cross border trader
R28	Informal cross border trader
R29	Informal cross border trader
R30	Informal cross border trader
R31	Informal cross border trader
R32	Informal cross border trader
R33	Informal cross border trader
R34	Informal cross border trader
R35	Informal cross border trader
R36	Informal cross border trader
R37	Informal cross border trader
R38	Informal cross border trader
R39	Informal cross border trader
R40	Informal cross border trader
R41	Informal cross border trader
R42	Informal cross border trader
R43	Informal cross border trader
R44	Informal cross border trader
R45	Informal cross border trader
R46	Informal cross border trader
R47	Informal cross border trader
R48	Informal cross border trader
R49	Informal cross border trader
R50	Informal cross border trader

Source: Fieldwork.

1.4.3.1 In-depth Interviews

Yin (2009) notes that interviews are one of the most significant sources of qualitative case study data since they focus on lived events and experiences. A research interview is an occasion for interpreting and constructing information and not merely for discovering or conveying information (Nieuwenhuis, 2007: 87); as such, an interview is a form of conversation with a purpose (Burgess, 1982; Burgess, 1984). In-depth interviews were crucial to this study, including interviews with informal traders, border officials and key informants. For these three different sets of interviews, the researcher conducted them in a language (English or Shona) comfortable to the participants, such that respondents were able to fathom the interview questions and air out their views appropriately. The researcher ensured that the interviews did not surpass 45 minutes.

Generally, the researcher observed that interviews had the advantage of engaging participants on a deep and active mental level, which proved to be vital in answering the research questions pertinent to this study (Babbie, 2007). The researcher probed at times to enhance the clarity of the information collected. The face-to-face interactions allowed the researcher to capture non-verbal communications such as facial expressions, which were of some significance in interpreting the meaning of what was said. Because of the Covid-19 pandemic, however, some of the interviews were conducted by phone.

Interviewees were contacted prior to the interviews and were briefed openly and fully about the topic that was under study. During the process of the interviews, the researcher tactfully engaged the participants, making them feel comfortable and at ease. The researcher repeatedly reassured participants that no names would be mentioned in the written findings, especially for those who had requested anonymity and privacy – this was important due to the sensitive information they provided for this research. Such reassurances made the participants open up during the interviews.

The researcher was cautious to minimise levels of errors or bias in the interviews. For instance, induced bias occurs where the researcher formulates slanted questions in such a way that a particular response will be obtained. Induced errors are therefore directly a result of the lack of objectivity by the researcher. To evade induced error, the researcher made use of value-free questions to ensure that participants responded to the best of their knowledge, instead of trying to tell the researcher what they think he wanted to know. Thus, all questions were carefully crafted to ensure they were not leading, to avoid bias.

A total of 31 interviews were carried out with *informal traders*. In this research, informal traders were defined as those non-registered, non-accounting and non-tax paying individuals or groups of household members whose business practices are based on street vending or hawking (they often but are not limited to those selling or providing small quantities of goods and services to an undefined market to earn a living). These individuals expressed their viewpoints about their experiences as cross border traders (including at Beitbridge), based on a research schedule or guideline constructed by the researcher (see Appendix 1). Another round of interviews were conducted in the midst of Covid 19 to understand how the pandemic had impacted on ICBT (see Appendix 2).

The interviews were open-ended and discovery-oriented and sought to deeply examine the traders' thoughts, feelings, opinions, perceptions, and perspectives (Boyce and Neale, 2006), as well as to identify new issues emerging during the interviews. Through these interviews, the researcher was able to acquire an insider's feel and perspective about the lives of informal cross border traders. The traders detailed their experiences, challenges and issues pertaining to their economic security. The researcher interviewed most of the informal traders in Shona as they suggested that it was their home language and they felt comfortable conversing in it.

In this research, *border officials* referred to all those personnel that are officially employed to work at Beitbridge border post. These are the officials that are responsible for border control management. The researcher also conducted interviews with former officials of the border post. A total of 12 current border control officials and two former officials (14 in total) were interviewed during the research process. Most of these officials were attached to the Zimbabwe Revenue Authority (ZIMRA), one of the key state agencies at the border posts; but three were members of the Central Intelligence Organisation (CIO). In speaking about border control, the ZIMRA officials often offered critical views which diverged from official ZIMRA portrayals of the practicalities and realities of border control management. In this regard, the current state officials (including those from ZIMRA) were not selected via official channels, or via state gate-keepers.

Overall, sociologists do not invariably contact research subjects through gate-keepers, as the latter are power-holders who may scuttle legitimate research. The border officials were approached separately from their organisational structures, and were prepared to be part of this research on that basis (through informed consent). Hence, they were not speaking in their official capacity (as

representatives of a particular state agency) and their views as expressed were not necessarily reflective of ZIMRA or other state agencies.

The interviews with current and former ZIMRA officials were key to unearthing central issues in this study, as these officials had expert knowledge and hands-on experience about the peculiarities of what took place at Zimbabwean border posts generally and the Beitbridge post in particular. They offered details and insights about border management which are often hidden from public view and even private scrutiny, revealing issues and challenges fundamental to the intricacies of border management. The interview schedule used for interviewing these officials appears in Appendix 3. These interviews were conducted outside working hours and beyond the physical confines of the border post, in absolute privacy.

The researcher also 'targeted' five *key informants* who were researchers or university lecturers (see Appendix 4 for interview schedule). These informants had some level of expertise regarding border control management and the nexus between border control management, informal cross border trading and economic security with specific reference to Zimbabwe.

1.4.3.2 Qualitative Observation

This research also made use of observations in order to solicit requisite data at the Beitbridge border post. Gorman and Clayton (2005: 40) define observation studies as those that "involve the systematic recording of observable phenomena or behaviour in a natural setting" Hence, accurate and realistic results reflective of what actually happens in practice, rather than perceived views and opinions, can be obtained using this method. Two forms of observation were undertaken for this study.

First of all, within the confines of the Beitbridge border post itself, the researcher observed various activities that were taking place without interfering with participants. The intention was to ensure that people behaved as normal and natural as they always do. The researcher conducted this process for three consecutive days at the Beitbridge border, to have a crystallised understanding of the issue under study. For the duration of this period, the researcher did not interfere with the participants but observed events from a distance. This is termed "complete observer" by Gold (1958) while Gorman and Clayton (2005) term it as being an unobtrusive observer. The recording of events (note-taking) was done carefully so as not to scare away or frighten people (regular citizens or border officials) conducting their activities.

In this regard, observations can be overt (i.e. everyone knows they are being observed) or covert (i.e. no one knows they are being observed and the observer's status as an observer is concealed) (CDC, 2018). The major reason why this research adopted the latter kind of observation (that is, covert) at the border post itself is that people are more likely to behave 'naturally' if they do not know they are being observed. The researcher did not even engage with officials at the border post for this specific data collection method, because the officials would have acted in a way contrary to their normal way of border management. This of course was challenging. Border posts are usually surrounded by security forces and the Beitbridge border is not an exception. The researcher had to limit observation to three days in order to avoid any possible detection by border authorities, including security officials. The process was however rewarding in terms of the results.

Issues of ethics have been raised regarding this method. As the norm, in every research involving human subjects, some level of informed consent is generally required. This does not take place with regard to covert observation. Even requesting (and receiving) the permission of border management at the Beitbridge border post to freely observe happenings at the post would not amount to informed consent in relation to observing the hundreds and indeed thousands of people passing through the post daily. This dilemma was a key concern of this researcher, and it is a matter widely discussed and debated in the research literature (Adler and Adler, 1994; Jorgensen 1989). This method has the key advantage of not being directly intrusive vis-à-vis the lives of research subjects, and there is no reason to believe that covert observation necessarily brings about any harm to the subjects – certainly, no evidence arising from this method and recorded in this study prejudices or harms any subject. The ethical principle of 'do no harm' hence undercuts any possible ethical challenge arising from the failure to ensure consent, at least in this study.

As a second form of observation, I also turned to overt observation, with a slight participatory dimension to it, what Adler and Adler (1994: 379) refer to as "membership roles". This involved spending time with informal traders (with their knowledge and permission), as they went about their everyday lives. In this respect, the researcher sought to immerse himself in the world of the informal cross border trader, to obtain an even deeper insider perspective, or at least to get a feel for the lives of these traders. This entailed details of their motivations and activities, including why they choose a particular port of exit (and entry) and under what conditions they did or did not declare all their wares at the border post. In this way, the traders were able to "instruct the

investigator in the intricacies of their personal and social worlds" (Pearsall, 1970: 343). More specifically, the researcher went twice to Messina (across the Zimbabwe-South Africa border) with two different groups of informal traders and this was very rewarding in terms of getting significant information about the processes and systems involved in informal cross border trade.

1.4.3.3 Documentary Analysis

Documentary analysis informed this study since the aim to be fulfilled had to be theoretically-formed and based on empirical data. Gibson and Brown (2009:66) articulate that "documentary search refers to the process of using documents as a means of social investigation and involves exploring the records that individuals and organizations produce". The main sources of documentary information for this study were Zimbabwe Government reports, World Bank, WTO, trade agreements, journals, newspapers and other internet sources among other material used. These resources were key in exacavating methods and mechanisms which have been put in place to promote cross border trade at various level (intercontinental, regional, sub-regional, etc.) and more particular protocols that enhance informal cross border trade across the Beitbridge border post. Documentary analysis was important in counter-checking biases that were associated with the subjective nature of in-depth interviews conducted in this study.

1.4.4 Sampling

Sampling is an essential and integral component of any research and plays an essential role in pre-determining how participants will be recruited. Mugo (2002) defines sampling as "the act, process or technique of selecting a suitable sample or representative part of a population for the purpose of determining parameters or characteristics of the whole population." This research used non-random or non-probability sampling to select the 48 respondents who participated in the research. The core characteristic of non-probability sampling techniques is that samples are selected based on the subjective judgement of the researcher, rather than via random selection, (Gill and Jameson, 1997).

The researcher had to use his discretion on which categories of people would provide the most relevant information. The researcher hence chose, in particular, informal cross border traders and former and current ZIMRA officials because their lives are intertwined in very direct ways with the topic under investigation. For this study, the researcher initially identified a few participants (both state officials and informal traders), who then recommended and referred me to other

participants in a snowball fashion. Convenience sampling was used to interview informal cross border traders who work at local flea markets based in Harare. Because of the sensitivity of the topic (including the fact that it speaks of illegal activities at the border post), snowball sampling provided others with the confidence to become part of the research, as they had been recommended by those they know and trust. Certainly, the officials felt free to talk knowing that the researcher had been referred to them by someone they knew.

Just as this study of Beitbridge is not necessarily representative of border posts more generally in Zimbabwe, the non-random selection of research subjects implies that the study's results are not generalisable (statistically) to the entire border control management system at Beitbridge or to all informal cross border traders who make use of this border post. However, there is strong reason to believe that the results speak accurately about the practices, processes and challenges at Beitbridge. This is because of the triangulation of methods (interviews and observations) and evidence sources (traders and officials) as well as the fact that saturation of evidence emerged in the fieldwork much earlier than expected. There was significant confirmation of key tendencies at Beitbridge border post as evidence was being collected from both traders and officials.

1.4.5 Data Analysis

Babbie (2007) notes that data analysis can be defined as the process of inspecting, transforming, tidying and modelling data gathered from research, with the goal and objective of highlighting useful information, and suggesting research findings and conclusions. For the purposes of data analysis, this thesis used thematic analysis. According to Rice and Ezzy (1999), this method is about identifying themes through careful reading and re-reading of the collected data. Thematic analysis is a qualitative analysis tool that involves examining and recording patterns of emerging themes from the data collected, with the themes forming categories of analysis.

It needs to be highlighted that, when analysing qualitative data, thematic analysis requires organising the evidence in a logical way, followed by its classification into meaningful thematic groups, then interpretation and further scrutinising so as to establish major themes, patterns and meanings. After collection of data for this study, the researcher transcribed (and translated if need be) the data and, in the process, began to increasingly familiarise himself with the collected data by submersing himself into it through listening to, and reading, the recorded data. This helped the researcher to carefully pick possible themes which were then coded and categorised. These

thematic categories formed the basis for the thematic arrangement of the empirical chapters of the thesis.

In this process, the assistant researcher and I coded the data independently according to what we thought was best. We then later discussed together the emerging themes. Such a discussion also helped to ensure validity and reliability as we agreed on the fundamental data, justifying why certain data fell within specific themes. This ensured that themes were properly identified and recorded; and also, that sub-themes were considered appropriately.

1.4.6 Validity and Reliability

Validity and reliability are very critical components of social research. There has been some debate pertaining to the application of these concepts to qualitative research, as questions have been raised about how validity and reliability can be empirically applied in non-statistical researches which are not measuring quantitatively (Smith, 1991). In this regard, instead of speaking about reliability and validity in qualitative research, some scholars prefer to talk about credibility, conformability, consistency and transferability (Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

Nevertheless, Babbie (1989: 133) writes that "[v]alidity refers to the extent to which an empirical measure adequately reflects the real meaning of the concept under consideration." Thus, central to the idea of validity is the issue of meticulousness and ensuring that the researcher is measuring what is actually intended to be measured. To enhance validity for this study, in chapter two I discuss the concept and theories of border control management and the standardised internationally approved mechanisms which make border control effective. These are the same systems against which efficacy and effectiveness in border control management on the Beitbridge border post was assessed. This enhances validity of the study as practices at Beitbidge border post are assessed against internationally agreed norms and standards.

Reliability is concerned with the consistency, stability and repeatability of the informants' accounts as well as the investigators' ability to collect and record information accurately (Selltiz et al., 1976:182). To ensure reliability in this study, the same set of questions was administered to all informal cross border traders and, similarly, the same set of questions was administered to border control managers and also the same for the experts in this field. This was critical in checking consistency and variances in evidence collection.

1.4.7 Ethical Considerations

Ethical clearance was sought from Rhodes University (see Appendix 6) and all ethical protocols were observed in conducting this research. For interviewed research subjects, consent was sought and participants signed consent forms (see Appendix 5 for consent form). However, some refused to sign consent forms as they feared these could be used to trace their participation in this study; hence, they resorted to verbal consent. Given the repressive character of the system of governance in Zimbabwe at the time of this research, research participants feared reprisal from the government and wanted to have maximum confidentiality and anonymity.

It was clear that, in the case of both state officials and informal traders, particularly controversial and sensitive information (at times) was withheld during interviews. For instance, informal traders did not always reveal all of their activities as they felt that giving such information might expose them to harm, including activities with reference to their engagement with government authorities. I respected their right to withhold information, and hence did not probe beyond what was reasonable.

For border control officials in particular, due to the nature of information sought, it was felt inappropriate to seek formal authorisation from any relevant state agency before interviewing these officials; and, in the case of observing within the confines of the Beitbridge border post, no permission was obtained. These cases both raise ethical issues, which I addressed earlier. Overall, it should be reiterated that anonymity and confidentiality were guaranteed to all participants including in the presentation of data in this thesis.

1.5 Thesis Outline

I now briefly indicate the content of the following chapters. Chapter two offers the theoretical framing for the thesis, namely, theorising border control management in Zimbabwe using the Actor Network Theory (ANT). Chapters three and four further contextualise the study. Chapter three focuses on informal cross border trade historically in Zimbabwe as well as pertinent thematic issues around informal cross border trade in present-day Zimbabwe. Chapter four examines border control management and trade facilitation at border posts in Zimbabwe, both in the past and currently. This includes reference to many of the challenges facing Beitbridge border post specifically. Chapters five to seven are the empirical chapters for the thesis: chapter five looks at the practices of border control management at Beitbridge in some detail; chapter six focues on

informal cross border trade at Beitbridge and economic security in Zimbabwe; and chapter seven examines informal cross border trade with specific references to the problems under the COVID-19 lockdowns. The final chapter (chapter 8) demonstrates the ways in which the empirical evidence (and analysis of it) ably addresses the main and subsidiary objectives of the thesis, as well as how the theoretical framing contributed to this.

CHAPTER TWO: THEORISING BORDER CONTROL MANAGEMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF CROSS BORDER TRADERS AND ECONOMIC INSECURITY IN ZIMBABWE

2.1 Introduction

The Actor Network Theory (ANT) can be used satisfactorily to explicate issues surrounding border control management in the 21st Century. It is a comprehensive theory which emphasises on the importance of tracing the actors in order understand their roles and structural functions of any given system with precision. Central to the theory is principle of following the actors within an actor network while, denouncing human contingency. This principle was key in this study in identification of actors involved in border control management in Zimbabwe and tracing their roles and contributions in securing the borders and enhancement of trade facilitation. This chapter will also bring into light how network theories have been used in Zimbabwe and justify why the ANT is best theory for explaining phenomenon understudy. In doing so, this chapter will briefly look at some border theories, excavating why they were less suitable for this study. Lastly, this chapter will deal with the concept of economic security in relation informal cross border trade.

2.2 Borders and Border Theory

Border theory is of some significance for studying border control management, though it is not the central theory used in this thesis. The work of Thomas Nail is of some significance in this regard, as he considers "the constitutive role played by different types of border regimes – fences, walls, cells and checkpoints – in constructing societies across history" (Deller, 2017). His theory of borders discusses the ways in which territorial borders limit unwanted intrusions and how points of entry and security points block unwanted elements from crossing territorial borders. Sager (2017) articulates that,

> Borders are not static, but rather move as a result of political conflict, economic and juridical reforms as well as resistance from migrants and changes in the physical environment. Their function is not simply exclusion and inclusion, but also redirection and circulation. Borders expel, expand, bind and delimit.

Nail considers physical borders in their literal sense and their manner of demarcating boundaries between states, within which the notion of bordering arises. The principle of bordering goes beyond analysing merely what happens at the border post by examining domestic processes

pertinent to border controls, including the formulation and enactment of immigration laws and procedures. It also entails validating the paperwork of those people who would have been allowed entry in the first place as they can overstay or break other rules, leading possibly to their expulsion. In this sense, bordering is an all-encompassing concept which focuses on issues at the border as well as other issues inside and even outside the physical territorial boundaries. This is relevant to this thesis, in that the Beitbridge border post seeks to regulate the movements of informal cross border traders, who buy goods in South Africa and sell them inside Zimbabwe – these traders are driven by the need to meet some reasonable level of economic security, with economic insecurity in Zimbabwe of importance when analysing borders and border controls.

In a way, parallel to the Actor Network Theory (ANT), Nail also seeks to go beyond standard accounts of border control management by developing a theory that is not simply concerned with the territorial, the economic, and the political. More specifically, he focuses on material and physical objects as well. To Nail, 'roads' and 'sidewalks' for example facilitate movement and set limits on where people are permitted to go (Sager 2017). More broadly, Nail understands 'bricks' as "any material produced through standardisation, including people, so that 'walls' include not only citadel walls, but soldiers, military grids, siege towers, roads and ports" (Sager 2017). Thus, like ANT, his theory highlights the human and the non-human in performing various roles in redirecting unwanted migration. Hence, once inside the territory's borders, walls detain people in prison or they hold people until their asylum cases are decided. This theory facilitates in particular an understanding of the processes that refugees have to undergo until they are accepted or rejected in the country they seek to live in. But, it has broader relevance – including for this study. In the case of informal cross border traders at Beitbridge, police, custom officials, fences and walls work together limit or bar informality and the irregular flow of goods from South Africa into Zimbabwe.

A further concept linked to border studies, as set out by Sendhardt (2013), is that of debordering/rebordering. This concept, which like 'bordering' falls within a broadly constructivist theoretical approach (as does ANT – see below), allows for a recognition and understanding of the constantly changing interplay between territorial, functional, and symbolic borders by way of a single, internally consistent theoretical framework. Importantly, it stresses that border systems are constantly changing. In the case of the European Union, the focus has been on adjustments to enhance internal cooperation within the Union while, at the same time, tightening and blocking off

external unwanted elements (Sendhardt 2013: 24). This approach, unlike Nail's, examines internal processes and policies and not exclusively what happens at the border posts. Both theories do not seek to explicitly unearth border control mechanisms and practices in any sustained way. Their concepts of bordering (and debordering/rebordering) are important in highlighting that borders (and hence border controls) are not static but fluid. But this is insufficient for pursuing a critical analysis of what takes place in practice at the physical borders of countries. This renders the ANT as an important theoretical counterweight for this study.

2.3 The Central Tenets of Actor Network Theory

They are many social network theories (Liu 2017), which typically analyse how groups or individuals interact based on nodes, interfaces and linkages in a dispersed though structured network marked by micro-level confusions and contestations. These theories have been drawn upon in studying Zimbabwean society**.** In a quantitative study, for example, Sibanda (2018) makes use of social network theory in analysing the impact of social media on the financial service sector in Zimbabwe.

The Actor Network Theory (ANT) is one particular version of social network theory, and shares many common features with social network theory broadly. Despite these similarities, there are important points of departure between them. Social network theory, as a whole, places at its core the action of human actors (individuals or organisations), with non-human objects rarely appearing in the analysis except for human actors to manipulate at will.

Alternatively, as will be brought out in this section. The ANT treats non-human entities as actors or at least as having agential power or agency, performing functions alongside their human actors. This is particularly important in a study of border control management, given the importance of both inanimate objects (the technical) and human agents (the social) for border management as a socio-technological network-based system. More specifically, machines like scanners and cameras play a pivotal role in securing borders, as do border officials. The social and the technical are interdependent and mutually reinforcing in securing borders. From such a perspective, it is easier to excavate the actual problems affecting border-post control systems, including at Beitbridge in Zimbabwe. In this era, where technology has become an integral aspect of virtually all aspects of life, a border which is not well-equipped technologically, and in a synergetic relationship with human agents, is likely to be marred with various problems and inefficiencies.

The Actor Network Theory (ANT) has its roots in constructivist social theory (Fuglsang 2004, Laurier 2010, Bosco 2014, Lave 2015). Constructivism is premised on the idea that knowledge and truth are subjective rather than objective, because knowledge and truth are socially constructed. From the 1970s, ANT emerged and became increasingly incorporated into constructivism as an important part of empirically-based social studies (Tonelli et al. n.d.), as well as fitting into the sociology of science and technology. Overall, ANT became an important framework for combining the subjective and science, that is, the social and the technical. It played a significant role in bridging the gap between science and the social world and thereby undercutting the dichotomy between facts (the objective) and values (the subjective). Its most identifiable intellectual predecessor is the radicalised sociology of science and technology that emerged in the wake of the work of Thomas Kuhn (Bloor 1991), though it draws upon a diverse array of thinking, including Michel Foucault's theory of micro-politics and power (Cressman 2009: 2) One of the foremost thinkers within ANT is Bruno Latour.

As implied by the phrase "actor network", actors do not exist outside a network, as the network-system functions like a web connecting actors with different specified functions into a single entity in the pursuance of specific goals and targets. As a constructivist theory, ANT speaks about the construction of knowledge and meaning as centred on the interaction between human and non-human entities incorporated into a single web – the network creates nodal linkages between human agents and the objects that become intrinsic to the network in question. In doing so, the ANT investigates how objects are constructed, represented and circulate in particular situations within a network. The theory is concerned with showing how and why social orders (as networks) emerge the way they do and how they hold together over time and, perhaps most importantly, it identifies gaps and inconsistencies which contribute to inefficiencies. This is the very essense of conducting a social enquiry.

Central to the theory is the tenet called "follow the actor" (Garrety 2014: 15). This is the main methodological underpinning which animates the theoretical framework. This tenet entails understanding what happens within network-based systems by tracking the actions of those involved in the operations of the system. It thus places emphasis on tracing the roles or activities of network agents (as builders) as the best way of pinpointing the processes within complex networks. By tracing the complex relationships that exist between actors within a 'field' of social

activity, the theory discovers how these mutual interactions also condition the relations between "the social and the technical"; as well, it allows for the identification of who (subject) and/or what (object) performs which action/role and the circumstances in which such action (or role) occurs. In this way, the Actor Network Theory is mainly concerned with uncovering, tracing and analysing connections, linkages and relations among a variety of actors and things, or what is known as the "sociotechnical". In this context, Jacobsen (2017: 13) argues that "a network is therefore perceived as a path or striation that is formed through the activities, in which heterogeneous actors (human and non-human) interact with others to form a network."

Garrety (2014:15) elaborates on this by making the following claim: "To investigate how something becomes truth, routine and accepted, the researcher finds a point of origin and traces how the network spread, who or what was enrolled and how interests were translated." Hence, the injunction to follow actors produces due attention to the existence of agents crucial to the network which, in turn, helps the researcher to identify and understand the multiple interactions taking place in a given actor-network system. In other words, following the actors as they undertake their duties creates a crystallised understanding of how they function and how they contribute to the functioning of the overall network. In doing so, ANT uses the notion of 'causality' in a loose sense. As Vass (2019: 5) points out: "ANT dismisses talk of causes and yet … it does produce something like causal explanations… [T]he kind of causal explanation that ANT (like post-structuralism) dismisses is the variety espoused by positivists in which cause is reduced to a statistical relationship between quantitative variables." This implies a weak notion of causality or perhaps the notion of 'condition' rather than 'cause'; and specifically a relational conditioning by focusing on conditioning through network connections involving agents and objects (Dankert 2011).

In the end, ANT is a specific kind of network theory. It differs from other network theories in a way which makes it particularly pertinent to this study. More specifically, it considers human and non-human materials as equal 'partners' in producing, conditioning and reproducing networks. Thus: "The singularity of ANT begins in its ontological perspective of breaking with current dualities in scientific thinking, such as society/nature; human/non-human; agency/structure; context/content; macro/micro, and local/global" (Latour 1994: 2005). Challenging such distinctions makes the ANT reasonably unique, as it is one of the few theories which does not dichotomise the human and the non-human. The actor network theory accords human actors and

non-human *actants* equal importance as they both perform their respective duties without one being given universal ontological priority.

Latour (1996:373) highlights that "[a]n actor in ANT is a semiotic definition – an *actant* – that is something that acts or to which activity is granted by another … an *actant* can literally be anything provided it is granted to be the source of action". In the actor network theory, it is possible to use the notion of 'actant' to designate both human and non-human actors, with both having agency and effects in their interactions within networks. The emphasis on both human and non-human agents is critical as the world is not entirely "social" and does not exist on its own, as if completely demarcated from technology and objects. Human activities simply cannot be separated from science and technology. Because of this, if anything malfunctions (be it objects or subjects), then the entire network-system is affected. This is certainly the case with regard to border posts and border control management. For instance, when the internet goes down, the shock is felt throughout the entire system, as border controls temporarily stop working or slow down their rate of clearance (given that most of the functions of border control management and customs clearance are automated). From this perspective, it is also possible to understand why some border systems are more efficient than others, that is, why some experience delays, corruption and other inefficiencies while others are in large effective. This boils down to the character of relationships and interests within the actor network and how subjects and objects become entangled over time.

ANT offers a conceptual and methodological apparatus for pursuing empirical work as it helps investigators to identify and trace associations in network-systems, as indicated earlier. Ruming (2008:3) posits that "[u]nder the ANT rubric, all phenomena are the effects of heterogeneous networks, where the complexity of interaction and agency is inevitably beyond the vision of actors themselves." Consequently, no single actor (human or non-human) is able to determine or 'cause' by-itself a course of action in a network, as actions are a result of the complex interactions constituting what is always a multi-dimensional network. The patterns of interaction within any given network-system are an outcome of how actors interact empirically; therefore, the emergent structure cannot be determined by any one element or individual. To reiterate, "the stability" of a network is "a function of interactions of heterogeneous elements as these are shaped and assimilated into a network" (Law 1990:113). Network-structures may adjust or alter as new actors become incorporated or as circumstances change or innovations take place. All this requires first

identifying what subjects and objects exist within the network under study. For this study of border control management, it becomes necessary not only to identify and examine the human agents (such as the police, customs officials and the military) but also the material (equipment and software) – including computers, infrastructure, scanners and cameras among other things.

As Murdoch (1997: 738) brings to the fore, the Actor-Network Theory incorporates what is known as a principle of generalised symmetry; that is, the natural or the social, micro or the macro. Networks are composed of humans and non-humans as agents within a system and these have various functions and activities for the fulfilment of organisational goals. Non-humans are therefore equally important as humans in the ANT as both carry out duties and tasks in the 'field' where the action takes place (Latour and Wodgar 1986). On that note, Dankert (2011) in short argues that ANT has "a focus on the connection between humans and non-human entities… for example a gun + a man = gunman." It is the combined action and functions of the two that makes a system or action complete, thus the two are complementary and symbiotic, at least ideally. In that vein, the role of human actors in border control management cannot be assessed outside the context of non-human materials as these make the whole system complete and functional. The relationship which exists between human and non-humans in execution of their duties in the field is explained by Vass (2019: 1), who points out that "the world is made of assemblages known as actants [used in the sense of 'objects'], actors, actor network and articulation…." An assemblage is the coming together by way of mutual conditioning (or articulation) of all elements making up and animating the network. The assemblages involving humans and non-humans at the border post therefore are crucial for this study, from an ANT perspective. Focusing on assemblages creates a holistic approach to the social inquiry of networks such that, as Dijstelbloem and Broeders (2014: 27) articulate it, "ANT focuses on connections and the networks of association that emerge when information is circulated and distributed through networks of different kinds of social and technological actors " in living and dynamic systems.

Scholars drawing upon ANT use the notion of assemblage to trace relations among various entities involved in a network-process (Rydin 2012). In as much as the concept of assemblages is extensively used in ANT, the concept did not originate within the ANT discourse. The concept of assemblage originates with French philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. Deleuze and Parnet (2007: 69) argue that an assemblage is "a multiplicity which is made up of many

heterogeneous terms and which establishes liaisons, relations between them across ages, sexes and reigns – different natures. Thus, the assemblage's only unity is that of co-functioning: it is a symbiosis, a 'sympathy'. It is never filiations which are important but alliances, alloys; these are not successions, lines of descent, but contagions, epidemics, and the wind." Hence, the nodal linkages in a system connects the social and the technical to enhance functionality and efficiency and no one of the two partners is superimposed over the other.

The notion of an assemblage highlights the complex linkages between actors and actants-objects, including in the case of the Beitbridge border post – these assemblages are socially configured and reconfigured. Dijstelbloem and Broeders (2014: 11) indicate: "Central to the notion [of the ANT] is the idea that the division between the social and the technological (what Latour would call the human and non-human) is not of a natural kind but the result of a division of labour in which both humans and non-human perform the task they have been delegated". Therefore, the division of labour (as socially-constructed) is central to ANT, with diverse groupings of human actors performing specific duties and roles different from others. This division of labour, as indicated, incorporates the role of objects which play their own special roles as well. Hence, the phrase often used with reference to non-human agents – namely, that 'they are delegated' or given the responsibility of performing specific functions within a social-technological network. Equipment like cameras or scanners at border posts are actants-objects for surveillance which have a unique function peculiar to them only, which no other human or non-human agent can fully replicate, hence contributing in a unique way to the overall effectiveness of the border control system. Such various functions are rendered and recognised as important as each task-performer (human or non-human) is credited to contributing to the functioning of the system.

Another notion crucial to ANT is that of contingency. According to Noe and Alroe (2003: 6): "The accomplishments of a certain actor-network are always just one among many possible outcomes. Contingency then means that actor networks are built on choices, there is no master plan prescribing the process of mobilisation of the network for making choices rationally, because the network must establish its own schema of rationality." Hence, the network is not created or shaped by any one agent or central overseeing node, but is an outcome of assemblages of various human actors and actants-objects within a specified 'field' of social life. Human agents with the same or complementary interests are inexorably drawn into an actor network, where they forge relations

and systems of interaction to realise their interests. These interests permeate the entire system, which motivates human actors and activates non-human actants to carry out their roles in a fashion that are deemed necessary. Since the network is not prescribed by anyone, or does not take on a necessary form, Noe and Alroe call it "contingent".

From the foregoing analysis, it becomes clear that, for ANT, truth is not cast in stone, as it changes over time. Practices and procedures do not remain static but are fluid – systems change over time, perhaps improving in terms of efficiencies but also liable to enter phases of dysfunction. At the heart of the dynamic quality of network-systems is technological innovation. Hence, ANT seeks to understand networks not as static entities but as subject to change, with the entry or loss of various components (human and non-human agents) of the network and the reconfiguration of components affecting the constitution of the network. Relationships and practices evolve over time and, as Noe and Alroe (2003: 8) point out, "the ANT provides a very fruitful framework for exploring of the heterogeneous and complex nature of things."

According to the ANT, the actor is not the source of action; rather, the "moving target of a vast array of activities swarming towards" the actors is the source of action (Latour 2005: 46). The ANT becomes a useful device in analysing border control management as it takes into account not only the role of human actors and objects but goes further to examine the entities towards which the action of actors and objects is directed. This means that, for this study, the source of action is not the border control agents as such. Rather, those involved in the crossing of the border for various reasons are the ultimate source of action for the border control network. In this way, the issue under study can be holistically analysed in interconnected ways. Although the roles of the sources of action (the activities of, for instance, informal cross border traders) are not the main focus of the ANT, their role in configuring the network are fundamental to its very existence and character.

As this research focuses on cross border trade, it means that the actions of informal cross border traders are of paramount importance. It is their activities which propel actors and objects into action. In this way, the ANT effectively captures and accounts for all parties and elements pertinent to the network-matrix. As Vass (2019:7) points out, the action network theory "prefers to place contributors to action outside the actors, rather than examining how the actors themselves could come to act." While some scholars may consider this as a weakness of ANT, it does provide certain

strengths – it allows the theory to be inclusive by not only limiting its focus to actors and objects internal to the system, and thereby incorporating external variables which stimulate action to take place. In this light, examining cross border traders at border posts, including what brings them there in the first place and how they interact with the agents of border management, is very important to this Beitbridge border system management study. This involves investigating the nexus between territorial border management, cross border trade and economic security in Zimbabwe.

Another notion used with reference to ANT is 'translation'. A network involves a system with defined actors (subjects and objects) where issues or things are processed, and this requires translation. Callon (1990) therefore claims that a network is "a process of association between actors, in which actors define, relate and describe each other, which, within the terminology of actor-network theory, is referred to as a translation process." Translation can be understood to entail diverse types of action, including interpretations, calculations, inspections, and negotiations. Further, if actants-objects in particular are not translated (and therefore given meaning and significance), then they are not or cannot be part and parcel of an actor network in a useful and significant manner. In this way, translation is used to "describe the ways in which agency is ascribed and negotiated" (O'Neill and Whatmore 2000) within an actor-network. Overall, if both humans and non-humans are not translated in and into the network, they become of no value and of no account to a given network. Their conversion into usable forms within networks gives them meaning and makes them responsive to various roles as may be warranted. From the ANT point of view, actors do not function alone without networks, since the actor-based network involves a collective translation, that is, both human and non-human actors work in and through their interconnectedness and collaboration. In making this point specifically about non-human actors, Noe and Alroe (2004: 4) posit that translation "can be characterised as the transformation of objects as they are enrolled into the network and mobilised as *actants* of the network." So, the issue of translation excavates how human actors and objects are integrated into the network for the purposes of fulfilment of organisational goals.

The ANT fits into what is sometimes referred to as strategic constructivism, which combines rationalist and idealist logics of influence: whereby the rational calculations of actors (including via translations) become socially embedded in institutions, and the focus of analysis are the

processes of socially embedded rational calculation (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998: 910) aimed at organisational functionality. Therefore, combining the social and the technical improves the functionality of systems, demystifying conundrums as the soci-techinical actions are translated objectively towards problem solving. In this respect, the ANT has a clear multi-dimensional framing, involving subjects and objects, in which the social and the technical combine to form collectives (or institutional assemblages) (Latour 1999b). "Collective" refers to the associations between human and non-human actors, with the correlations and mutual conditioning between the social and the technical only made possible by the principle of translation which combines the two (the human and non-human) into a single framing.

The ANT therefore reasserts the capacity of researchers to make sense of phenomena taking place in a social world, in this case (in this thesis) by facilitating in-depth understanding and knowledge of border control procedures. This is an important scholarly focus as states seek to make borders as open and secure as possible, consequently making cross-border trade more efficient. Both human and non-human agents are central to border control management. This marks the significance of ANT to this thesis about border control management at Beitbridge, Zimbabwe. In real life, people and technology do not exist separately and far removed from each other; rather, they are intimately connected. Theories that focus on human agents (particularly at the expense of non-human agents) fall far short in this regard. ANT posits and proposes a balanced examination of "the social and the technical", this offering a more inclusive analysis of social networks and systems.

2.4 Strengths and Weaknesses of the ANT for Studying Border Control Systems

As argued already, the ANT has considerable strengths which makes it the best and most appropriate theoretical underpinning for this research. To reiterate, Vass (2019: 6) notes that, "inspired by impeccable hostility to dualism [subjects and objects] ANT encourages us to consider material objects and not just human, social or cultural factors as contributory causes of social events." This is contrary to most ontological and methodological conceptions within sociology that predominantly place emphasis on human agents and activities and how they (or these) relate to the environment around them in social, political or economic terms. By extension, these conceptions downplay the role and the contribution of material objects in configuring and conditioning the social world and social systems. The ANT has played a leading role in restating

the significance of 'the material' (in the sense of material objects, with their own agency albeit unintentional) in social research and should be respected for this. This bridging between the social and the technical makes it an advanced theory which is relevant and suitable in analysing phenomena in contemporary times. More so, Law (1992: 387) notes that ANT theory has a pronounced empirical thrust, though this is not to be equated with empiricism. Scholars drawing upon ANT adopt a pronounced empirical approach, which has assisted in refining and enhancing the theory. As Dijstelbloem (2014: 10) brings to the fore: "ANT is both a philosophical theory about the ontological relations that constitute socio-technical assemblages as well as a methodological account of how to empirically analyse the interactions between the social and technological."

However, ANT is said to have its own set of weaknesses, as is the case with all sociological theories. For instance, significant criticism has been levelled against the ANT for giving equal weight to the role of humans and non-human material objects. In doing so, the theory supposedly downplays the role of humans who in fact are in effective control of network-systems and can alter, manipulate and override the role of non-human materials.

The ANT has been also criticised for "describing endless chains of associations without ever arriving at an explanation for the reasons and differences in network formation processes" (Muller 2015). In other words, while it is strong in tracing and tracking the internal processes and mechanisms of network-systems, it often fails to go beyond the realm of description to offer a pronounced explanation of what is unique to particular networks. Noe and Alroe (2004: 7) make the point that "ANT does not have a notion of network environment. The world becomes an endless web of interaction and does not have a notion of object independent of its relations." In tracing and tracking networks, the boundaries of a particular network tend to remain unidentified, as if the network under study intrudes the entire realm of existence, without an external context (or environment) within which it exists. Also relatedly, the tenets of ANT often seem to limit the occurrence of every agent and activity to a network and inter-connectedness which might not always be the case.

A further criticism is that a typical network does not come into existence because interested parties decide to come together. Rather, contrary to ANT's diffused understanding of social reality, there is a higher order (or central, overseeing node) which organises the existence of a network and the

actors who are to be involved in it. Therefore, most networks are determined at inception by individuals or organisations in power and not out of the independent will of interested parties, so to speak. Lastly, as noted, ANT "prefers to place the contributors to action outside the actors, rather than examining how the actors themselves could ever come to act" (Vass 2019:7). Thus, the ANT holds that those not central to the network-system (i.e. at the margins of the network), or even those perhaps 'outside' the system (in the external environment) are the stimulus for action by agents more central to the system. For this study, this would mean that those involved in crossing the borders are responsible for activating the agency of those in the border control system-network. This is problematic, as certainly the action of those crossing the border are conditioned by the actions of actors directly involved in border control management.

All these criticisms have a degree of validity, and this study of Beitbridge border control management is sensitive to them when adopting and using the Actor Network Theory. Combined, the criticisms do not undermine the relevance and importance of ANT in describing and analysing networks, including border control management networks in Zimbabwe. In using ANT in this thesis, the primary focus is on actors (human and non-human) central and pivotal to the border control system, but in the context of reference to the role and activities of cross border traders (i.e. those acted upon by the system, but who also shape the system).

In focusing on those directly involved in the control of borders, the thesis gives precedence to examining the activities of specific actors involved without seeking to grasp the entire system at one go. Tracing and "following the [border control] actor" leads to the identification of a range of subject-actors (and objects), thereby constructing a layered understanding of how the Beitbridge border is managed as a network-system, including the flaws intrinsic to border management. The tenets of the ANT best explain how systems (including border control systems) are managed and, most importantly, how material objects may (or may not) aid humans in making processes easy and effective. Additionally, the ANT rightly indicates that various actors (including actors from different sub-systems) join together to perform a certain function if it is in their interest to do so. In this study, the assemblage and translation characteristic of border posts include various state agents from different organisations and departments which perform varied functions designed to make the border post secure and efficient.

According to Braga and Suarez (2018), ANT emerged "as an object-oriented ontology whose main purpose is to redefine sociology through a 'sociology of associations'. One of ANT's main goals is to discover new institutions, procedures, and concepts capable of collecting and regrouping social relations." This 'sociology of associations' includes both human and inanimate subjects. As a result, ANT rejects any form of reductionism, which splits (in dichotomous fashion) the technological from the social and then goes on to assume that 'the human' instrumentalises inanimate subjects as mere objects devoid of all agency. The ANT bestows power to both actors and actant-objects in a way which gives equal weight to both in terms of their agential significance, though perhaps over-privileging actant-objects in the process. Nevertheless, unlike other sociological (including network) theories, ANT does not trivialise actant-objects. Indeed, actant-objects typically do not even appear in other theories as they are relegated to the background as mere passive objects which humans manipulate at will. Therefore, the ANT (as a type of social network theory) is a useful approach in seeking to detail the complexities associated with border control management.

Network theories, including ANT, have been used in studying Zimbabwean society. To date, however, the ANT has never been adopted to examine border control management in Zimbabwe, making this research unique and different. In this way, the use of ANT in studying border control management at Beitbridge makes a significant contribution to Zimbabwean studies.

While this is the case, the ANT has been applied to the Zimbabwean context in relation to other fields of study. For instance, Katanha and Simatele (2019) draw upon this theoretical framework in analysing issues of hazard mitigation in Muzarabani, with the case study entailing a semi-arid zone. Katanha and Simatele (2019: 4) highlight that the Actor-Network theory rejects the notion of human agency (or human intention) as the only influence on hazard mitigation, thereby recognising the relevance of other factors – including flora and fauna, water, geologic factors and climate) – as important elements in their research. They show how both actant-objects and human actors are inexorably drawn into a system where they play equal and unique roles. In fact, their study brings to the fore the significance of ecological actant-objects for hazard mitigation, with the importance of these objects equalling the role of government and non-governmental actors. In concluding, the research demonstrates how *Ziziphus mauritiana*, a tropical fruit tree locally known

as ‘musawu’, provides an opportunity for an actor-network analysis, which helps to explain the complex mutual association of non-human and human actors in the hazard mitigation discourse.

2.5 ANT – The Economic Security of Cross Border Traders

The main focus of this research is to analyse how physical borders (in this case, a national boundary) act as bridges or barriers to effective trading, paying particular attention to how they are managed. The border management network-system, as in the case of Beitbridge, is deeply intertwined in the lives and activities of international cross border traders, with the former functioning in ways which may facilitate or hinder the latter (i.e. cross border trade). The ICBTs are themselves embedded in social networks which stretch from their place of origin and trading sites in Zimbabwe to their places of purchase in South Africa. The activities of the ICBTs play an important role in activating and configuring the border control system at Beitbridge. At the same time, the lives and livelihoods of ICBTs are activated by the presence of deep levels of economic insecurity in Zimbabwe. It is thus important to consider briefly the notion of economic security and how, through the lives of informal cross border traders, it relates to – or interfaces with – border control management in Zimbabwe, with the Actor Network Theory in mind.

The concept of economic security has its roots in human security studies which seek to address the multi-dimensional vulnerabilities that compound the day-to-day living of ordinary citizens. The human security concept has broadened from a state-centric approach to a more holistic approach which is people-centred (Nesadurai 2005). Prior to this shift, states were concerned about issues of national security hinged on the notion of state sovereignty and protection of the state from external interference such as acts of aggression (Waltz 1991). The people-centred concept of human security became embodied in the Human Development Report (1994:23), which defined human security as people’s safety from chronic threats and protection from sudden hurtful disruptions in the patterns of daily life. Thus, developing the capacity to thrive as fully-fledged humans, in the face of a multiplicity of vulnerabilities and threats, became central to human security. Trying to reach a level of economic security, as a basis for livelihoods, is part and parcel of this quest to live a dignified life, as embodied for example in the precarious lives of Zimbabweans who engage in cross border trade in the context of the troublesome character of the national economy (with very high levels of unemployment) over an extended period. Besides economic security, human security entails political security, environmental security, health

security, personal security, food security and community security. Overall, human security means "protecting people from critical (severe) and pervasive (widespread) threats and situations" (CHS 2003:4).

The United Nations Trust for Human Security (2009: 5) points out that:

> First, human security is needed in response to the complexity and the interrelatedness of both old and new security threats – from chronic and persistent poverty to ethnic violence, human trafficking, climate change, health pandemics, international terrorism, and sudden economic and financial downturns.

Economic security is one building block for human security and it is the main form of security examined in this thesis, as detailed later with reference to the political economy of Zimbabwe (see chapter 3). During World War II, when the United States was still at war with its adversaries, President Roosevelt addressed the nation in highlighting the following:

> We cannot be content, no matter how high that general standard of living may be, if some fraction of our people – whether it be one-third or one-fifth or one-tenth – is ill-fed, ill-clothed, ill-housed, and insecure. But, he added, over time, we have come to a clear realisation of the fact that true individual freedom cannot exist without economic security and independence (Sunstein 2004).

Roosevelt was agitating for a broad view of security (now human security) and his emphasis on the importance of economic security created a new challenge and responsibility for states not only to deal with issues of national security (as the old notion of security) but to concentrate increasingly on the well-being of its citizenry (human security).

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) (2015) defines economic security as the ability of individuals, households or communities to cover their essential needs sustainably and with dignity. It adds that: "Food, basic shelter, clothing and hygiene qualify as essential needs, as does the related expenditure; the essential assets needed to earn a living, and the costs associated with health care and education also qualify" (ICRC 2015). The way people try to meet their daily expenses (source of income) in the face of worldwide poverty becomes of paramount importance, with the Millennium Developmental Goals (MDGs) seeking to reduce endemic poverty and the ongoing suffering of ordinary people. Because of the deep failures of the Zimbabwean government, including by way of economic and fiscal mismanagement, ordinary Zimbabweans

have constructed and pursued ways of making a living in the face of numerous adversities, including cross border trade.

A key issue for this thesis becomes the extent to which (and the ways in which) the border control management system at Beitbridge facilitates or hinders the possibility of economic security for cross border traders. This is addressed by drawing upon the Actor Network Theory and analysing the role and functions of both humans and non-human agents at the border post, as part of the border control network. Insofar as the border control network hinders livelihood construction amongst cross border traders, this might go some way in explaining why these traders tend to resort to informality and illegality (i.e. to maximise their economic security, or limit their economic insecurity).

Also of relevance in this regard is the prevailing globalisation of the world economy, particularly under neoliberal conditions, as this tends to pry open borders in terms of the flows of goods and people (with cross border traders combining both flows) (Liew 2000). As Nesadurai (2005: 8) points out, any "notion of economic security that does not take into account the prevailing structural condition of economic globalisation may be far removed from the realities of contemporary life." Neoliberal restructuring of the global economy has had at times the effect of undermining the integrity of national borders and the autonomous functioning of nation-states (Andruseac 2015). It has also been criticised for heightening the levels of economic insecurity on a worldwide basis (Concordiam 2014). Yet, the primary responsibility for ensuring the economic security of ordinary citizens still remains with the state (including the Zimbabwean state). Further, even under neoliberal conditions, the nation-state must ensure and guarantee national security, with processes and practices at border control sites being especially important in this respect. This raises all sorts of complex questions about the relationship between national security and economic security, including the ways in which they may or may not be in tension. Additionally, it also poses questions about the priorities of border control management systems, given the dual functions of national and economic security for the state and how border controls impinge on both forms of security.

2.6 Conclusion

In a nutshell, ANT offers a conceptual and methodological apparatus for pursuing empirical work which helps investigators to identify and trace associations in network-systems, as indicated

earlier. It has a clear multi-dimensional framing, involving subjects and objects which makes it feasible to get an inside perspective on the functionality of system in this case border control management. This theory has not yet been used to excavate issues relating to border control management in Zimbabwe, hence it will be critical in explaining border control issues in intrinsic ways. The association and assemblage of the social and technical improves the applicability of the framework in the social world taking into excavating objective reality. Since ANT is hinged on following the actors, practices and procedures do not remain static but are fluid – hence the ANT allows us to detect the changes within systems over time, which justifies its vitality in understating issues at the Beitbridge border post. Thus, this research is ground-breaking as it is contributing extensively to understanding ICBT and border control management from a unique angle in Zimbabwe. They are so many other theories that can be used to explain border control management but their applicability in excavating issue understudy is limited.

CHAPTER THREE: INFORMAL CROSS BORDER TRADE IN THE CONTEXT OF ZIMBABWE'S POLITICAL ECONOMY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter traces the growth and development of informal trade including informal cross border trade in the context of Zimbabwe's political economy. The political restructuring that started in 1980, coupled with policy incongruousness had serious repercussions to the formal economy thereby triggering the growth and expansion of the informal sector. To exclusively excavate the key concerns of this chapter, I employ periodisation of events making a historiographical assessment of the growth and development of informal trading in the context of the political economy in which activities were occurring. The two phenomenon are intertwined and cannot be comprehensively understood separately as political misfeasance's and poor policies triggered economic downfall which consequently resulted in the growth and expansion of the informal sector in Zimbabwe. Thus, political restructuring and how it led to the demise of the economy and its impact on informal cross border activities is central to this study. This chapter is mainly broken down into five distinct periods, that is, political and economic restructuring in the 1980-1989, 1990-2000, 2000 to 2008, 2009 to 2015 and finally under the so called "Second Republic." The chapter will then focus on thematic analysis of informal cross border trade.

3.2 Informal Trading Before Independence

Trade is not a new phenomenon which was brought about by colonialism in Africa as Africans had their own ways and systems of conducting trade amongst themselves, "considering that gold and copper mining or iron-working and beer-brewing were legitimate activities before colonisation began in 1890" (Ndoro, 1996, in Ndiweni and Verhoeven, 2013: 2). Thus, the Shona traded at community level and also with other tribes like the Ndebele in Matabeleland and went to other territories as far as Tete and Sena (now in Mozambique) for trade. Prior to the 18th century before colonialism began, inhabitants of the African continent engaged in trade amongst themselves in the absence of borders. The nature of this trade between and among ethnic groups was hinged on barter trade, that is, the exchange of goods for goods as there was no currency as a mode of exchange. Colonialism only improved the system of trading, by introducing currency and precision in measurements of quantities and items involved in trade. Chiliya et al. (2012:2) postulate that, "[h]istorically cross border trade dates back to pre-colonial times before the adoption of artificial

borders which brought with it tariff and non-tariff barriers." Hence, this type of trade did not involve state regulations, but people simply conducted trade according to their agreements and needs. In this regard: "Exploitation of the country's mineral wealth was one of the chief occupations and Africans engaged in the production of, and trade in, gold for over nine centuries" (Phimister, 1974: 233).

However, with the settler occupation and colonising of Zimbabwe, African trade was disrupted as blacks were segregated from controlling the means of production and removed to Reserves: "Under the Gold Trade Ordinance, Africans were forbidden to legally buy or sell gold" (Bhila, 1972: 13). The colonial government was now responsible for all trade (including now cross border trade) and Africans had to work in the factories, mines and farmlands for wages and salaries – this disrupted effective trade activity that had existed prior to colonialism. Therefore, conducting any trading activity was criminalised. According to Brand et al. (1993), "the colonial regime attempted to control the spread of the informal sector in urban areas. This had the effect of making it a 'hidden feature' of the economy." After the colonial government established itself in Zimbabwe, the informal sector activities were thoroughly regulated by the police. Thus, the autonomous African (black) market-oriented activities were consequently established as a sub-sector, but this was made illegal before being suppressed and displaced (Dhemba, 2008). During the colonial era, activities in the informal sector continued, although tight controls were put in place to squash it. These mechanisms ensured there was no mushrooming of such activities anywhere, in both urban and rural areas. Laws such as Town and Country Planning Act (1946), the Vagrancy Act (1960), the Urban Councils Act and the Vendors and Hawkers By-laws (1973) are some of the pieces of legislation that were put in place to frustrate the growth of informal sector activities (Dhemba, 1999: 12).

The famous Siyaso Magaba Home Industry was opened as far back as the 1950s as a way of promoting self-help employment for those excess African populations which could not be absorbed into the formal economic system (Chirisa, 2011). This is one example where informal activities in fact were allowed to take place (in a controlled area) and the system was strictly regulated to ensure such activities remained within prescribed places. Hence, informal activities were illegal, and the colonial regime made sure such activities were not conducted anywhere, but only allocated spaces like Siyaso to cater for the needs of the excess black population.

3.3 Political and Economic Restructuring during the 1980s

A new political order emerged in Zimbabwe in 1980 with the attainment of independence coupled with political and economic restructuring. The new government sought to empower and ensure emancipation of the black majority. Democratically, the new government did not introduce any significant changes, though at face value it appeared to be democratic since it came into power through a popular vote.

The ZANU-PF government inherited the settler state's authoritarian political culture in a number of ways: in the 1980s there was a marked failure to reform or democratise the traditional structures of power in the rural areas, and the government inherited the power of the colonial state (including the monopoly of the use of force) and so its security, executive and legislative capacity as well (Onslow, 2011:11). Instead of entrenching democratic norms, the new government maintained the status quo. Its desperation to cling to power and do away with possible adversaries was depicted in the early 1980s when it violently embarked on Gukurahundi in Matabeleland to eliminate dissidents, an act which left close to twenty thousand people dead. In this way, "[t]he continuation of ZANU-PF as a dominant one-party state has of course also been intimately connected to the reorganisation of state structures, and the role of violence and intimidation" (Onslow, 2011:33). Despite the end of the liberation struggle, systematic violence remained an important resolve of the ruling party to remain in power, tactics which became more pronounced in the post 2000 era.

Similarly, during this same period, the new government initially maintained the economic system it inherited from the colonial government. Ndlela (2006) articulates that, at independence in 1980, Zimbabwe inherited an inward oriented economy that was excessively protected from international competition and, due to this vibrancy, informal trade was very small accounting for less than 10% of economic activities. The formal sectors of the economy provided employment opportunities to the majority of the urban population. Urban informality in the 1980s was less diversified in Zimbabwe on a comparative basis with other African states (ILO/SATAPE, 1984). The activities mainly included knitting, collecting firewood, hairdressing, and shoe repairs among other activities (such as the sale of fruits and vegetables in urban areas by women). Women were side-lined from work in the main because of low education levels, low skills, and hence the formal economic system was biased and more inclined to employ men.

Ndlela (2006) argues that "[d]uring this decade [the 1980s] the informal cross border trade was characterised by part time traders." These consisted of people who were formally employed and would pursue cross border trade during their spare time, some out of interest while others as a way to supplement their earnings. Informal cross border trade was not prominent during this period as it was stigmatised especially for those travelling to and from South Africa for purposes of buying and selling. Muzvidziwa (1998: 30) states that: "In the 1980s, cross border traders were portrayed as witches, allegedly insensitive to the suffering of the Black majority under apartheid in South Africa." Hence, cross border trade was greatly despised though it had already started and, due to the criminalisation and stigmatisation associated with this trade, it remained very low. Informal activities were generally limited, and informal cross border traders even more so. Ndiweni and Verhoeven (2013: 6) point out that "[t]he Riddell Commission of 1981 reviewed about 28 Acts which prohibited informal activities and recommended that they be repealed. It is against this backdrop that the window to informal activities was first opened." Even though there was a change of government (from colonial government to the government under a new independent state), the new administration did not provide an enabling environment to allow for the growth and development of informal activities. However, it is during this period that informal cross border trade started to take shape.

Ndiweni and Verhoeven (2013:6) argue that, during the 1980s: "Individuals who spotted shortages in the market identified opportunities to supply spare parts to businesses that had exhausted their foreign currency allocations…Some were buying any products that were in short supply in Zimbabwe such as watches, deodorants, electrical gadgets to come and sell back home." Hence, informal activities were proliferating especially cross border trading, which led to the coining of the term "brief case business men" (Davies, 2004). Ndiweni and Verhoeven (2013: 6) also note that women who were not employed spotted an opportunity in the Botswana market and started earning their own foreign currency through selling Zimbabwean agricultural produce such as vegetables and fruits in Botswana. Using those proceeds, they would then buy products that were in short supply in Zimbabwe and come back home with wares to sell.

At this time, since the government emphasised the principle of growth with equity, it also sought to redistribute land to the black majority who had been previously marginalised under colonial rule. According to Brett (2005:7): "Some 3.8 million hectares of land had been acquired for

redistribution to Communal Area (CA) farmers by 1990, 2.2 million of this by 1983, but only 8,000 more by 1990 and a total of 71,000 by 1997. Almost 40,000 households had been resettled by 1985." Thus, the government took a dynamic approach to redress imbalances in all sectors of the economy, empowering the black population which had been previously disadvantaged. The government made strides towards the realisation of food security for the poor and the marginalised. Rural communities received substantial food relief during the droughts of 1982-84 and 1987 when "more than a million people had to be provided with food from outside because of almost total crop failure" (Brett, 2005:7).

In 1985, elections were held which saw the triumph of ZANU-PF over PF-ZAPU. PF-ZAPU was absorbed into ZANU-PF to form a broadened ZANU-PF in 1987 through a Unity Accord creating a one party state – this meant consolidation of state power by ZANU-PF without any opposition. The position of prime minister was done away with in 1987, and Mugabe became an executive president (Polity IV Country Report, 2010) Thus, the then President, Robert Mugabe through the ZANU-PF-dominated parliament, started to amend the constitution and vest excessive powers in the office of the President. Amendment No. 7 also of 1987 changed the system of government from a parliamentary to a presidential system. Vollan (2013: 10) points out that, "after the 1987 … changes, the power had shifted to the President in the composition of the government, in his substantial influence in appointing members of Parliament … and in the division of powers between the President and the Parliament." These parliamentary appointments included eight Governors, ten traditional Chiefs, and 12 other members, with the total adding up to 30 members who were appointed by the President into parliament.

These radical changes took place in the last quarter of the first decade of independence, transforming the political system of Zimbabwe by centring power in one person, the consequences of which Zimbabwe had to endure for the next three decades. In this respect, as Onlsow (2011: 2) argues: "In Zimbabwe and ZANU-PF's case the process of centralising power took place in stop-start phases: first, there was the period 1980-1987, leading to the 1987 Pact of Unity, after which ZAPU was absorbed within ZANU-PF." Hence, the new government ensured there was no viable opposition in the 1980s by creating a one party state and all power was centralised in the President.

Overall, though, the economy was vibrant in the first decade and the formal sector was very strong and performing well, as depicted by statistics provided by Brett (2005: 27) which show that,

"growth averaged 4.7 percent between 1980 and 1984 despite a serious drought in 1982, and 4 percent between 1985 and 1990." Agricultural price controls gave commercial farmers cheap inputs and credit, while food subsidies reduced urban food prices. Tariffs protected domestic industry from foreign competition, financial regulations kept interest rates down, and wages were allowed to grow more than inflation. Significant gains were accrued, including improved education, health services and the extension of market opportunities to African farmers.

Despite signs of economic growth, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) (1989) estimated that, over the ten-year period 1980-1990, formal sector employment had grown very slowly: 160,000 new jobs were created during the entire period, out of which 155,000 were in the public sector and primarily in education. This limited growth in the primary and secondary sectors of the formal economy inhibited employment opportunities for those who aspired to join the formal sectors of the economy. This was bound to have knock-on effects in terms of a possible expansion in the informal economy.

3.4 The 1990s: ESAP

The growth and development of informal cross border trade can be attributed to a number of associated factors which include high unemployment, poor policy formulation and implementation, shortages of foreign currency, reduction of domestic industry output and increased poverty.

In the early 1990s, following the global imperatives as prescribed by the Bretton Woods institutions for developing countries, the Zimbabwean government introduced a structural adjustment programme called ESAP to cut government expenditure as well as to introduce trade liberalism, a move calculated to boost the economy. Social services provided by the governments to their citizens were rendered a heavy burden on governments by Bretton Woods institutions and hence limited economic growth – an economic problem ESAP sought to address. Privatisation was greatly endorsed as the best way to create sustainable economic growth and better livelihoods for citizens of developing countries. According to Kawewe and Dibie (2000: 84): "The major tenets of the [neoliberal] agreement require the debtor governments to apply the following measures: (1) Eliminate price controls; (2) Cut subsidies to prices of basic goods and services; (3) Engage in Free trade; and (4) Devaluation of currencies." These were the major requirements of ESAP that

Zimbabwe had to implement as recipients of financial aid from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank.

Kachere (2011: 25) points out: "Between 1990 and 1996, Zimbabwe implemented trade liberalisation faster than any part of the [ESAP] reform package." The most unfortunate part of the move was that local industries were not ready and strong enough to face stiff international competition presented by foreign industries, which were producing cheaper goods. The result was devastating as this led to a host of negative impacts such as closure of many factories, massive retrenchments, declining real wages and skyrocketing consumer prices. As a result, ESAP became synonymous with the growth and development of the informal sector in Zimbabwe during the 1990s, with the retrenched seeking a mechanism for survival; hence, informal cross border trade drastically increased in the 1990s. Mnangagwa (2009: 116) notes that: "In 1997 Zimbabwe's economic decline began to visibly take place. It began with a crash on the stock market on November 14 1997… [and] by 2003 Zimbabwe's economy was the fastest shrinking in the world at 8% per year." Hence, the continued economic decay which was characterised by hyperinflation, closure of companies, retrenchments and high unemployment led to the growth and increase of informal activities and consequently informal cross border trade.

The downside of structural adjustment programmes was that they were uniformly crafted for all countries despite the uneven national levels of development, industrialisation and rate of economic growth per year; it was a one size fits all policy. The Bretton Woods institutions paid a blind eye to the fact that different economies and countries (depending on their development, education, literacy rate and scientific levels) ought to have different economic models compatible to their unique context and peculiar to their systems. The result was disastrous for most developing countries including Zimbabwe. Many of the economic challenges faced by developing countries today are rooted in the implementation of neoliberal programmes and, since then, very few countries have recovered from their negative impacts.

As Jenkins (1996) highlights, in the case of Zimbabwe, "[i]n 1995 the official number of retrenched workers stood at about 100,000, while unofficial estimates by trade unions indicate figures between 150,000 and 160,000 lay-offs". Hence, ESAP negatively impacted on the performance of local companies as privatisation and opening of markets created avenues for foreign competition, which local firms could not withstand, and the lay offs were a direct result of

ESAP policies. As the number of people employed in the formal economy dwindled, figures started growing regarding numbers in the informal sectors of the economy, as this became an alternative for livelihoods. In this context, based on an empirical study, Mupedziswa and Gumbo (1998: 59) thus note that, "[t]he number of [study] respondents who could afford three meals per day declined … from 44.6 per cent in 1993 to 42.25 per cent in the subsequent two years period. The quality of the food taken would have declined as well." More broadly, research conducted in Dzivarasekwa and Tafara by Matshalaga (1997a, 1997b) indicate that food shortages amongst families, inadequate clothing, poor accommodation, failure to pay school fees and poor health services became prominent after the introduction of ESAP. Such findings show the depth of impoverishment of Zimbabweans at the time, with informal cross border trading becoming an alternative opportunity to augment peoples' incomes and livelihoods in the 1990s.

Although those who had been retrenched joined the informal sector, not everyone had the longevity to stay afloat in the business. Nevertheless, with thousands being laid off from work during this period, surveys conducted between 1994 and 1997 showed that there were more female informal operators than males, with the percentage of females increasing over the years (49% males and 51% females in 1992; and 48% males and 52% females in 1997) (Mupedziswa, 2001). Most of the participants of this economic activity particularly women were involved in low profit activities for survival like selling of vegetables. Because of the adverse economic conditions that ESAP had brought, informal cross border trade became an important source of livelihood, though it was difficult to sustain over time. Mupedziswa (2001: 30) states that 19.5% of women were involved in this trade in the early 1990s and by 1993 the number had dropped to 15.4%, and to 15% by 1995.

As inflation surged during the time of ESAP, quality of life declined immensely. Potts and Mutambirwa (1998: 74) thus note that "real expenditure fell by 12.4 per cent because incomes did not keep up with prices (which rose 45 per cent over the period) and the share of food in household budgets rose significantly." Hence, besides the fact that some people had lost jobs which provided them with income for food, the price for food was going up; yet for those still employed, salaries remained stagnant. Mupedziswa and Gumbo (1998: 59) also indicate that, as food prices rose, some families had to cut down on nutrition and food intake. For example, some families stopped buying chicken, beef, bread and fish, and they cut back on the number of meals per day. Therefore,

ESAP's intended consequences were never realised but the unintended effects of this policy were pervasive.

The education sector was affected as well by ESAP and education standards have been declining gradually in an incremental fashion to date and have never recovered; although other factors like corruption have compounded the situation (Carnoy, 1995) As a general tendency, "[h]igher unemployment leads to declining nutrition, health and education standards, increasing school absences while at the same time increasing the national demand for tertiary and secondary schooling" (Kawewe and Dibi, 2000:95). However, in as much as cross border trading is criminalised and despised by most governments around the world including that of Zimbabwe, those involved in cross border trade were reported to have managed to deal sufficiently with their financial issues, including an ability to pay for education of their families. The study by Mupedziswa and Gumbo (1998: 59) shows that no one from the cross-border group reported a school drop-out, so that their activities were sustaining them effectively as a safety net in these harsh moments, although there was a "8.6 school drop-out [rate] due to ESAP in 1993" in the country as a whole.

Like education, the ability to pay or cater for medical expenses also falls under economic security. ESAP greatly affected the health sector in various ways including the ability of people to afford decent health care facilities. One respondent documented by Mutambirwa (1998: 69) noted that "hospital, school fees, transport, water and food are all very expensive." As retrenchments increased, prices of commodities began to sky rocket and people were having difficulties paying their medical and related bills such as medical aid. Mutambirwa (1998: 69) conducted interviews to check on how people were managing their medical expenses: "Three respondents stated that rising health fees were making people seek alternative, cheaper, forms of health care: in one case *n'angas* (traditional healers) and in the other ... people [are forced] to join churches for spiritual healing." Hence, people diversified their means of medication by seeking counsel of traditional healers and church spiritual healing (*maporofita*) as they tended to be relatively cheap and at times free, thus limiting the financial burden regarding medication. ESAP is also said to have aggravated the increase of HIV and AIDS in Zimbabwe:

> The economic reforms that were introduced by the WB [World Bank] and IMF and adopted by the Zimbabwean government spelled mass economic disaster, exacerbated the HIV/AIDS devastation

> … Alternatively, they (women) turn to indentured servitude or prostitution increasing the women's HIV infection risk and that of their children (Kawewe and Dibie, 2000:83).

In as much as informal activities became the salvation for many people, not everyone could venture into this activity as they lacked capital necessary to start a business. Rather, some women resorted to prostitution, which negatively affected public health. Hence, ESAP crippled and complicated the health sector in Zimbabwe, as its effects were multi-dimensional.

In a nutshell, the 1990s was essentially a unique period for Zimbabwe, as many contemporary challenges have their roots in this period. During the early 1990s, Zimbabwe was affected by droughts, which meant food shortages in the country, and the government had to spend a significant amount of money to import grain. The situation worsened, compounded by poor government policies such as ESAP, which culminated in downsizing of the economy, massive retrenchments and inflation, thereby forcing many people into informal economic activities for survival. As Njaya (2015:98) puts it: "The growth of the informal sector from thereon can be traced to the economic structural adjustment programme, 1990-95 and other economic policies (for example price controls), business regulatory policies (for example, Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment Act) and the [later] fast track land reform programme."

3.5 1999 to 2008: The Fast Track Days

The period from 1999 ushered in a new era in Zimbabwe, characterised by unprecedented levels of violence. The political economy between 1990 and 1999 was marked by mismanagement of public funds, corruption and poorly formulated policies which led indirectly to the creation of the most important opposition party in Zimbabwe since independence, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). Feeling the pressure, panicking and revealing its desperation to cling to power, ZANU-PF resorted to its usual strategy of employing violence against opponents. In this respect, "[t]he Zimbabwean government formally announced the fast-track land reform programme (FTLRP) in July 2000 and it was then launched in April 2001 with the aim of acquiring land from white commercial farmers for redistribution to the poor" (Centre for Public Impact, 2017). The fast-track land reform was marred with violence and forced eviction of both white farmers and their employees. According to Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum (2010: 9):

> More than eighty-nine methods [were] used in Zimbabwe to violate rights to property, which include unsolicited visits by high ranking politicians on one's property, cruelty to animals, torture, pegging-

> off land by settlers, damage to property, theft of equipment, trashing and looting of homes, burning of crops, barricading 27 of homes, stock thefts, police searches and occupations without proper offer letters.

ZANU-PF elites, war veterans, as well as prominent ZANU-PF supporters spearheaded these activities.

In the post 2000 era, the then President of Zimbabwe Robert Mugabe made another attempt to centralise more power in his office, as he had done in 1987 as discussed earlier. However, with the formation of the vibrant opposition party a year before the new millennium, developments did not unfold as planned by the ruling party. As highlighted by the Bertelsmann Transformation Index (BTI) (2008: 4), the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA) "as a collective movement to push through far-reaching constitutional reforms" dealt Mugabe "a historic defeat in 2000 when it convinced 56% of the Zimbabwean electorate to reject constitutional reforms proposed by the government." Mugabe had pushed for constitutional amendments seeking to centralise executive power even further. For the first time ever, Mugabe lost in a national voting process. This acted as an indicator of public opinion about ZANU-PF, which became clearer when the MDC did exceedingly well in the 2000 parliamentary elections by winning almost half the seats. It was during this time that there was large-scale occupations of white-owned farms and the subsequent fast track land programme.

Because of the undercutting of the commercial agricultural economy, the national economy downsized greatly in the post 2000 era, to the extent that "[a]t one-time inflation was pegged at two hundred and thirty-one million percent" (Mukuhlani, 2004: 172). Richardson (2005) further notes that: "My econometric estimates indicate that the independent effect of the land reform, after controlling for rainfall, foreign aid, capital, and labour productivity, led to a 12.5 percent annual decline in GDP [Gross Domestic Product] growth for each of the four years between 2000 and 2003". Political miscalculations resulted in the economy plunging into a deep crisis and the number of people surviving via the informal economy started to increase further. Additionally, the illegitimacy of the ruling party attracted targeted economic sanctions which worsened the situation. These sanctions were meant to punish ZANU-PF leaders for violating property rights and the perpetuation of violence on innocent civilians for political expediency.

To clearly demonstrate the extent of the economic decline, the Zimbabwe Economic Policy Analysis and Research Unit (ZEPURA) (2013: 9) states that "[r]eal average earnings declined sharply from an average index of 94 in 1986-90 to 36.5 by 2000-2004 and 10 by 2004, while employment levels dropped from a peak of 1.4 million in 1998 to 1,067,900 by 2004." All those formally employed who lost their jobs had to find, or at least try to find, alternative means for survival to support their families. Most resorted to various activities in the informal sector, and informal cross border trade was one such means. As noted by Muzvidziwa (2006:181), cross border trade became an increasingly important livelihood strategy, and one "that has enabled many women to support themselves and their families".

The Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum (2002:5) highlights that violence was rampant during the 2002 presidential election and even after the election. Teachers for instance were being forced to renounce their Teacher's Union Association for a ZANU-PF-backed teachers' association. Though both ZANU-PF and MDC were involved in politically motivated violence at this time, most of the political violence was perpetuated by ZANU-PF members. Politicisation of food aid was a major form of political violence recorded, with MDC supporters having to face starvation, as war veterans and ZANU-PF militia reportedly took over food distribution in most of the constituencies. People were brutalised and murdered, and subject to unlawful arrests, with women also raped. For the election, "the modus operandus … was, terror, violence" and, after the election, "[m]ass retribution started in the rural areas. The retribution found an urban expression as the army reportedly beat up people branding them up as traitors" (Melber, 2002: 35). State institutions were being manipulated by ZANU-PF to serve its interests rather than national interests. Becoming and being ZANU-PF was more important than the status of a Zimbabwean.

As the economy almost nose-dived from 2000, and with rising inflation, the informal sector continued to grow at an unprecedented rate. Retrenchments and closure of companies continued to increase, gradually resulting in a burgeoning number of traders in the informal economy. The formal sector rate of employment declined between 1993 and 2004, such that the expansion in employment by 1 million between 1993 and 2004 was due to the growth of self-created jobs in the informal sector (Leuberk, 2008: 25). It was estimated as well that no less than 80% of households in Zimbabwe were living below the poverty datum line, effectively rendering the informal sector as the backbone of the economy (Kanyenze and Sibanda, 2005:10). Informal activities started to

mushroom everywhere especially in urban areas, in the form of flea markets, street vending, and tuck shops as people resorted to survivalist activities. Various studies have documented that most traders joined cross border trading after the year 2000. Mudyazvivi (2006: 4) posits that 84% of the traders in a survey had joined informal cross border trade during this period, while Chakanda (2017) notes that 90% of studied participants joined at this time. Thus, the post-2000 era marked a rapid period of social decay which pushed a large number of people into joining informal economic activity. Younger people of working age in particular found themselves with no choice but to join the growing informal economy for survival.

The growth of the informal sector therefore cannot be explained outside of the political economy of Zimbabwe which was responsible for the contraction of the formal economy. In this regard, the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (RBZ) highlights that, for the mid-2000s, the informal and micro-enterprises sector accounted for an estimated 15% to 20% of total output or GDP (RBZ 2005:40). For instance, the Bulawayo City Council was receiving Z$63 million a month (Z$756 million a year) from vendors, which it lost following the clampdown on the informal economy under Operation Murambatsvina in the year 2005 (*Zimbabwe Independent*, 10 June 2005:4). Thus, the informal sector became a very important economic activity not only for the economic security of individuals and families but also as means of revenue collection for the city councils and the government.

The implementation of Operation Restore Order (*Murambatsvina*) showed that the government was prepared not only to use violence to influence election results, but also in the socio-economic realm. The government weaponised public policy through *Murambatsvina* to curtail urban informal activities, According to the Government of Zimbabwe (2005: 45):

> In August 2005 the minister of Local Government and Urban Development Dr Ignatious Chombo said that: "The government insists that all the sweeping demolitions have been to rid the country of a chaotic nature of an unregulated market to clear up the distinction between formal and informal sectors of business. An economy cannot be run by an informal sector but it is run by the formal sector with the informal sector offering a supportive role. The formal sector provides the bulk of the revenue that also trickle down to the informal sector…The relationship had become blurred we are correcting it".

However, closure of companies and the collapse of the formal economy led to the sharp increase in urban informality, a point to which the Minister turned a blind eye. This operation was also a political move calculated to punish urban voters, who had shown to be sympathetic to the opposition MDC.

Saunyama (2013: 22) postulates that the President (Mugabe) opined that the informal sector was harbouring criminal activities and economic saboteurs. Overall, the demolition resulted in an estimated displacement of 300,000 civilians in urban areas countrywide, with mass loss of livelihoods and property. By September 2005, 2.9 million people across the country needed food assistance (Human Rights Watch, 2005). The operation was thus a menace to economic security as it created homelessness, hunger, and destruction of people's income generating projects as well as reducing access to health and education services, without alternative solutions.

The economic situation deteriorated in 2007 and 2008 as, for example, the local legal tender "lost more than 99.9 percent of its value" (Hanke, 2008:1). The government tried to force merchants to reduce prices of commodities through price controls, but this was fruitless as such efforts were not commensurate with the inflation rate. Zimbabwe ended up printing one hundred trillion dollar notes to try and keep up with the sky-rocketing inflation. To date, this has been the highest inflation ever reached by any country in the world. Towedzera and Chagara (2017: 5) point out that "[a]s Zimbabwe's shops emptied and the purchasing power of the Zimbabwean dollar evaporated during the economic meltdown of 2008, traders [particularly, cross border traders] played a critical role in ensuring that essential supplies, such as food stuffs, remained accessible to many households." The dire economic conditions resulted in informal cross border trade increasing dramatically, as the nation had to resort to basic commodities supplied mainly from South Africa and through the activities of informal cross border traders. In other words, these traders became the heroes and heroines, providing food to the nation at a time when the government was incapacitated.

Research conducted at that time showed that 85% of respondents participate in cross border trading for income purposes, followed by reasons of food security (67%), employment (60%) and overcoming poverty (49%) (UN, 2008). Traders involved in informal enterprises generally fared better than the general populace due to the income they received from their businesses, even at the peak of Zimbabwe's economic meltdown in 2008. A retrospective analysis of Zimbabwean informal activities shows that, in the late 2000s, activities of informal cross border traders were

pivotal to the supply of commodities and economic security. Thus, Ncube and Phillip (2006) in Chibisa and Sigauke (2008: 38) state that the informal sector became the "lifeblood" of the nation. The Provincial Head at the Ministry of Small and Medium Enterprise Development of Zimbabwe (Beatrice Mutumbwa) also said: "At one time, the economy of Zimbabwe would have completely collapsed. But the traders stood firm and imported the much needed inputs which were able to sustain the economy" (South African Trust, 2009). Beyond any doubt, informal cross border expanded rapidly because of the ongoing downturn in the post-2000 economy, with these traders enhancing the economic security of themselves and fellow Zimbabweans alike.

At the same time, ZANU-PF tyranny gradually increased during this period, further dismantling democratic values. In the period between March and July 2008, in the context of national elections, significant political violence occurred in punishing MDC supporters (CCJPZ, 2009; HWR, 2008a; Masungure, 2009). At the peak of economic decay in 2008, Zimbabwe held presidential elections where, for the first time in history, the opposition party (MDC) received more votes than the ruling party – though it failed to get the 50 plus 1 (votes) needed for it to win this election. It also did exceedingly well in the parliamentary elections. The presidential run-off election was marked by unprecedented electoral violence in the months leading up to it. Abductions, rape, torture, destruction of property, disappearances, and all kinds of atrocities were committed by ZANU-PF and state agents. ZANU-PF bases (from which terror was orchestrated) were set up both in rural and urban areas and, even after the election, MDC supporters were brutalised and some fled the country (Kriger, 2012; Raftopoulos et al., 2008). The situation ended up with ZANU-PF winning the election resoundingly by 80% while the opposition leader withdrew from this re-run election. This led to the formation of a Government of National Unity (GNU) through Southern African Development Community (SADC) mediation.

3.6 GNU (2009-2013) and Beyond

SADC sought to rescue the situation, with South Africa mediating in negotiations between ZANU-PF and MDC, culminating in the Global Political Agreement (GPA) which led to the formation of a Government of National Unity (GNU). The GNU was formed by the three major political parties in Zimbabwe, that is, ZANU-PF, MDC-T and MDC-N (by this time, MDC had split into two separate parties). Steps towards positive peace were taken, efforts for national reconciliation were made, and there was the creation of the Organ on Peace and National Reconciliation. Church

organisations as well as Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) encouraged people to forgive one another regarding past violence.

Economically, the GNU registered a commendable level of success. It made progress through the introduction of dollarisation which resulted in the easing of the economic situation. Hence, Mukuhlani (2014:172) points out that "[t]he effects of GNU on political and economic development of the country were a mixed bag but it was a sigh of relief to Zimbabweans who have endured it all during the period 2000 to 2008." During this time, the economic problems eased. For example, inflation figures released by the Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency (Zimstat) show that the year-on-year inflation rate (annual percentage change) for the month of May 2013 as measured by the all-items Consumer Price Index (CPI) dipped 0,29% to 2,20% from the April 2013 rate of 2,49%. These figures are both a far cry from the pre-20090 trillion percentage inflation rates recorded.

Further, Jamaela (2013: 67) notes that, with the formation of the GNU, "South Africa waived visa requirements and allowed Zimbabweans to enter the country with ease." The situation improved for cross border traders who could now cross the Zimbabwe-South Africa border and buy goods for resale back home with little difficulty since arduous visa requirements had been scraped. In fact, informal traders' livelihoods improved considerably under the GNU as the United States (US) dollar stabilised the economy, and people could trade with a stable currency bringing predictability to their economic activities. In the wake of stability and availability of goods in the country, Chikanda and Towedzera (2017) highlight that the kinds of goods that traders imported by 2014 were different from those they brought in back in 2008. This was mainly because, under the GNU, there was an abundance of food in the country, and people could now obtain foodstuffs in local shops unlike in 2008. Hence, informal cross border traders favoured importing non-food items like clothing and electrical goods However, as the World Food Programme (WFP) shows, 72% of the Zimbabwean population still lived on less than $1.25 a day in 2013 and 2014, and food was relatively expensive though available.

Despite the stability that the US dollar brought to the economy during the GNU and in the immediate post-GNU years, many people still resorted to informality as industrial capacity and job creation remained poor. Kanyenze et al. (2017: 8) articulate that:

> Zimbabwe is experiencing a structural regression characterised by increasing dependence on natural resources, deindustrialisation and informalisation. The share of the manufacturing sector in GDP peaked at 26.9% in 1992 before collapsing to 7.2% by 2002 and averaging 11.7% between 2009 and 2014. Industrial capacity utilisation declined sharply from 35.8% in 2005 to only 18.9% by 2007, and below 10% by 2008. It then climbed to a high of 57% in 2011 before declining again, reaching 34.3% in 2015, but was back up to 47.2% in 2016. Just between 2011 and 2014, 4,610 firms closed down, retrenching 55,443 workers.

The informal sector of the economy therefore remained important as a means for economic security for many Zimbabweans. This sustained thousands of families as the formal sector continued to collapse even after dollarisation, as shown by the statistics above. More specifically: "A Finscope Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise Survey established that there were 3.5 million micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME) with an estimated turnover of US$7.4 billion (or 63.5 percent of gross domestic product)" (Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency, 2011, in Njaya 2015: 98-99). Further, in terms of employment: "In 2011, of the 5.4 million employed aged 15 years and above, 4.6 million (84%) were considered to be in informal employment, 91% of whom had unskilled jobs" (LEDRIZ (2015: 4).

Clearly, the informal sector was the main avenue of employment even under the GNU. Hence, informal activities of different calibres and specialisations (including informal cross border activities) were central to income generation in Zimbabwe. To further reinforce this point, the Prices, Income, Consumption and Expenditure Survey (PICES) of 2011/12 showed that "the total value added for the informal economy (including agricultural production by households) for that period was US$1.3 billion (US$810.0 million from informal non-farm-based activities and US$921.4 million from households engaged in agricultural activities), constituting 19.5% of Zimbabwe's 2011 gross domestic product (GDP)" (LEDRIZ, 2015: 7). Beyond any reasonable doubt, informal activities in Zimbabwe remained a pivotal aspect of the national economy, at a time where the government's macro-economic strategies were vastly insufficient for economic recovery.

Under the GNU, though, local government administration and service delivery improved remarkably. Basic services were restored in most urban areas across the country; however, since 2014, there has been a reversal of these gains (BTI, 2016). During the GNU, MDC was in control of national finances as one its leaders (Tendai Biti) was the finance minister, who tried to limit

ZANU-PF financial mismanagement. Despite this, the 2013 elections saw ZANU-PF returning to power as the sole government in Zimbabwe. In this context, the Crisis Group (2019) notes that, post-2013:

> After an election in 2013 in which it ran on a platform of job creation and economic recovery, the ZANU-PF government demonstrated astonishing levels of financial delinquency. It "financed" its own systematic over-expenditure with massive borrowing. Domestic debt, which stood at just [US]$442-million in 2013, surged to [US]$10.5-billion by February 2018 and has climbed further over the last year.

From just under US$500 million, the debt astronomically grew to over US$10 billion, and there is no evidence that this money was used to resuscitate industry or revitalise the economy. Certainly, the majority of people had to continue with their daily activities in the informal sector of the economy for survival.

In 2015, 19 of the banks that form the Financial Traders Association of Zimbabwe (FTAZ) were poorly capitalised and were at risk of defaulting (BTI, 2016). Hence, banks were on the brink of closure due to undercapitalisation. Because of improved administrative and financial systems under the GNU, inflation was recorded to be -2.41% in 2014 but it quickly jumped to 10.61% in 2018 (Statista, October 2021); and, despite the government blending US dollars and Zimbabwean currency, the annual inflation rate stood at 457.2% in June 2020 while the unblended (usual) annual inflation rate stood at 737.3% (Covenant University, 2020).

Hlatywayo and Mukono (2014:1457) argue that the GNU failed to a great extent to solve the problems prevailing in Zimbabwe prior to its formation, including finding any lasting political solution to the internal conflict. Human rights abuses continued during the period of the GNU, though abuses were largely discreet rather than public acts of violence (BTI, 2016). Admittedly, a new progressive constitution came into existence under the GNU, but implementation of the necessary legislative reforms under the new constitution was a challenge for the post-2013 ZANU-PF government.

3.7 Mnangagwa's "Second Republic"

Under the post-2013 government with Mugabe still as president, public opposition of some significance arose against ZANU-PF, particularly in urban areas, including in 2016 and 2017. This period was punctuated with demonstrations as people were frustrated with the longstanding

economic doldrums haunting their livelihoods. The first movement ('this flag' movement) was led by Pastor Mawarire, using social media as the major tool for information dissemination as well as the Zimbabwean flag as its symbol (Allison, 2016). This was followed by the Tajamuka movement which was more radical in its intent and tactics, carrying out a number of street demonstrations that disrupted economic activities for both formal and informal enterprises in Zimbabwe. Some Tajamuka members were arrested in Gwanda, Zvishavane, Mutare and Kadoma (*News24*, 2016), implying that the movement was gathering steam outside of the capital city of Harare.

Specific protests at the time related to Statutory Instrument 148 of 2015 (Customs and Excise (General Amendment) Regulations, 2015 (No. 80)). This reduced "the duty rebate for travellers to US$200 from US$300 whilst, at the same time, completely scrapping it for travellers using small cross-border transport, buses or trucks" (Musarurwa, 2016). This contributed to discontent especially among informal cross border traders as their operations were being sabotaged. The situation was made worse when the government banned the import of a variety of goods (see later) via Statutory Instrument 64 in 2016, which resulted in further demonstrations including the burning of the ZIMRA warehouse at the Beitbridge border post. Tajamuka activists were accused by the police of burning the ZIMRA warehouse (Musarurwa, 2016). Thus, in this instance, the political activities of Tajamuka were closely linked to the interests of informal cross border traders as they joined hands in protest for the economic security of the traders as well as the majority of people who are largely dependent on the informal sector for survival.

As Wiklef et al. (2020:24) note, "the influx of imported products and the subsequent displacement of locally produced goods from the market" had taken place over time, and this prompted the government to introduce Statutory Instrument 64. The policy was put in place as a mechanism to limit imports to promote industrialisation in the country. While this might seem laudable, it was done at the expense of informal cross border traders, due to the banning around importing a range of goods. The study conducted by Wiklef et al. (2020: 29) shows that the majority of the respondents spoke about economic growth improving in the context of this statutory instrument. However, the economy remained punctuated with industrial failure, rampant unemployment and inflation surging up, as well as shortage of goods and basic commodities due to import restrictions. Hence, this policy militated against the livelihoods of informal cross border traders and the vast majority of Zimbabweans who relied on affordable imports brought into the country by these

traders. As argued by Chikanga (2019), "[a]part from basic things like diesel and petrol, Zimbabwe suffers from shortages – all the time. Cooking oil, mealie meal, bread, soap, sugar, stationery, basic groceries are extremely difficult to find, as the shops are empty". Hence, the statutory instruments did not bring about positive consequences to the economy.

In November 2017, Mugabe fired his deputy (Emmerson Mnangagwa) at a time when factionalism was rife in ZANU-PF. The sacking of Mnangagwa and the side-lining of key allies of Mnangagwa arose because Mugabe was aware of the former's leadership ambitions and his ties with military leadership (Beardsworth et al., 2019: 580; Rutherford, 2018). As the ruling party's succession race was heating up, there were strong indications that the G40 faction (led informally by Grace Mugabe) was positioning itself to take control of the party. These internal party intrigues led to the November 2017 coup, which deposed Mugabe and led to the installation of Mnangagwa as party and state president. Moore (2017: 6) questions: "How did the G-40 think they could get away with sending off a man so close to the military, who also had Gukurahundi … and much more under his belt?"

The European Union (EU) (European Union, 2018: 1) postulates that "[i]nternational responses to the military intervention have been cautious: The African Union (AU), the Southern African Development Community (SADC), and the United States – which generally oppose coups – initially called for constitutional governance and peaceful dialogue." Somehow, at least at first, the international community embraced the military coup in Zimbabwe although no one openly expressed this as such; certainly, there were no punitive measures taken against Zimbabwe for the coup. This acted as an indicator that even the international community, which does not condone coups, simply wanted Mugabe out of power. Within the country, many Zimbabweans were optimistic, hoping the Mnangagwa government (the so-called "Second Republic") would usher in new changes.

After the coup, parliamentary and presidential elections were held on 30 July 2018, with ZANU-PF being victorious. Although Mnangagwa expressed his respect for human rights, doubts existed about his sincerity from the start of his administration. In fact, the ruling party was accused of sending soldiers into the rural areas to ensure that people voted for the ruling party in the July 2018 election. As the EU points out: "The army is suspected to have deployed troops to influence voters in the countryside and to have infiltrated the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC), seriously

undermining its autonomy." This entailed an uneven playing ground before and during the election, coupled with a delay in the release of the presidential results which was taken to imply that the ZEC (under ZANU-PF's influence) was 'doctoring' the results. After the voting, in early August, anti-government demonstrations were held agitating for a quick release of the election results. Six civilians were shot and killed during these demonstrations, by the army (Pigou, 2019), which attracted wide international criticism against the Mnangagwa regime.

The character of the controls and style of governance under Mnangagwa soon became very clear, highlighting continuity rather than change in the shift from Mugabe to Mnangagwa. Soon after his election as state president, Mnangagwa increased fuel prices, sparking nationwide demonstrations. The disproportionality of the armed response by the government alarmed the world, as soldiers openly fired live ammunition at civilians in broad daylight for a second time:

> On 18 January, the Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum was able to publish consolidated statistics counting 844 human rights violations during the general strike [demonstrations]. These numbers include: at least twelve killings; at least 78 gunshot injuries; at least 242 cases of assault, torture or inhumane and degrading treatment, including dog bites; 466 arbitrary arrests and detentions; and many displacements (Pigou, 2019).

Beside political squabbles and human rights abuses, the Second Republic has also faced a number of socio-economic problems.

For example, health challenges continue. Burke (2018) notes for instance that "[a]t least 50 people have died in a cholera outbreak caused by sewage leaking from broken pipes into drinking water in Harare." This took place soon after the elections, in September 2018. Like before, the Mnangagwa government is failing to ensure proper service delivery (such as a supply of clean water), leading to sub-standard sanitary conditions and the loss of life through cholera. In response to the cholera outbreak, the government sought to deflect the blame, including by pointing figures at informal traders. Indeed, it found an excuse to punish urban voters (who are mostly opposition supporters) by militating against informal activities and disrupting the business operations of informal cross border traders and street venders. The selling of wares informally was said by the government to be contributing to the spread of cholera, hence it insisted on closing the operational places of traders where they sell their goods.

This crackdown on informal traders complicated the livelihoods of an agglomeration of people that heavily rely on informal activities, and it can be described as entailing a "policy-induced poverty" (Banchirigah, 2006) arising as an externality of a policy. This occurred in the name of a clean-up campaign to combat cholera. Troops were sent into urban areas to ensure that no informal trading was occurring, even destroying informal trading infrastructure in the process. This seems a far cry from Mnangagwa's commitment to democratic principles and his intent to revitalise the economy and enhance the well-being of citizens (Crisis Group, 2018; Noyes, 2020: 6).

3.8 Informal Cross Border Trading in Zimbabwe

So far, in this chapter, I have provided a broad historical overview of Zimbabwe's political economy within which to locate the existence of the informal economy and cross border trading in particular. This section now focuses specifically on informal cross border trading, and on a thematic basis. These themes include financing informal cross border trade, reasons for resorting to informality in Zimbabwe, and the government's perspective of informal cross border trade.

3.8.1 Financing Informal Cross Border Trade

Golab (2015) makes a distinction between illegality and informality in relation to cross border trading. For instance, some goods may be illegal (such as contraband cigarettes or narcotics) in that it is illegal to sell or possess them, while other goods are not illegal as such. The notion of informality relates to the fact that cross border traders typically evade customs duty processes and regulations, including the trading of legal goods outside the official channels of the law. In bypassing formal processes, this informality also takes on the character of illegality.

The informal sector in Zimbabwe is diverse and varied as it encompasses a wide range of activities which include sculpturing, homemade building materials, woodwork, cooking and selling foodstuffs, pirating (*mishika shika*) among other things. As part of the informal economy which is thriving in Zimbabwe, informal cross border trade has become an important source of income for many people and it has positively impacted on the economic security of those involved in it. South Africa remains as the central destination for informal cross border traders (ICBTs), with food, clothing and other essential items being brought back into Zimbabwe for resale. Other traders go to other countries like Mozambique, Zambia, Botswana, Malawi and Tanzania in Africa, and some are now going as far as China to buy wares. Not only does informal cross border trade create a

source of livelihood for traders, it also facilitates the availability of goods that would otherwise not be accessible on local markets in Zimbabwe.

Funding informal cross border trade remains a personal prerogative as no financial institution is willing to provide funds (loans) to ICBTs, as they often have little capital, no title deeds, or properly registered companies. Fear of defaulting in paying back loans creates uncertainty within the formal financial systems in lending these traders money. Most often, ICBTs start their business through their own savings, "due to lack of collateral security, and other unofficial screening criteria" (Mishi and Kapingura, 2012: 8667), which inhibit engagements with formal financial lending institutions. For start-up and working capital, some informal cross border traders access money from other vendors, friends, family and informal moneylenders. Money lenders often charge exorbitant interest such that, at times, traders may spend huge amounts of money paying back the debt. The ICBTs bemoan the absence of credit facilities from financial institutions, as this situation compels them to resort primarily to informal money lenders (LEDRIZ, 2017: 21), leading them into the possibility of a perpetual debt trap. This expensive mechanism of borrowing complicates the effective and profitable operation of ICBTs. As Mupedziswa (1999: 10) highlights, informal cross border traders "have faced numerous operational constraints, among which has been a lack of credit facilities" This has been a historic pitfall since the inception of this economic activity in Zimbabwe.

3.8.2 Cross Border Traders Resorting to Informality

Although the informal economy can be found even in high-income countries, it "thrives in the context of high unemployment, underemployment, poverty, gender inequality and precarious work, the very circumstances we have in Zimbabwe" (Towedzera and Chakanda, 2017: 934). Thus, beyond any reasonable doubt, these factors have triggered the growth and development of the informal economic sector in Zimbabwe.

A key challenge for undercapitalised cross border traders is that they are expected to engage in cross border trading as if they were part of the formal economy. As Ijeoma and Ntuli (2017: 68) highlight, "[t]he informal cross border traders are … subjected to the same fees and costs as the formal traders." Despite the fact that informal cross border traders' income is low and erratic, and they face numerous capacity constraints, the Zimbabwean government insists that they carry out their business as formal traders, including in relation to official duty and taxation levels. Due to

the financial burdens associated with international trade, tax and duty evasion becomes a tactic used by cross border traders, thereby leading to their characterisation as informal cross border traders. The strict trading rules imposed upon these traders do not take into consideration their financial plight, and these rules result in the unorthodox practices conducted by them as they navigate through the border posts of Zimbabwe, informally and illegally if need be.

Additionally, Zimbabwe has the highest cost of importing and exporting goods in the entire southern African region. In part, this is because import duty collection has become one of the major ways by which the Zimbabwean government seeks to generate national revenue, given the massive closure of industries and other companies in the context of economic decline. The *Zim Economist* (2016) posits that, "the cost of exporting and importing for Zimbabweans is higher than the average regional cost. One has to part with US$5660 per container compared to the regional average of US$2793 with Namibia as low as US$1905." At least potentially, this places a heavy burden on informal cross border traders, with duties and taxes (if paid) reducing their already-minimum profit levels even further. A recent study thus indicates: "The informal traders indicated that they were not satisfied with the charges, citing that the charges were exorbitant and beyond their reach. The major reason cited for these exorbitant charges was that most informal trade is subjected to flat rates which impose a 40% duty rate on most products, according to the Customs and Excise Tariff Notice (2012)" (Ijeoma and Ntuli, 2017: 68).

Moreover, beyond high transaction costs, stringent protectionist policies often force informal cross border traders to engage in malpractices, avoiding customs systems at the Beitbridge and other border posts. Despite the fact that there is minimal manufacturing capacity currently in Zimbabwe (and now for an extended period), which cannot even come close to meeting local demand for the supply of necessary goods, the government introduced the ban on importation of certain goods through the Statutory Instrument (SI) 64 of 2016. SI 64 of 2016, "is an amendment notice which legally adds a list of imported goods to the already existing schedule of restricted imports as contained in notice SI 08 of 1996 which seeks to control the importation of certain goods in Zimbabwe" (Donga et al., 2018). SI 64 of 2016 banned the importation of goods such as various processed and tinned foods, bottled water, dairy products, household furniture, fertilizer, cotton fabric and some building materials. According to the Minister of Industry and Commerce, the move was designed "to support our local industry […] buying locally manufactured goods;

whether it involves purchasing machinery worth millions or even just a T-shirt; [this] begins a cycle in which you re-invest money into the local economy, instead of spending it on an imported product and sending the money outbound" (Tawodzera and Chikanda, 2017: 913).

One major result of this was the increased use of "*amalistha*", who carry goods through undesignated areas (without border posts) by crossing the river with goods from the South African side to the Zimbabwean side. In this respect, *My Zimbabwe News* (2016) points out that:

> Zimbabweans are now using undesignated roads along the border where there is no fence and where army patrols are weak to smuggle the goods and farmers have now had to upgrade their security. … The ban on some foreign import goods in Zimbabwe has resulted in the increase of incidents of smuggling by informal traders and private people along the southern border [with South Africa] across the Limpopo River.

Because authorities were confiscating the banned goods at the border post of Beitbridge, some angered traders were smuggling these into the country, including ungazetted ports of entry along the Limpopo River (*The Standard*, 2016), at the own risk of theft of their goods. Even those traders who had been using official ports of entry in the past (and paying import duties at times) turned to unofficial entry points to avoid confiscation of now-illegal goods.

Instead of helping to formalise the informal cross border trade, the government is compelling traders to become even more informal in their practices, through policies like the Statutory Instrument. In fact, "the South African government raised concerned that the SI 6A legislation was not only a threat to cross border trading but also on intra regional trading" (Sandu, 2016). Thus, the ban was not militating against cross border traders only, as it was tantamount to a violation of a bilateral trade agreement between Zimbabwe and South Africa, hence flaunting international regulations. The eventual repeal of the law was greatly welcomed by cross border traders.

Delays at the Beitbridge border post is also another factor which leads to cross border traders to use unofficial channels to get their goods into the country. Traders interviewed in one study indicated that they often experienced problems at the border, with the most significant challenge being queues and delays – three-quarters of the traders encountered this on a regular basis (Towedzera and Chikanda, 2017: 935). Because of this, there is "an opportunity for touts who know that the traders want to cross the border quickly and will pay a small fee for officials to speed up the clearing processes for them" (Tawodzera and Chikanda 2017: 913). At times, traders resort

to corrupt dealings to speed up the clearance process. This of course lessens their profit and is considered by traders as an unnecessary burden and therefore deeply problematic.

3.8.3 Government Perspective on ICBTs and Informality

Most governments are sceptical of informal cross border trade, and it is mostly branded as illegal. Thus, for many governments, informality is viewed as problematic, "because of low productivity, low contribution of fiscal resources and high concentration of poverty and exclusion" (Ghani and Kanbura, 2013: 22). This scenario is evident in Zimbabwe where informal cross border trade is in effect criminalised and those involved in it are not trusted as legitimate cross border travellers. According to the *Financial Gazette* (2016), "Zimbabwe National Chamber of Commerce chief executive officer, Christopher Mugaga, estimates that Zimbabwe could be losing US$1,5 billion every year through smuggling of goods. The figure is more than one third of the country's US$4 billion National Budget."

From the Zimbabwean government's perspective, informality is contributing to national economic decline by crippling government initiatives to revive industry in the country and leading to a loss of revenue through tax evasion. It also entails an unfair competitive advantage over formal businesses because of avoidance of custom clearance and import duty evasion by informal traders (Wanjuki et al., 2015). As Ijeoma and Ntuli (2017) note, "ICBT is considered as being illegal, short term, unorganised and is associated with difficulties in accessing foreign markets, importing goods, realising significant profits and sustaining economic growth." Hence, informal cross border trading needs to be combatted.

Protests in 2016 in relation to the tightening of border controls might suggest significant support for ICBTs by ordinary Zimbabweans, because of the supply of goods forthcoming from this trade. In fact, Muzvidziwa (1998) carried out detailed research on informal cross border trading in the 1990s, concentrating on traders based in Masvingo. In terms of his sample of interviewees, 64% thought that the government had an unnecessarily negative attitude towards informal cross border traders and that it should just leave them alone. More recently, Chiliya et al. (2013) highlight that government propaganda often labels ICBTs as MDC supporters. In this regard, the 2016 protests were viewed by government as part of a regime-change agenda by the opposition.

There is no doubt that "[t]he smuggling of goods has got a negative impact on those people who want to do business in a proper and ethical way … in that those who smuggle have lesser costs"

(Tsuma, 2016). However, it is not always the case that informal cross border traders seek to evade customs procedures at Beitbridge or elsewhere. Thus, a study conducted by the United Nations Development for Women (UNIFEM) stated that "three quarters of informal cross-border traders contribute to governments' revenues through the payment of duty and licence fees" (*Tay*, 2021). As a result, the argument by the government about the character of these traders is incorrect (Saunyama, 2013; Tekere, 2000; Peberdy and Rogerson, 2003 in Kurebwa, 2015: 66). In this respect, at the border posts or the borders more generally, ICBTs tend to straddle formality and informality in dynamic ways.

Maximisation of government control over informality in Zimbabwe dates back to the colonial period. Gumbo and Mupedziswa (1993: 34) note that the colonial regime attempted to regulate the growth of the informal sector through deliberate and elaborate enactment of laws that criminalised the informal sector. They refer to laws such as the Town and Country Planning Act of 1946 and the Vagrant Act of 1960 as well as a range of by laws related to the activities of vendors and hawkers. For independent Zimbabwe, a similar situation prevails (Chitambira, 2009), including local government controls in Harare and other cities. In this sense, the Zimbabwean government's attitude towards informal activities is an inherited element from the colonial regime (Mhone, 1996). This imperative to regulate and to formalise the informal is extended to along the borders of Zimbabwe, by way of seeking to ensure that cross border traders do not undercut the territorial integrity of the country, from the viewpoint of the government. This government stance only serves to deepen the probability of customs evasions by ICBTs.

3.9 Conclusion

The political and economic restructuring that took place in Zimbabwe since 1980 has resulted in diverse calamities for many Zimbabweans which has inversely triggered the growth and development of the informal sectors of the economy including cross border trade. Poor policy formulation, corruption, politics of patronage and mismanagement of public funds among other factors have been central to economy decay in Zimbabwe. Henceforth, triggering an exodus of skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled personnel turning and resorting to informal cross border trade for survival. These activities have become important sources of employment and survival for millions of Zimbabweans, though the government has been sceptical of such activities, reflected by its antagonistic policies which militates against the proliferation of this economic activity.

Introduction of SI 64 statutory instruments, operation Murambatsvina and constant state brutality against informal cross border traders through disruptive activities and confiscations of wares show the antagonism by the government despite the central role of this activity in sustaining national economy in the era of economic decay. Thus, formalisation of the informal sectors of the economy is critical as a strategy to support the innovations and entrepreneurship efforts of traders which can be instrumental in revitalisation of the dilapidated economy.

CHAPTER FOUR: TRADE FACILITATION AND BORDER CONTROL MANAGEMENT IN ZIMBABWE

4.1 Introduction

In contemporary times states are concerned with creating systems and mechanisms for expediting the movement, release and clearance of goods, the essence of trade facilitation. This chapter is going to detail Zimbabwe's quest and initiatives in embracing trade facilitation. Hence, this chapter discusses trade facilitation procedures aimed at improving border control management and efficient movement of goods and people across national borders placing emphasis on the Beitbridge border post. It begins with a discussion on border control management in general and then introduces border control management in Zimbabwe and the actors involved. To effectively excavate important issues, this chapter will discuss key international organisations championing trade facilitation that is the World Customs Organization (WCO) and the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and then narrows down to the role of Regional Economic Organisations (RECs) and their approach to trade facilitation particularly in relation to informal cross border trade. From this context, I will examine how Zimbabwe has conducted itself towards informal cross border trade in the face of these trade facilitation agreements. The Simplified Trade Regime (STR) becomes a key arrangement of discussion for this chapter as it directly deals with small traders and informal cross border traders. Hence by the end of this chapter, one should have a condensed understanding on Zimbabwe's attitude towards trade facilitation and its approach in resolving informality in the form of cross border trade.

4.2 Border Control Management

Article 1(2) of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Protocol on the Facilitation of Movement of Persons defines a border as "[a]ny common land border between any two Member States, or any airport used for flights within the Region, or sea port used for trans-shipment connections." Borders have mainly five functions, namely, they: mark the limits of national dominion; filter the flow of certain goods into and out of a country; control the flow of people; act as ideological barriers; and are lines of military defense (Timothy and Tosun, 2003). As such, a border is a central component of the concepts of state sovereignty and statehood, and a state's failure to manage its borders properly can have serious repercussions for its domestic and international legitimacy. According to Okumu (2011: 3): "Border management is commonly

defined as the government functions of immigration, customs and excise, and policing, with the aim of controlling and regulating the flow of people and goods across a country's border/boundary in the national interest (particularly economic development, security and peace)."

Border Control Management (BCM) is the sovereign responsibility of states and any state (including the Zimbabwean state) generally provides a policy doctrine on how its borders are to be managed. In this context, elements of overall BCM, as central dimensions to the integrity of a country's political economy, include: policies for immigration dealing with the transit of persons across borders, customs policies dealing with the transit of goods across borders, and border security policies for defining border forces' mission in protecting and regulating frontier borders. At the same time, border management is essentially a collaborative process between a country and its neighbours considering that borders mark inter-territorial boundaries. Typically, BCM is most effective and efficient when undertaken with explicit and formal cooperation and coordination with neighboring countries and even amongst states on a regional basis. As such, the degree of porousness of borders is mainly determined (or at least conditioned) by the character of the relations and accords between bordering nations (Prokkola, 2008). The border management system is the key regulation mechanism for cross-border movements and both facilitation and control are equally important objectives that must be addressed at the same time.

4.2.1 Border Control Management in Zimbabwe

In a globalised world where interconnectedness and integration are key dynamics influencing economic growth and social development, policymakers are increasingly realising the need for accelerated trans-border regulatory reforms to remove unnecessary barriers and burdens on trade. One such policy-system aimed at this goal is Coordinated Border Management (CBM). The World Customs Organisation (WCO) defines CBM as "a coordinated approach by border control agencies, both domestic and international, in the context of seeking greater efficiencies over managing trade and travel flows, while maintaining a balance with compliance requirements" (WCO, 2009). This notion gives prominence to the general principle of coordination of policies and programmes in border control management, both within a particular territory and across territories.

The WCO published the "Customs Compendium for Integrated Border Management" in 2006, which outlines the key elements of an integrated border management system consistent with CBM.

In essence, coordination of activities among various border control agencies is the central idea of this system, which is calculated to contribute to organised, efficient and effective border management: "The CBM concept is broad and offers numerous interpretations, operational arrangements, such as joint mobile teams, hot pursuit, joint risk management…," (Polner, 2011:49), among other operations. Thus, in contemporary times, the WCO has been at the forefront in spearheading policies that directly deal with border control management. The notion of CBM can be traced back to the International Convention on the Simplification and Harmonisation of Customs Procedures in the Kyoto Convention of 1973 before it was reviewed and adopted in 1999 (European Union, 2018).

Given the complexities of modern-day border control management, states tend to acknowledge the importance of CBM and Zimbabwe has in fact adopted this conceptual and institutional arrangement. Zimbabwe is bordered by Zambia to the north, Mozambique in the east, Botswana in the west and South Africa to the south. Some of its busiest border posts include Chirundu, Plumtree and Nyamapanda. However, Beitbridge border post is the most important one and arguably the busiest border post in all of sub-Saharan Africa, and it provides the most insights regarding how Zimbabwe manages its borders. As Poloji (2012) highlights, "the objective of borders is to provide value added services that facilitate smooth movement of people and goods across borders, hence the need for effective and efficient border management that can facilitate the free flow of people vehicles and goods across borders." As such, trade at and along borders, especially Beitbridge in the case of Zimbabwe, plays a crucial role in a country's economy – this is particularly relevant for Zimbabwe, as customs duty is one of country's largest sources of tax revenue.

Okumu (2011: 1) points out that border management is a joint undertaking of an array of governmental institutions, governments and border communities. There are over ten agencies that are involved in border control management in Zimbabwe and these are found at Beitbridge border post. They include: Zimbabwe Revenue Authority (ZIMRA), Department of Immigration Control, Ministry of Agriculture-Vet Inspectorate, Ministry of Agriculture-Plant Inspection Protectorate, Ministry of Health-Port Health Inspectorate, Medicine Control Authority of Zimbabwe (MCAZ), Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZPR), ZRP Border Control Unit, President's Department, Ministry of Transport: Vehicle Inspectorate Department, Environmental Management Agency (EMA) and the

Zimbabwe National Army (ZNA). As such, each one of these agencies plays a crucial role in ensuring that trade and travel between Zimbabwe and South Africa and the region more widely, is as unencumbered and smooth as possible. These various government agencies, with different mandates (including security, inspection, taxation, and surveillance) come together for the sole purpose of effective border control management. Table 4.1 refers to twelve Zimbabwean state agencies and their specific roles in the BCM process. Every agency listed is relevant for informal cross border traders as shown by the role they play at the border.

Table 4:1 Zimbabwe Border Agency and their Roles

NAME OF BORDER AGENCY	PARENT MINISTRY	AGENCY'S ROLE AND PURPOSE AT THE BORDER	KEY STATUTES ADMINISTERED AT BORDER POSTS
1. ZIMRA (Customs)	Finance	It is the Customs Administration in Zimbabwe, responsible for: • Collection of import duties and other taxes for Treasury use • Customs clearance of goods for importation, exportation and transit to ensure compliance with all statutory conditions and requirements • Collection of trade data for national trade statistical compilation	• Customs & Excise Act (Cap 23:02) • Value Added Tax Act (Cap 23.12) • Income Tax Act (Cap 23:08)
2. Plant Inspectorate	Agriculture, Farm Mechanisation and Irrigation Development	• Controlling import of plants, plant products, growing medium, injurious organisms and invertebrates • Inspection of imported and exported plants and plant products to protect plants against plant pests and diseases • Issuing permits and phytosanitary certificates to authenticate compliance of imported products with plant health regulatory requirements	• Plant Pests and Diseases Act (Cap 19:08)

3.Veterinary Inspectorate	Agriculture, Farm Mechanisation and Irrigation Development	• Inspection of imported and exported animals and animal products to protect animals against diseases • Issuing veterinary permits to authenticate compliance of products with vet regulatory requirements	• Animal Health Act (Cap 19:01)
4. Vehicle Inspectorate Department (VID)	Transport, Communications and Infrastructural Development	• Weighing and inspection of vehicles to check for compliance with load limits, validity of road permits and roadworthiness of vehicles • Collection of necessary road use fees	• Road Motor Transportation Act (Cap 13:10)
5.Port Health	Health & Child Welfare	• Inspection of imported food items, drugs and other health products to protect public health • Ensuring imported food, health products and similar items comply with health regulatory requirements	• Public Health Act (Cap 15:09) • Food and Food Standards Act (Cap 15:04) • Hazardous Substances and Articles Act (Cap: 15:05)
6.Medicines Control Authority of Zimbabwe	Health & Child Welfare	• Inspection of imported medicinal drugs and related health products to protect public health	• Medicines and Allied Substances Control Act (Cap 15:03) • Dangerous Drugs Act (Cap 15:02)
7.Environmental Management Agency	Environment & Natural Resources	• Monitoring importation of hazardous and other substances harmful to the environment	• Environmental Management Act (Cap 20:27)
8.Forestry Commission	Environment & Natural Resources	• Controlling exportation of forestry products to conserve forests • Issuing of permits for exportation of forestry products	• Forest Act (Cap 19:05) • No section on cooperation with other agencies
9.Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) – Different Units	Home Affairs	• Border control through conducting anti-smuggling checks and patrols to ensure goods are imported and exported in compliance with Customs and other laws • Issuing anti-theft police clearances for vehicles crossing the border • General law enforcement to maintain peace, public order and security	• Public Order and Security Act (Cap 11:17) • Police Act (Cap 11:10) • Protected Places and Areas Act (Cap 11:12) • Criminal Law Codification Act

		• Protection of the border posts as they are designated protected areas	
10. Department of Immigration Control	Home Affairs	• Controlling the movement of people into and out of Zimbabwe through passport and visa control	• Immigration Act (Cap 4:02)
11. Central Intelligence Organisation	President's Department	• Collecting and using intelligence on people and other traffic crossing the border for state security	• No specific law in particular
12. Zimbabwe National Army	Defence	• Safeguarding the border for national security against invasion or insurgency	• Defence Act (Cap 11:02)

Source: Shayanewako (2013:9, 10).

The ways in which these agencies coordinate in conducting their activities is key to effective border control management. Indeed, all these agents are supposed to work together through coordinated efforts to ensure law and order at Beitbridge. However, border security and facilitating, managing and ensuring the smooth flow of trade has generally been given low priority in Africa and Zimbabwe is no exception. The study by Shayanewako (2013) reveals that a lack of coordination and disjointed operations across state agencies has proven to be a major problem in compromising effective border control management in Zimbabwe. The country's border security falls far short of desired expectations such that all sorts of illicit activities occur along the border and have proven costly for the country. An extensive research by the Zimbabwe National Chamber of Commerce (ZNCC) has revealed that smuggling, ineffective border controls and lax customs and security systems at Beitbridge Border Post cost Zimbabwe an estimated US$80 million monthly, translating to almost US$1 billion annually (*The Herald*, *15 July 2020).* The negligence of border security and poor, or lack of, management of the Beitbridge border has also largely contributed to the prevalence of cross-border crimes.

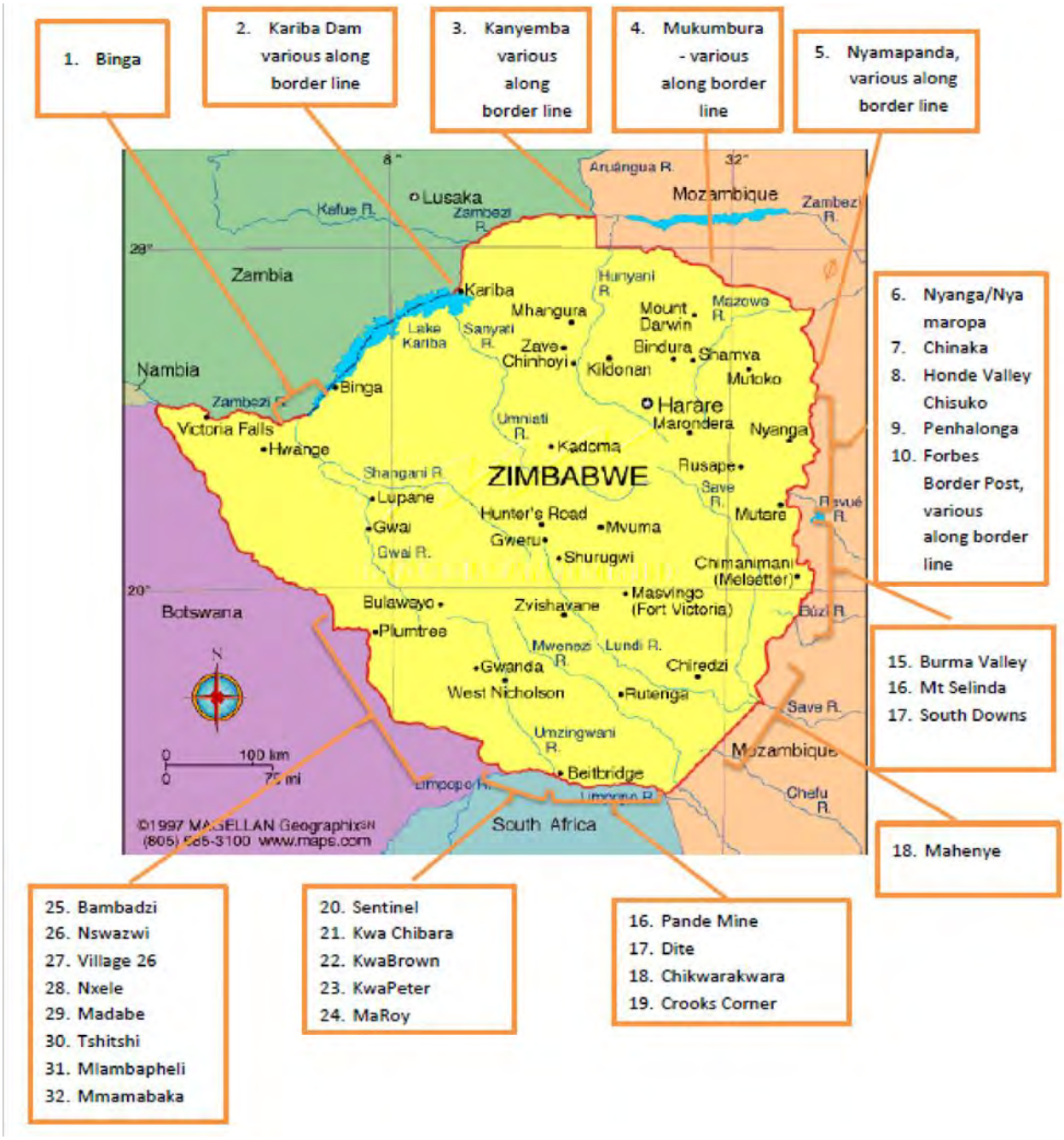
Economic factors also affect the stability of borders and capacity of border management systems. In some cases, highly developed and highly underdeveloped states exist in the same regional vicinity, often bordering one another and the resulting economic asymmetries sometimes generate

cross-border tensions and encourage illicit market flows (Duggan, 2008: 12). This is especially true for Zimbabwe and South Africa with regards to the Beitbridge border post. There is a marked difference between the character and strength of the economies in South Africa and Zimbabwe, which contributes to the overall performance of border agencies, leading to differentiated levels of performance. The clearing procedures on the South African side are thus more efficient compared to the Zimbabwean side due to South Africa. The Zimbabwean side is besieged by the prevalence of dilapidated infrastructure, chronic delays and corruption – the low salaries of civil servants on the Zimbabwean side promote corruption and other illegal activities.

For instance, members of the Zimbabwe National Army (ZNA) deployed to maintain or at times to restore order at the Beitbridge Border Post abuse their station and have become a law unto themselves as soldiers demanding bribes from travelers and motorists have become the norm, with several ZNA members having been arrested on various criminal allegations of robbery and even murder (*The Standard*, 4 August, 2019). This is in line with the claim made by Naim (2005) that borders, if not properly managed, not only create profitable opportunities for smuggling networks but – in the end – weaken states by limiting their ability to curb the global networks that hurt their economies, corrupt their politics, and undermine their institutions. The high level of porosity at Beitbridge, facilitated by acts of omission or commission by border agencies themselves, has enabled the smuggling of people, drugs and goods such as cars, secondhand clothes, cigarettes and livestock. This lack of effective border management also encourages the trafficking of precious minerals such as gold as well as poached ivory, which continues to contribute to the downfall of the Zimbabwean economy.

Figure 4.1 shows all the informal/undesignated border crossing points for Zimbabwe and helps in identifying why Zimbabwe's border security system has failed to combat illicit activities along its borders. The map shows nine informal cross border points around Beitbridge border post alone, reflecting the complexity of the matter. Elasticity of border control management in terms of border security exists because of the presence of both formal border posts and a shifting array of informal exit-entry points. Some informal traders take advantage of BCM capacity constraints by making use of these irregular crossing points to get their goods into the country as they know these points are normally devoid of any state agencies. For the Zimbabwean state, it is simply impossible to try and control all the informal crossing points, requiring not only resources but political will as well.

Figure 4.1: Porosity of Zimbabwe Borders



Source: Naim (2005).

The leakages have existed for some time now, and they will continue to do so until concrete solutions are put in place to curb the problem. This would require aggregated efforts from all border agencies involved to act according to BCM best practices, as well as a pro-active approach to ensure that undesignated routes are closed down. This would also mean that state officials

working at Zimbabwe's borders must be paid adequately so that there would be less temptation to engage in corrupt practices.

In the meantime, to counter smuggling, ZIMRA revealed recently that it was now focusing on implementing a new US$10 million tax and revenue management system, which is funded by the African Development Bank (*The Herald*, 15 July 2020). An important recommendation put forward by the ZNCC in its own research, to avoid the massive loss of border-generated revenue, is "the need to digitise all ZIMRA operations at the borders and move to paperless operations. The immigration online system has long collapsed resulting in manual clearance of travelers although hence the need to adopt technological tools for reconnaissance and patrol of the frontier to curb illicit activities" (*The Herald*, 15 July 2020). As a result, for effective border management, governments (including the Zimbabwean government) are being encouraged to develop more appropriate policies and legislation, and to bring about the administrative structures, operational systems and human resource capacity necessary to respond effectively to diverse challenges around cross-border flows of both goods and people (EAC, 2020).

4.3 World Trade Organisation and Trade Facilitation

Trade facilitation is increasingly central to movement of commodities across borders as both states and international organisations strive to maximise economic benefits emanating from the ease and free movement of people and goods across national boundries. It plays a pivotal role in the reduction of bureaucratic red-tape and therefore in increasing the efficiencies and effectiveness of border control management more broadly. According to the World Trade Organisation (WTO), trade facilitation is defined as follows: "The simplification and harmonisation of international trade procedures where trade procedures are the activities, practices and formalities involved in collecting, presenting, communicating and processing data required for the movement of goods in international trade." (WTO, 1998 n Grainger 2008: 17). Put in another way, trade facilitation focuses on how procedures and controls governing the movement of goods across national borders can be improved to reduce associated costs and burdens as well as maximise efficiency, while safeguarding legitimate regulatory objectives (Grainger, 2007). Thus, the efficient cross-border movement of commodities is at the heart of trade facilitation as it seeks to reduce the time that goods spend at border posts, facilitate the clearance of goods (and therefore, people) and, simultaneously, keep borders secure.

Before trade facilitation became prominent and a key component of international trade, as part of wider neo-liberal restructuring, nations mostly employed protectionist policies, in order to shield their home industries from external competition – this entailed making use of non-tariff barriers to trade. Decisions about when to impose non-tariff barriers were influenced by the political alliances of a country and the overall availability of goods and services locally and internationally. As Tarver (2019) notes, non-tariff barriers are ways to restrict trade using trade barriers in a form other than a tariff. In this regard, they include quotas, embargoes, sanctions, and levies. As part of their political or economic strategies, countries frequently used non-tariff barriers to restrict the amount of trade they conducted with other countries. In this way, these barriers are "policy measures other than ordinary customs tariffs that can potentially have an economic effect on international trade in goods, changing quantities traded, or prices or both" (UNCTAD 2010: 99). While such barriers still exist, nation-states now focus primarily on the possible benefits of increased cooperation and trade liberalisation. This has influenced modern practices as far as international trade is concerned, including the WTO's Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA).

The World Customs Organisation points out that: "The TFA … presents a great opportunity for modernising customs administrations, boosting international trade, and strengthening the economic competitiveness of countries across the globe. With such positive indicators, the WCO is seizing the opportunity to play a meaningful role in the speedy implementation of the provisions contained in the TFA" (WCO, 2014). Thus, around the globe, states are striving to organise and harmonise their trade policies and border control management systems, with uniformity and simplification of procedures seen as key in boosting international trade. Trade facilitation, including through the TFA, is concerned with expeditiously moving goods across borders, based on best practices from around the world. As the WCO further points out: "Developing countries are expected to save around 325 billion US dollars a year, including the acceleration of their integration into global value chains, and according to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), developed countries stand to gain 10% cut in their trade costs, including easier trade flows for their economic operators" (WCO, 2014:10). It is claimed that the financial gains from trade facilitation are immense as the amount saved per year can be channelled to other activities focusing on national economic and social development. Developing states in particular are encouraged to partake in the TFA as estimates show that the full implementation of the TFA could reduce trade costs by an average of 14.3% and boost global trade by up to US$1

trillion per year, with the biggest gains in the poorest countries (WCO, 2014:10). As a developing nation, Zimbabwe ratified the agreement on the 17 October 2018.

The WCO's call for customs administrations worldwide to reform and modernise their functions is designed to enhance revenue collections while also facilitating international trade (Mafurutu, 2015:2). The WCO has been working closely with the WTO since 2005 on this global initiative and its officials have been participating in all WTO programmes (including by way of technical assistance) in this regard. Although these two independent organisations have different roles in international trade, they cooperate on a number of areas such as market access, customs valuation, rules of origin and trade facilitation (Foltea, 2012). The WTO provides the platform and the WCO provides the tools, complementing each other's work tremendously. To facilitate the necessary reforms and modernisation of border functionality, the TFA agreement acknowledges the difficulties faced by developing and least developed countries in realising their trade facilitation goals; hence, it sets out workable terms for implementation as per agreement with all country-members. Most of the technical assistance provided by the WCO has been in the area of customs valuation and trade facilitation.

The TFA, which only applies to members of the WTO that have accepted it, entered into force on 22 February 2017 after two thirds of its 164 members had ratified the agreement. Developing countries will only apply certain provisions of the TFA which they are capable of implementing from the date of the TFA's entry into force, and these commitments are listed under Category A of the agreement. Category B comprises a list that members will implement after a transitional period following the entry into force of the TFA. Category C contains provisions that a developing country commits or bookmarks for implementation on a date after the transition period. The table below (Table 4.2) shows Zimbabwe's Category A commitments that it has chosen to implement under the TFA.

Table 4.2: Zimbabwe's Category A Commitments

Article 6.1 General Disciplines on Fees and Charges Imposed on or in Connection with Importation and Exportation
Article 6.2 Specific Disciplines on Fees and Charges for Customs Processing Imposed on or in Connection with Importation and Exportation
Article 7.3 Separation of Release from Final Determination of Customs Duties, Taxes, Fees and Charges
Article 8.1 Border Agency Cooperation
Article 9 Movement of Goods Intended for Import under Customs Control
Article 10.3 Use of International Standards
Article 10.5 Preshipment Inspection
Article 10.6 Use of Customs Brokers
Article 10.7 Common Border Procedures and Uniform Documentation Requirements
Article 10.8 Rejected Goods
Article 10.9 Temporary Admission of Goods and Inward and Outward Processing
Article 12 Customs Cooperation

Source: Chidede (2018).

These are the provisions from the Agreement on Trade Facilitation that Zimbabwe has pledged to implement immediately after ratifying the agreement in 2018. Improvements on border post service delivery were expected, but major problems at the country's border posts remain despite

progress made so far in implementation of these particular provisions. For instance, corruption, delays, and high tariffs on customs duties are still rampant on Zimbabwe's borders. Travellers and traders, including informal cross border traders, still complain of misfeasance arising from maladministration at the border posts, notably at the Beitbridge border post. These issues point to the existence of structural and political problems limiting the effectiveness of trade facilitation mechanisms in Zimbabwe and, until such problems are addressed, efficiency at border control will remain.

4.4 Regional Economic Communities (RECs)

This section looks at regional economic communities (RECs) of which Zimbabwe is a part, to establish the intersectionality between these RECS and informal cross border trade for Zimbabwe. This enables a deeper examination of the opportunities and challenges experienced by Zimbabwe's ICBTs. Zimbabwe is a member of several economic blocs in the region, such as the Common Market of Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and the South African Development Community (SADC). COMESA covers a larger area of operation and overlaps into SADC's overall territory, which makes both blocks operational in SADC. The two blocs have begun processes of harmonising their policies and programmes, which will ultimately boost trade regionally. In doing so, the blocs have taken the position of informal cross border traders into consideration.

4.4.1 Tripartite Free Trade Area

As states are realising the benefits of trade facilitation and liberalisation, trading blocs are being formed world over, and Africa is no exception. The Tripartite Free Trade Area (TFTA) is the largest regional economic grouping in Africa at the moment and comprises of COMESA, the East African Community (EAC) and SADC. In this respect, SADC (2020) states that the emergence of the TFTA began in 2008, after which the heads of states and governments in COMESA, EAC and SADC met and signed a declaration launching negotiations for the establishment of the COMESA-EAC-SADC Free Trade Area (FTA) on 12 June 2011, with the aim of achieving economic growth through for example the reduction of (tariff and non-tariff) barriers to trade. The Tripartite Free Trade Area (tripartite because it involves three blocs) was officially launched in June 2015 and is built on three pillars: market integration, industrial development, and infrastructural development. Article 5 of the Agreement provides for the formation of the free trade area, which includes but it

is not limited to the removal of all trade barriers, liberalisation of trade services and cooperation on customs matters, all to ensure the pursuance of trade facilitation. The TFTA is set to assist in harmonising programmes and policies of the three blocs with the ultimate aim of an African-wide Economic Community (Pearson, 2011; SADC, 2012).

Although progress has been slow, when fully implemented, the TFTA is expected to see an increase in intra-continental trade through its trade facilitation processes. According to Juma and Mangeni (2015), "the TFTA will result in a much larger market whose free flow of goods and services will help to maintain economic growth at 6–7% per year. At this rate the combined GDP of Africa is projected to reach [US]$29 trillion by 2050, which would be equal to the current combined GDP of the EU and the US. With additional policies, such growth will contribute significantly to spreading prosperity and reducing poverty." The TFTA, which has now been signed by 29 African countries (including Zimbabwe), acknowledges the significance of informal traders, with its preamble stating: "Mindful of the important role of micro, small and medium enterprises in job creation and income generation for the majority of the people in the Tripartite Member/Partner States…" Despite being a high-level agreement seeking to improve intra-Africa international trade, the importance of the inclusion of informal traders in its legal framework should not be taken lightly. By extension, this refers to the prevalence of ICBTs in the spatial area of TFTA. Although there are inherent difficulties in measuring the sheer scale of informal cross border trade, a study carried out by Nshimbe and Moyo (2017) estimated that it amounted to 30 to 40% of total intra-regional trade in the SADC region and 40% in the COMESA region.

4.4.2 Trade Facilitation within COMESA

COMESA originated initially as a Preferential Trade Area (PTA) in 1982 (Khandelwal, 2004) and has 19 members at present. Most of these countries participate in a free trade area, and they "are members of more than one such organisation" (Kritzinger-van Niekerk and Moreira, 2002). At the heart of creating free trade areas and RECs (or regional blocs) is the desire to boost intra-African trade, through the smoother flow of goods across borders and heightened predictability of trade within the continent. COMESA, just like the TFTA, seeks to eliminate non-tariff barriers to increase cooperation and trading activities among its members.

The agreement establishing COMESA Protocol on Free Movement is an important document. The agreement was adopted in Kinshasa in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in 1998 and

Zimbabwe is party to the agreement. Article 2 of the Protocol states that "[c]itizens can move freely, [and] are free to take up offer of employment in any member state." In addition, it expressly addresses issues of informal traders as it states that citizens from member countries "are free to pursue activities in self-employment, [and] set up and manage undertakings in any of the member states." This regional protocol thus takes into consideration the activities of informal traders and bestows upon them the right to venture into all kinds of legal entrepreneurship in member states. Thus, their inherent right to operate is enshrined in this protocol, including the right of informal cross border traders to buy and sell their wares in different member states without hindrance.

Trade liberalisation, coordination and harmonisation of border procedures are critical components of COMESA's trade facilitation mandate, as this is calculated to enhance intra-African trade activities, leading to the maximisation of economic benefits on a regional scale. Juma and Mangeni (2015) state that, between 2004 and 2014, trade within the COMESA region grew from US$8 billion to US$22 billion. While this is quite a remarkable achievement for COMESA, significant harmonisation of trade facilitation procedures in the region are still necessary. In Article 14(1) of the protocol, member-states vow to design and standardise their trade and customs documentation and information in accordance with internationally accepted standards, considering the use of electronic data processing systems, thereby improving their border control procedures. As a way to reinforce such noble ideas, COMESA launched its Customs Union at its 13th Summit of Heads of State and Governments in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe on 8 June 2009. At this meeting: "The member states agreed to submit their lists of products with rates that are the same as those under the Common External Tariffs (CET) (that is, the rates of 0, 10 and 25 percent), as well as their lists of sensitive products where current national rates would be aligned to the CET rates" (Othieno and Shenyikwa, 2011: 6). A Common External Tariff refers to a uniform tariff rate adopted by members of a customs union or common market (in this case, COMESA) with regards to imports from countries outside the market.

Though both TFTA and COMESA are important initiatives, intra-African trade remains very low compared to other regions. In this respect, "[i]ntra-African trade, defined as the average of intra-African exports and imports, was around 2% during the period 2015–2017, while comparative figures for America, Asia, Europe and Oceania were, respectively, 47%, 61%, 67% and 7%"

(UNCTAD, 2019). This reflects how Africa is failing to take advantage of its available commodity market, with a population of well over a billion people.

Why the volume of intra-Africa trade remains low is not entirely clear, but it does in part reflect a lack of prioritisation of regional integration as member-states do not seem passionate about implementing agreed policies and strategies that increase intra-African trade. Efforts to liberalise and harmonise trade practices and procedures for effective trade facilitation are also hampered by inadequate implementation mechanisms, reliance on foreign donor aid and lack of political will by some African states within these RECs (Khandelwal, 2004; Verhaeghe and Woolfrey, 2017). Dependence on external funds has undermined Africa's development trajectory by removing the need for African nations to develop through regional cooperation and exchange.

Another reason that could explain why some states drag their feet in fully implementing free trade areas and integrate trade facilitation measures is that some countries still rely heavily on duties levied on imports as an important source of national revenue – since member-countries will no longer be subject to import taxes, these states will need to think of ways to cover the gap left by the reduced tax revenue. A study by Bown and Irwin (2019) on taxes on international trade as a percentage of government revenue shows that it is primarily developing countries that rely on taxes on imports to fund their governments; and this may explain why Zimbabwe levies high taxes on goods brought into the country compared to most states in the region. This variation across states in Africa in terms of levels of import-protectionism through tariffs has been a long-term tendency. For instance, nearly two decades ago, Khandelwal (2004: 20) noted that countries like Angola, Burundi, Comoros, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mauritius, Madagascar, Seychelles, Sudan, and Zimbabwe had significantly higher protection than most states in the region. The different stages of socio-economic development between nations within a particular region may also contribute to uneven commitments to moving away from the use of import tariffs. Overall, uneven and different levels of development and industrialisation, and varying import and export ratios (i.e. trade balances), across countries greatly influence the level of openness and (or) protectionism a country would likely pursue. Hence, even if there are international and regional commitments as part of an economic bloc, a particular nation may focus primarily on its own national economic gains as opposed to the collective gains of the trading bloc or blocs.

4.4.3 Simplified Trade Regime within COMESA

According to Kieck (2010:3), "border management is becoming more complex" due to the "multiplicity of state agencies involved in that management." As advancements in border control management continuously take place, simplified trade procedures for small-scale traders have also been developed to make international trade easier and manageable as they often lack the financial capacity to deal with high transaction costs involved in international trade. The idea of simplifying trade procedures for ICBTs is not a brainchild of SADC or COMESA. Rather, Article VIII of the World Trade Organisation's GATT Agreement and provisions of the Revised Kyoto Convention for the Simplification and Harmonisation of Customs Procedures, which came into effect in 2006, calls for the development and implementation of simplified trade procedures for eligible small-scale traders (EU, 2017: 2). In the case of the simplified trade regime (STR) for COMESA, there is "a cross border reform programme which has the main goal of transforming and mainstreaming informal cross border trade into formal trade" (Muqayi, 2015: 10). The formalisation of the informal sector entails bringing informal traders into the formal economy, which can be done through simplifying legislation and regulations governing trade as well as educating traders on formal procedures (Koroma et al., 2017). Specific STRs must be established between specific nations in COMESA. For instance, Malawi launched a COMESA STR with Zambia in May 2010 and with Zimbabwe in August 2012 and, in this regard, the borders involved in STR transactions are Nyamanda-Mwanza for Malawi and Zimbabwe and Mwami-Mchinji for Malawi and Zambia. Zimbabwe has established a STR with Zambia in which there is a "common list of goods that ICBTs can trade across their respective borders duty-free up to US$1,000. ICBTs clear these goods with customs with little paperwork and for low processing fees" (Nshimbi, 2016). Through pursuing the STR initiative, COMESA has embraced a realist approach towards informality as it seeks to face the problem head-on and appreciate the importance of informal cross border trade in creating job opportunities. Simultaneously, it acknowledges the challenges ICBTs face, which include "corruption, where officials solicit bribes in order to smuggle goods, sexual abuse and confiscation of goods", among other problems (Laub, 2016).

In reforming cross-border trade mechanisms and procedures, the STRs seek to integrate ICBTs into the formal economy and thereby enhance their activities. It formally recognises ICBTs as central to regional economies, STRs allow these traders to trade openly on a commercial basis using a simplified form for the declaration of goods. This is also meant to allow these traders to

trade "mainly on duty-free basis within a reasonably high threshold of goods worth US$1,000 or less without the need for a Certificate of Origin" (FAO, 2017: 17). However, this requires a widespread educational campaign as, currently, informal cross-border traders know very little of the information desks that assist traders with self-declaration or information regarding the STRs more broadly, perhaps owing to their low education levels and the fact that they are unregistered, according to research undertaken in 2018 by Global Economic Governance Africa (GEGAfrica, 2018: 16). The research further revealed that traders had little knowledge of the rules of origin within the COMESA and SADC regions.

4.4.4 Simplified Trade Regime in SADC and its Effects on ICBTs

Despite the STR's likely positive contribution within COMESA member states, Ijeoma and Ntuli (2017: 69) argue that it remains a challenge that traders are not able necessarily to access the SADC markets because the STRs are restricted to COMESA countries. Not all SADC members are COMESA members and this has created a discord within the region's trade facilitation efforts. A simplified trade regime has not yet been established for SADC despite ongoing consultations that began in 2017. Horn and Tawanda (2017: 1) note that: "Unlike the EAC [East African Community] bloc where the STR has been implemented fully and the informal economy is enjoying its benefits, the mechanism is yet to be adopted by SADC countries." Some SADC members like Zimbabwe and Zambia, as members of COMESA as well, have implemented the STR while others countries within SADC which are not COMESA members (like South Africa) have not yet adopted it. In the year 2020, SADC (2020: 47) revealed that it is finalising the development of a simplified trade regime framework aimed at reducing barriers to trade by simplifying customs procedures and processes. However, the lengthy period of the consultations and negotiations reflects, to some extent, the lack of commitment of the bloc to regional cooperation. In this regard, problems can be foreseen even if South Africa were to come on board regarding establishing STRs. The possibility of one with Zimbabwe for the Beitbridge border post might be unlikely since Zimbabwe relies heavily on duty as an important source of revenue collection, the government may be hesitant to implement the STR at the Beitbridge post where it collects a large chuck of its revenue.

At the same time, a SADC STR stance would go a long way in making Zimbabwe's ICBTs' cross-border activities easier and more efficient, especially at Beitbridge border post where Peberdy et al. (2015: 9) estimate that 50.1% of those crossing the border are informal traders. As Beitbridge

is the busiest inland crossing in sub-Saharan Africa and handles approximately 30,000 people and at least 500 trucks on a daily basis, STR between South Africa and Zimbabwe would be crucial in making trade mutually beneficial for all parties involved (Muchagoneyi, 2020). The STR would formalise informal cross border activities and the Zimbabwean government would also benefit from increased revenue collection – as most informal cross border traders will lose the motive and resolve to engage in unorthodox activities in importing and exporting their goods. The finalisation of a SADC STR would ease trade for cross border traders, create more employment; increase incomes and, in the process, increase food security and ultimately reduce poverty levels among traders, who are predominantly women and youth (GEGAfrica, 2018). As it finalises its STR, SADC should prioritise harmonising it with those of COMESA and the EAC. Currently, informal cross border trade "categorically and characteristically involves, under invoicing, under reporting, tax evasion," and other unethical practices which the STR seeks to eliminate (Njiwa, 2013). Thus, the STR would encourage informal cross border traders to conduct their cross-border transactions openly and transparently. In essence, the STR is a mechanism that can work to close loopholes in border control management.

4.5 Existing Systems and Controls for ICBTs

In the meantime, there are mechanisms in place which seek to regulate the activities of ICBTs at Zimbabwe's border posts (including Beitbridge) and to generate revenue from their activities, including software systems and presumptive taxes.

4.5.1 Software Systems in Zimbabwean Border Control Management

Customs law in Zimbabwe draws upon the "Customs and Excise Act CAP 23:02 and Statutory Instrument 154 of 2001" (Bonga 2014:6). These are the bedrocks in which all customs activities are embedded, as they lay out all the fundamental rules ranging from powers of officers, importation and exportation of goods, warehousing, ordinary duties, anti-dumping duties and countervailing duties among other issues. In order to import and export goods to and from Zimbabwe, certain documentation is required. Bonga (2014:11) explicitly states the long list of required documentation when clearing commercial importation at Zimbabwean borders. The documentation list includes: Bill of Entry (Form 21), Suppliers Invoice, Export or Transit Bill of Entry from the country of exportation (where applicable), Bill of Lading, Freight Statements, Insurance Statement, Original Permit, Cargo Manifests and Value Declaration forms. These

requirements are very complicated and complex especially for informal cross-border traders, and they cannot satisfy all these requirements. This drives them towards illicit measures as they try to avoid such stringent requirements. This is the matter which the STR seeks to address, to bridge the gap and combat most of the challenges associated with the complex system for commercial clearance (a system yet to be implemented at Beitbridge border post).

Important at all border posts is also the issue of Customs Risk Management (CRiM), which has its origins in paragraph 1(C) of the 1994 General Agreement on Trade and Tariff Article VIII (on Fees and Formalities Connected with Importation and Exportation). The World Customs Organisation (WCO, 2010) defines risk management as the "[s]ystematic application of management policies, procedures and practices to the activities of documenting, communicating, consulting, establishing the context, and identifying, analysing, evaluating, treating, monitoring and reviewing risk." Hence, it relates to the coordination of activities as undertaken by customs administrations in directing and controlling any form of customs related risks and threats (Marufu, 2015:10). This principle is mostly concerned with which goods or persons should be examined and to what extent, and thus it is aimed at improving controls while reducing clearing times. Therefore, it is essential to analyse how ZIMRA, as the chief revenue collection agent as well as a key state apparatus in border control management in Zimbabwe has implemented CRiM in relation to border control management. The effective implementation of CRiM can lead to efficient working of border posts while inconsistent practices will compromise this efficiency.

Various software and systems are used globally to improve border control management and, beyond any reasonable doubt, technology is at the heart of trade facilitation protocols. A number of systems like UNCTAD Automated System for Customs Data (ASYCUDA) and Facilitation of Procedures for Administration, Commerce and Transport (CEFACT-UNECE) are prominent in border control management as customs software packages used to expedite customs clearances. These systems have been developed to make clearance easier and faster, to avoid delays at the borders, and hence they seek to ensure facilitation and control by authorities simultaneously. Zimbabwe makes use of these software systems (particularly ASYCUDA), but border control management remains comparatively weak. Regulation 38(1) of Zimbabwe's Customs Law makes use of the phrase like "no importation without entry" which advocates for entry of every imported commodity into the ASYCUDA system and, consequently, payment of duty for such goods.

Section 39 goes on to explain when, where and how duty is to be paid. However, a number of allegations and reports have been levelled against border control agents for deliberately dodging use of formal channels for rent seeking purposes, thereby disrupting the efficiency of the system (Zhou and Madhekeni, 2013; ZIMCODD, 2016). As highlighted above, the few examples of the Zimbabwe regulations cited show that the procedures and codes of conduct are set out clearly (on what is to be done when and how), but challenges arise when it comes to implementation.

So far, there has been three unique generations of the ASYCUDA system, starting from ASYCUDA version 2.7 to ASYCUDA ++ and now ASYCUDA World. Zimbabwe boasts of using the latest version of the ASYCUDA system. Clearly, Zimbabwe is keeping abreast with the times in terms of updating its customs software. However, these systems do not operate autonomous of human agents. The relevant information needs to be entered into the system and processed by ZIMRA officers at the border posts. Where corruption exists, the manipulation and avoidance of procedures takes place. This is not only a result of the activities of border control agents but also informal cross border traders. The ICBTs may try to improvise on their methods of avoiding and evading taxes so that they can maximise economic benefits of their trading activities. This might take place at formal borders, or might involve resorting to using unmanned and unofficial routes to get their goods into the country. This distorts trade statistics, as the data contained in the software system does not account for all goods imported and exported in a fiscal year. This should not be taken to mean that this is the hallmark of informal cross border trade, as some ICBTs do pay taxes at the Beitbridge border post.

4.5.2 Presumptive Tax Policy in Zimbabwe

Presumptive tax is an important strategic way of collecting revenue especially from informal sectors of the economy where transparency of recorded trade transactions is problematic. Sackin (2013) defines presumptive tax as a periodic tax, based on absolute figures or on percentages, which is levied on certain specified business operations. Through ZIMRA, the Zimbabwean government introduced the Presumptive Tax Policy (Act, Chapter 23:06) in 2005 to facilitate improvements in revenue collection. According to ZIMRA (2019): “Presumptive Tax legislation was introduced to broaden the revenue base in view of the increase in informal business activities. Selected sectors of the economy were targeted to ensure the participation of informal businesses in tax payment in line with experiences of other developing countries.” Cross border traders who

import commercial goods into Zimbabwe are required to pay a presumptive tax equal to 10% of the 'value for duty purposes' (VDP) of the commercial goods. The only exception are cases where the trader is registered with ZIMRA for income tax purposes and is up to date with submission of tax returns and payment of all taxes due (ZIMRA, 2019). The presumptive tax targets mainly informal businesses which includes small-scale traders such as cross-border traders, furniture makers and other micro- or small-scale manufacturers, transport operators, small-scale miners, restaurant operators, and flea-market and hair salon operators among others. It is levied on the revenue of the small-scale business and involves the use of indirect means to ascertain the tax liability of the informal business (Balaam, 2011).

Presumptive taxation can be used for any tax that is normally based on accounting records – income tax, turnover tax, and value-added tax (VAT) or sales tax – although it is commonly used for income tax. In Zimbabwe, informal traders (and others) are required to pay presumptive tax every quarter on the tenth day of January, April, July and October (ZIMRA, 2011). The presumptive tax is charged against business operators who do not keep proper accounts, which means that it is not a final tax but is collected in advance in the event the operator defaults on their tax obligations (Tapera, 2014).

Slemroad et al. (1994) found that presumptive tax was vital in situations where tax authorities found it complicated to determine, authenticate and supervise traders' activities. Therefore, presumptive tax ensures that the government generates revenue from trading activities, even where concrete evidence cannot be obtained for all or any trade transactions. In such cases, there is considerable uncertainty and controversy regarding validation of the actual transactions and precise income of a trader. Madzipa (2017) concludes that presumptive taxes hence "serves a purpose of restraining tax evasion in addition to expanding the tax base." Thus, informal traders become taxpayers, contributing to national revenue.

However, presumptive tax is not being paid by all ICBTs (and informal traders more widely) in Zimbabwe and this is due to several reasons. Due to the lack of transparency in Zimbabwe's tax system, taxpayers in general are not satisfied with how their taxes are used and hence they are not strongly motivated to comply with tax laws. Corruption and misuse of public funds is rampant resulting in lack of transparency and accountability of public funds, which therefore may discourage traders from complying. Zhou and Madhekeni (2013: 51) hence state that, "ZIMRA

has over the years been dogged with allegations of revenue leakage through smuggling, bribery, under-invoicing and under-declarations at its border posts." The government has not been very successful in closing revenue collection loopholes and this also explains why tax evasion has remained rife in the country. Of course, failures or limitations of presumptive tax operations are not peculiar to Zimbabwe, but are a universal problem, in part due to "capacity constraints" (Prichard, 2009).

Madzipa (2017: 21) argues that tax administrations themselves can be powerful collective actors able to block reform, or sabotage its implementation. Corruption, the selective application of regulations, and low tax morale have made the administration of taxation difficult. As well, in echoing and reiterating the more universal point made by Prichard (2009), Hove and Hove (2016) highlight that "[w]hat aggravates the situation in Zimbabwe is that the ZIMRA lacks capacity to fully administer its tax management systems." Thus, the system itself, which is charged to collect revenue, has internal problems crippling effective revenue collection. Of course, the sheer growth and development of the informal sector (including of informal cross border trade) over the last 2 decades creates additional logistical problems for the tax authorities to collect taxes (for example, presumptive tax) in Zimbabwe. In order to improve on this situation and avert ongoing pitfalls, Madzipa (2017: 21) concludes that there is need for inclusive consultations with those in the informal economy before policy formulation and implementation to assess policy feasibility in enhancing tax revenue collection including at Zimbabwe's official border posts.

4.6 Challenges at the Beitbridge Border Post

The Beitbridge border post is "the busiest regional transit link in Southern and Eastern Africa" (SAIIA, 2014: 69) and, as a gateway, connects indirectly a number of countries in the region. As the busiest inland port in sub-Saharan Africa, about 15,000 people move through the Beitbridge border post daily, with the figures rising to 30,000 during peak periods (Muleya, 2018). In November 2012, Zimbabwe and South Africa signed a Memorandum of Understanding to completely scrap visa requirements as part of a broader regional integration process within the SADC region. This has made it much easier for Zimbabwean and South African citizens to move between the two countries as only a passport is required for crossing the border. In 2018, the Zimbabwean government awarded the Zimborders consortium a tender to upgrade the Beitbridge Border Post, and President Emmerson Mnangagwa officiated at the ground-breaking ceremony –

but work on this project has since been abandoned (*Bulawayo24 News*, 15 October 2020). The Beitbridge border post faces a host of administrative problems centred on archaic infrastructure which has rendered the facility insecure and vulnerable to security breaches, particularly during the busy festive season. At the same time, Beitbridge is of paramount importance to the Zimbabwean government as it accounts for 60% of the country's revenue, raising a total of between USD4 million and USD5 million daily (*NewsDay*, 10 July 2019). In this context, this section details the diverse range of challenges existing at the Beitbridge border post in terms of overall border control management.

4.6.1 Border Porosity

Through globalisation and the ever-increasing inter-connectedness of nation-states, the movement of people and goods has increased tremendously. The question of how to control such vast movements has remained problematic in Africa, as African states usually have limited resources to ensure effective border management and control. As Okumu (2011: 1) states, "[i]ncreases in volumes of cross-border trading and movements of people from their countries of origin in search of greener pastures elsewhere [and for other reasons] have put enormous pressure on border control systems." This is certainly the case with Zimbabwe and the Beitbridge border post more specifically, as people seek greener pastures in South Africa. As Shayanewako (2013:14) points out: "There is no formal institutional framework [in Zimbabwe] to coordinate and oversee border control efficiency and, as a result, individual border agencies do what they see fit which at times may contribute to inefficiencies. The absence of an effective hierarchical authority overseeing these agencies to make sure their operations are well coordinated and knitting well into each other to close the loopholes rampant at Beitbridge border post has contributed to the border's porosity." This porosity exists at official border posts but also occurs on a wider basis because of illegal entry and exit points. As Zimbabwe's economy continues to experience systemic problems, not only do the number of ICBTs using legal and illegal entry points continue to remain stable if not increase – so do the number of desperate Zimbabweans seeking to access medical treatment and cheap basic commodities and drugs from South Africa.

For instance, based on first-hand observations at the Beitbridge border post, Munyanyi (2015: 106) highlights that "[p]eople could be seen entering and leaving the border without proper searches or declarations. Small-scale traders would pass through with goods, especially bread, several times a

day without completing customs formalities." In addition, the South African-Zimbabwe border (where Beitbridge is located) stretches for 225 kilometres and has numerous breach points, with only a solid rainy season preventing widespread crossing of the Limpopo River (*Bulawayo24 News*, 15 October 2020). The Zimbabwean police and army have forward bases along the border, but border communities are fuelling cross-border illicit activities rather than assisting the security forces. Taking advantage of this situation, cars stolen from South Africa during the dry season (when the Limpopo River level is low) have been reported to cross.

Although there have been several efforts to make the border more secure, border-jumping and smuggling remain. Even the fence on the South African side of the Limpopo River, separating South Africa and Zimbabwe, is notoriously porous. A new R37 million (South African Rand), 40-kilometre fence under construction meant to reduce the border's porosity has been repeatedly vandalised bringing the project to a halt (*SABC News*, 16 April 2020). Even during the lockdown caused by the global Covid-19 pandemic, many Zimbabweans are still risking their lives by crossing into South Africa through illegal means – as Beitbridge remained closed to informal traders. South African law enforcement authorities reported that they had arrested over 1,900 people crossing into South Africa from Zimbabwe in September 2020 alone as they tried to smuggle goods through the damaged Beitbridge border fence (*Eye Witness News*, 2 October 2020). Because of the border's porosity, revenue continues to be lost through smuggling, revenue that is crucial to Zimbabwe's development. Smugglers or informal couriers known as *malaitshas* who are notorious for tax evasion and smuggling continue to generate personal income because of the border's porousness. It remains to be seen what new measures Zimbabwe and South Africa enact that could effectively reduce the permeability of the border.

4.6.2 Crime

As a result of the permeability of the post, Beitbridge town and the border post itself have become a crime hotbed. Criminal syndicates aware of the BCM system's shortcomings have made it their business to maximise benefits from these loopholes. The economic challenges prevailing in the country, resulting in high rates of unemployment, contribute to Beitbridge's status as a hive of crime. After dark, the area between Musina town (on the South African side of the border) and the border has become a gangster's paradise with truck drivers being robbed at knifepoint of their cell phones, goods and all available cash (Planting, 2020). This has become so common that victims

do not even bother reporting these incidents of theft. Crime syndicates terrorise informal traders as well, who thus have to contend with risking their lives in order to survive as traders. It is particularly difficult for women, as different forms of sexual harassment and abuse are common along the border at Beitbridge. These sexual harassment claims are supported by the Zimbabwe Women's Bureau (ZWB) which reports that 30% of its members have reported cases of sexual harassment, gender-based violence and emotional abuse at the border post, and that the perpetrators are usually border control officers. The actual number is estimated to be much higher, as most victims of sexual abuse decide to remain silent as they fear stigmatisation and the destruction of their marriages and families (*ZW News*, 5 November 2020). Women make up the bulk of informal cross border traders and are forced to engage in transactional sex to obtain accommodation, transport or even to get across the border. On the South African side, there have been reports of South African soldiers allowing illegal migrants to find their way into South Africa in exchange for sex, while gangs known as *gumagumas* (wielding machetes and knives) rob and rape women passing through these unofficial channels.

4.6.3 Delays

The Beitbridge border is notorious for chronic delays in clearing procedures. Travellers at times spend up to eight hours at the border to be cleared and this becomes even longer during the festive season. A study carried out by Kwanisai et al. (2014: 8) revealed that: "Respondents indicated that the immigration and customs officials are few; are very slow in serving people; spend a lot of time on their phones; harass travellers; do not control the queues; take a lot of time when changing shifts." Cumbersome systems, procedures, inadequate resources and staff complement, lack of coordination between domestic and international border authorities, inadequate infrastructure, too many check and payment points, and duplication of processes and procedures, are some of the main causes of the delays. These delays come at a heavy price too as they are very costly to traders. The SAIIA (2014: 70) case study reveals that "over 400 trucks cross the Beitbridge border post every day … [and] each delay is estimated to cost $400 per truck per day."

Key reasons for ongoing delays at Beitbridge include the shortage of manpower at the post. The chief customs agent, ZIMRA, has on several occasions brought to light the issues around shortage of staff. According to ZIMRA officials, the ZIMRA Beitbridge office has a staff complement of 307 workers against a requirement of 526, which has largely contributed to delays and the "rising

cases of extortion and rent-seeking behaviour" (*The Herald*, 14 June 2018). The Beitbridge post is also affected by power outages and the South African side faces the same challenge. The frequent power outages disrupt the computer-based automated systems at the post. There are standby generators but these often fail due to fuel shortages, which contributes to delays and prevents effective service delivery at the Beitbridge border post. Delays undercut the efficient movement of goods and people despite the Zimbabwean government's adoption of effective trade facilitation protocols.

Such delays affect formal traders and ICBTs alike as they spend considerable time at the border post which, in turn, increases their chances of losing their goods and money to criminals operating at the Beitbridge border post day and night. Some of these traders also deal in perishable goods which makes the delays very costly. These delays create avenues for illicit activities and corruption as cross border traders and other users opt to bribe their way through the border post to avoid prolonged delays. The lack of harmonisation of border policies between South Africa and Zimbabwe fuels delays as well. Both ZIMRA and the South African Revenue Services (SARS) utilise a system called Automated Cargo Management (ACM), which harmonises border control procedures to reduce delays and allow single clearance from both sides. Approval is issued to the driver when the load has been cleared by SARS and ZIMRA, but effective and complete harmonisation of border control systems remains elusive. This process remains slow and rigid as the drivers have to join the same queue alongside buses and taxis. This results in delays since there is only a single-lane road going in either direction at the Beitbridge border post.

Due to the delays, some traders from regional countries who traditionally use Zimbabwe's Beitbridge port of entry for transit have decided to use a new bridge across the Zambezi River at Kazungula, in Botswana, as a way of avoiding long queues and corrupt customs' officials at Beitbridge – they then travel to South Africa via Botswana. Hence, potential users of the Beitbridge border post end up resorting to other avenues even if the route tends to be longer. This diversion costs Zimbabweans millions of dollars in transit and business incomes. Kwanisai (2014) points out that, at Beitbridge, there are "unclear procedures and too many stops. Even the officials do not know who is responsible for what." This reflects the sheer level of confusion at the Beitbridge border post which results in numerous inefficiencies stemming from excessive documentation requirements for traders, inefficient border-crossing procedures, and lack of transparency and

predictability. In this context, finding alternative routes may make financial sense for ICBTs and others, as the same problems do not presently exist in crossing the border into Botswana.

4.6.4 Corruption

Delays inevitably lead to corruption which, just as crime, has become common place at the Beitbridge border post. Border agencies, especially customs officials, engage in massive organised tax evasion resulting in massive losses to the already cash-strapped Zimbabwe government. According to Planting (2020), the ever-rising scale of corruption entails, for example, clearing agents collaborating with traffic police to advance trucks to the front of the queue at the border gates for a facilitation fee. Meanwhile, a Zimbabwean parliamentary delegation set up to investigate illicit activities at Beitbridge witnessed corruption first-hand when they came face-to-face with uniformed police and soldiers helping unlawful immigrants and illegal cross-border shoppers to cross (Bulawayo24 News, 25 October 2020). Although there can be no excuse for engaging in corruption, many would point towards the low salaries of civil servants, Zimbabwe's unstable currency and extreme inflation as central to fuelling corruption amongst border control and management agencies.

Chêne (2009) argues more generally that public officials will engage in corrupt activities if the incentive of corruption is higher than that of their normal salary. Most border authorities at Beitbridge openly extort money from stranded travellers in order to expedite services and ZIMRA officials have not been an exception. This explains why corruption is still rampant at Beitbridge border post despite the use, as noted earlier, of the ASYCUDA system at Beitbridge's border post. This is a significant set-back to the Zimbabwean government considering the funding invested in the procurement of the most modern systems of border control management such as ASCYUDA World. As a result, the efforts by the government to make border control management effective ends up in vain due to artificial loopholes created by disgruntled civil servants.

4.6.5 Poor Infrastructure and Lack of Resources

Though a significant portion of Zimbabwe's national revenue is generated at Beitbridge border post, the post has been neglected for a long time in terms of dilapidated infrastructure, both hard and soft. Khumalo (2014: 846) refers to this matter more widely, as "[i]n general, border posts within the SADC region are in need of proper and adequate resourcing in order to upgrade their aging and poorly maintained infrastructure." The infrastructure at Beitbridge border post was

constructed decades ago before the significant rise of international trade and informal cross border trade in Zimbabwe. The post was never equipped to handle the volume of cross border trade that intensified at the start of the new millennium as the Zimbabwe economy entered into a period of deep decline. The buildings are in serious need of a facelift, there is a shortage of accommodation for border staff and there is no running water in the buildings on a regular basis.

While the latest version of the ASYCUDA system has been installed on the Zimbabwean side, inadequacies in technological infrastructure and support systems for the computers compatible with this modern software are prevalent. There are also constant systems failures and disruptions at the Beitbridge post. Munyanyi (2015: 106) observes that: "The computer systems in use for duty calculation experienced outages twice in an eight-hour shift. ….. [B]ecause of inadequate hardware and network systems, their systems were not functioning properly." Munyanyi (2015: 106) adds that the ZIMRA baggage scanners that operate at both entry and exit counters have been malfunctioning since 2009 and minimal effort has been made to restore them to functionality. This problem still existed at the time this study was conducted. The implication is that officials have to resort to physical searching of baggage, which explains why border delays are an inescapable feature at the Beitbridge border post. Further, cameras are an important and integral part of any system for surveillance as far as border control management is concerned. The Beitbridge post only had CCTV cameras installed in 2016 and, several months later, the CCTV camera that surveyed a key area used by smugglers and illegal immigrants was not longer functional. Prior to this, this particular camera had led to the arrest of over 15 people for smuggling offences, including police, immigration officers, ZIMRA officials and soldiers (*The Herald*, 23 March, 2017). Technological innovation at Beitbridge therefore stands far short of what is required.

4.6.6 Covid-19 Pandemic

The global Covid-19 pandemic has slowed down operations at Beitbridge. However, as the rest of the world starts to reopen their economies, the post is grappling to deal with the reduced staff and the health protocols to reduce the spread of the virus. For 2020, Planting (2020) highlights the following: "Currently, it is taking the average truck 72 hours or three days just to get to the front of the queue, and another day to be processed through South African and Zimbabwean customs, four days in total." Consequently, drivers spend three days in the queue with little or no sleep fearing that, if they sleep, they will lose their place in the queue. The Beitbridge post is expected

to be opened on the 1 December 2020 for all forms of business (including ICBTs) and it is going to be a challenge as tens of thousands of people may want to cross the border upon reopening. However, as of 10 September 2021, all land borders still remain closed except for transportation of goods and for returning residents (Victoria Falls Guide, 2021). If not handled correctly, this could very well lead to a humanitarian crisis as the SADC region braces itself for a second wave of Covid-19. This is made worse by the lack of sanitation facilities, including dilapidated toilets and ablution facilities. There is also no running water for the frequent washing of hands as Covid-19 safety protocol measures demand. Lack of proper waiting spaces will also make social distancing quite difficult if not impossible. According to Muleya (2020): "In anticipation of a post-corona revival, Zimbabwe's Department of Immigration is pushing for the formal opening of two new border posts with South Africa: one at Shashe, 120km west of Beitbridge Town; and another at Tshituripasi, 125km east of the border town." It remains to be seen if South Africa opens these extra points; certainly, these new ports would go a long way in easing congestion at Beitbridge especially during the time of Covid-19.

4.7 Conclusion

In a nutshell, trade facilitation has become a leading concept in international trade and states everywhere are preoccupied with the harmonisation of their trade policies and border control systems with generally agreed and recognized practices from around the world. Though the process has been slow, Zimbabwe has been harmonising its policies with international systems and procedures. The intricate relationship between border control management and informal cross border trade in Zimbabwe reflects the controversies and conundrums associated with the full implementation of international trade systems, particularly those that consider the plight of small traders. Despite being regarded as the gateway to the rest of the African continent, the Beitbridge border post is besieged with vast challenges such as corruption, delays, poor implementation of trade facilitation procedures, lack of cooperation between and among different departments just to mention a few which are limiting efficiency. Hence a lot still needs to be done to improve border control management in Zimbabwe. Most worryingly, the government has not done anything meaningful to promote the activities of informal cross border traders passing through the Beitbridge border post. The STR initiative has not yet been implemented at the Beitbridge border post which means the cost of importing and exporting have generally remained very high for informal cross border in a decade of economic decay, hence this thesis would urge the governments

involved to quickly implement such initiative to help small traders and also formalize their trading activities which has massive benefits for both the traders and government.

CHAPTER FIVE: BORDER CONTROL MANAGEMENT AT BEITBRIDGE: PRACTICES AND CHALLENGES

5.1 Introduction

This chapter will focus on the proceedings taking place at Beitbridge border post, evaluating how such activities enhance or undermine border control management in Zimbabwe. To effectively analyse these activities, this chapter will start by looking at the infrastructure, systems and equipment (non-human) used in border control management, excavating their contribution to border control management at Beitbridge border post. Through useful points of view from border control agents and other important experts in the field this chapter added new perspectives to the understanding of border control challenges, introducing identity crisis and human decay factor to explain dimensions of corruption. A key argument sustained by the findings show that, despite the introduction of some of the key procedures of trade facilitation, border control management at Beitbridge remains problematic because of implementation failures. Last but not least, the chapter will discuss some externalities arising due to poor border control management affecting not only the Beitbridge border post but the entire Beitbridge as a community.

5.2 Infrastructure and Technology

Infrastructure is a very essential component of border control management as it relates to the operational space and buildings essential to house border control agents and border users. This includes the presence of wide and defined roads for traffic going in both directions, and enough parking space for haulage trucks, buses, and cars to avoid blocking the road for vehicles that should be in transit. There should also be sufficient space where people can stand or sit comfortably while waiting to be served, as well as well-labelled pathways and offices for arrivals and those leaving the country to avoid unnecessary commotion. A spacious place, with clear signs directing traffic (both vehicles and people) is the first step which enhances easy navigation of borders. Observations made during this study reveal that Beitbridge border post is now very old and is far too small and congested to handle the increased volume of border movements. As a ZIMRA official (R4) said, the border post was “designed and modeled to suit trade occurring three decades ago, but as globalisation and trade liberation continues to increase, the same has not happened in relation with the infrastructure at this border post.”

The Beitbridge border post comprises of a very small area with old-fashioned buildings; there are no demarcated roads for traffic going in opposite directions and all vehicles use the same road, which leads to a chaotic situation. Moreover, the infrastructure at the post is not well maintained and, indeed, is dilapidated; although, at the time of this research, renovations and touch ups were observed. The roads are very narrow with numerous potholes. During peak hours, there is significant overcrowding of people and uncontrolled movements outside the offices, though the queues can be orderly inside the buildings. This situation complicates effective manning and monitoring of activities transpiring at the border post, creating a haven for bogus agents to crook and steal from desperate travelers awaiting clearance. It is even difficult to identify and distinguish between which people are leaving the country and those who are entering from South Africa. Therefore, the issue of space and the organisation of such spaces at the border post is a major challenge inhibiting border control management. Another ZIMRA official (R16) brings this to the fore by arguing that the "Zimbabwean government admits that the Beitbridge border post administration does not have adequate capacity to handle large volumes of human and vehicular traffic that pass through the border post during peak periods." In this regard, significant revenue is collected from the border post but it seems that little is channeled to resuscitate the post's infrastructure.

However, a member of the office of the president working at the Beitbridge post (R21) suggested otherwise. Though it was true that not much infrastructural development had taken place at the actual border post, he argued that it was not true to conclude that there was no development at all. The government had built separate warehouses to store goods safely, while larger car parks had been constructed a few kilometres from the main post where imported vehicles could be parked pending clearance – thus decongesting the main border post. All the clearance-related paperwork for imported vehicles was conducted in these car parks which have their own offices as well, although they remain part and parcel of the main Beitbridge porder post. Resultantly, this meant that those people importing vehicles would not be in the same queues as other travelers, making the process faster than if they had to use the same offices. Therefore, R21 concluded that infrastructural development and expansion was taking place, as not all border facilities are in the immediate vicinity of the actual border post. This particular interviewee was the sole dissenter on such matters, as other members of the president's office had views consistent with current ZIMRA officials.

While all this may be true and should be taken into consideration, this has not done much to solve the long queues and delays at the Beitbridge border post. A former ZIMRA agent (R10) was certainly more critical, claiming that a typical rural school in Zimbabwe (which are known to be under-resourced) is more expansive than the Beitbridge post. To expose the deplorable conditions at the Beitbridge border post, a ZIMRA official (R17) pointed out that, "inadequate dilapidated toilets and ablution facilities, poor waiting space, and absence of shopping facilities on the Zimbabwean side of the border also show how outdated the border post is." Hence, not only does the border post lack infrastructure for border control management specifically, as critical facilities for public use such as decent washrooms and a shop for purchasing food are not available.

With the steep rise in cross border movements, modern technology is critical in making customs clearance fast and accurate. The Beitbridge border post, which is essentially considered as the gateway to other countries in the region, needs serious improvement in terms of technology. The role played by 'technical actants' still remains minimal. As reflected upon by a former ZIMRA agent (R2): "Most things are done manually at the Beitbridge border post; trucks, buses and people coming into the country are mostly subjected to physical searching. This is time consuming; one does not need to be an expert to deduce why clearance is very slow at this border post culminating in rampant delays and long queues, besides the issue of processing times." It is difficult to be thorough in undertaking physical searches for long queues of people, cars or trucks, as this process is very tedious. Lack of adequate technology at the border post undermines the secureness of the border itself, making it prone to criminality of all kinds.

Most interviewees, though perhaps articulating it differently, echoed these sentiments in noting that there is considerable human effort required at the Beitbridge border post, which limits and compromises trade facilitation in its comprehensive sense. Despite the improvements and upgrading of modern automated systems at border control in Zimbabwe (like adopting the latest version ASYCUDA), the proceedings at Beitbridge remains heavily dependent on human labour independent of computerised sub-systems. For example, an official from the office of the President (R12) points out that "the computers used in border control management are old and they can be slow, or at times [they] freeze causing unnecessary disruptions, let alone [the problems of] power outages and internet going down at critical times." This results in a breakdown of the socio-technological sub-systems at the border – there is a reliance on unwarranted human effort and

physical work, thereby distorting the principal mechanisms of harmonisation of procedures that are largely dependent on technological innovation.

Lack of technological innovation is undoubtedly a major setback to border control management in Zimbabwe. For instance, cameras can be useful for surveillance such that movements of all people and vehicles can be easily monitored. Even the work of border control officials can be put under scrutiny, as they also may be restrained from engaging in corrupt practices by the very idea that someone could be watching them through CCTV (ZIMRA agent, R15). The introduction of this single innovation could prove to be a solution to a number of challenges faced at Beitbridge border post. Hence, bridging the dichotomy between the social and the technical at Beitbridge border post could alter the prospects of trade for Zimbabwe. In this respect, R9 (a lecturer from the University of Zimbawe) points out that: "It is important that all ports of entry be under constant surveillance to ensure that illegal activities are detected and combated on our borders. With a functional CCTV, it is easy to identify criminal syndicates when they are monitored on computer-aided surveillance". Even if criminal elements are not immediately caught, officials can play back the footage in order to identify and track such criminals, and to carefully strategise on how they can tactfully engage the situation. Thus, with such a system, borders can be carefully monitored and illicit practices (by both border officials and those crossing the border) curtailed. Potentially, then, cameras have a dual effect in helping to make the Beitbridge border more secure while, at the same time, ensuring that border officials conduct themselves as per formal regulations and procedures.

Undoubtedly, the major contrast in border control systems between developed and developing nations hinges on the technological aspects. For instance, in developed countries, many processes are computerised (including the scanning of passports, humans and baggage) and this facilitates efficiency and effectiveness in border control systems. Inversely, at Beitbridge border post, there are significant limitations in terms of the availability of technological resources. Yet, even when available, these resources may be dysfunctional. Hence, scanners for checking baggage are sometimes out of service due to power cuts or malfunctioning. There are scanners for baggage existing at both entry and exit counters at Beitbridge. However, this research discovered that the scanners were not functioning at times such that officials resorted to physical searching. A ZIMRA agent (R16) pointed out that "[w]e are now used to the system and have to be prepared to work manually; …. we [officials at Beitbridge] generate billions of dollars annually but the

government finds it hard to buy [and maintain] effective equipment we need to use in conducting our work." Likewise, another ZIMRA agent (R17) emphasised: "It's very hard because at times we just have to do physical searches because the baggage scanner will not be working well. Hence at times you get tired and the end result is you look at faces, those you think are innocent you let them pass; those with criminal faces…. [you] search more". This facilitates the promotion of smuggling and related criminal activities – in fact, these thrive at Beitbridge border post as criminal syndicates wait for the most opportune times to strike knowing when the system is at its weakest (i.e. dysfunctional).

A ZIMRA officer (R17) spoke more broadly about the troubles faced because of technological deficiencies at Beitbridge. In an exasperated tone, he said: "We are tired of this situation; we have filed reports so many times to have this problem resolved but the government is taking it lightly, so then why should I break myself? This is not my problem. Our government trivialises the importance of technological systems which is why we still have piles of paper documents in the 21st century." These technological problems are systemic and exist over the long-term, according to current and former ZIMRA officials. The situation has not improved in absolute terms according to these officials and, even in relative terms, there are claims that other countries in the region are showing improvements in technological-based border control management. For instance, Mozambique had very weak socio-technological systems at its borders in the 1990s, but these have improved subsequently (Expert in border control management, R14). Thus, R13 (a ZIMRA officer) reiterated the need to further automate processes to ensure the smoother clearance of vehicular and human traffic.

Current technological infrastructure and systems, including hardware and network sub-systems, are deteriorating at Beitbridge due to deficient maintenance. The challenges associated with border-control technological advancement are complex due to constraints in financial resources required to procure modern advanced technology. Alone, Zimbabwe is unable to address these problems, with financial assistance likely required. Thus, R20 from the office of the president stated that "there is need for high level dialogue and commitment with the WCO [World Customs Organisation] for intervention, to help with procurement of modern state of the art equipment, which is compatible with current customs procedures and systems; otherwise, on its own, Zimbabwe will require decades if not centuries to fully realise such technological abilities to

capacitate proper and effective border control management." This lack of adequate technology, according to a ZIMRA official (R1), is the main reason why there is significant duplication of work in the system, especially from security agents. It is difficult to determine what or who has been checked and searched at the border and what and who has not, or even at times to demarcate the boundaries of the responsibilities of the different security officers. Of course, this leads to a pronounced level of disorder. Another ZIMRA official (R8) points out that "[i]t is not just a matter of us using the latest version of ASYCUDA World, but it requires a capable internet connectivity …we do not have that." Internet disruptions lead to system disruptions, causing unnecessary delays in clearance of people and goods as border agents have to wait for connectivity to come back, or try to address clearance problems while travellers endure lengthening queues. The end result is that agents sometimes have to manually conduct clearance, thereby complicating border control management at Beitbridge.

As with the question of infrastructure, one member of the office of the president (R21) had contrary views about technology. He argued that border control management at Beitbridge was near perfect in terms of the socio-technological systems, with the only challenge arising from border porosity at the unmanned areas and unofficial border crossings where smuggling of goods take place. He disputed all the allegations of inadequate border control mechanisms and insisted that, Beitbridge used the most recent version of ASYCUDA, it matched the global standard for recording trade and movements across national boundaries. There is no doubt that Zimbabwe has tried to embrace trade facilitation mechanisms and that the government is determined to meet international standards. But this research points to a compromised BCM system at Beitbridge, therefore undermining the credibility of the views of this member of the president's office – which likely entailed seeking to legitimise the ruling party.

5.3 Coordination among Border Control Agencies

The upsurge in informal activities in the Zimbabwean context has resulted in the need to enhance border control management systems in the country. Various interviewees noted that the government had taken various important strides in trying to meet international standards and ease trade and movement through systems upgrades. For instance, a ZIMRA agent (R19) spoke about the government's commitment to enhancing trade facilitation and expediting trade flows through simplification of importation and exportation. Despite these efforts, though, complicated and

inefficient customs and security procedures remain a major setback along the border at Beitbridge. In order to have a more comprehensive understanding of the key problems and bottlenecks at Beitbridge, including in relating to customs procedures, one of the experts interviewed (R5, a lecturer at the University of Zimbabwe) indicated the necessity of first considering the anatomy of individual state agencies and, in particular, how they operate and interconnect with each other. As an expert in border control management (R14) put it, "to begin with, intra-border control agency coordination is critical for each agency involved in border control as it determines if there is smooth flow of procedures and activities within a department horizontally, with the subsequent objective of trying to analyse how such issues can in any away affect inter agency coordination." The central argument here is that if any particular agency cannot effectively manage and coordinate its own activities as an entity, then it would not be expected to find a smooth flow within the entire border control system at Beitbridge, which requires the complex interaction of multiple agencies. In fact, failure to ensure inter-agency coordination would likely impact negatively on intra-agency performance.

Analysing the internal harmony within an individual agency at the Beitbridge border post is in line with the theoretical underpinnings of this study (the ANT), which emphasises the importance of 'following the actors' as a central technique in understanding how systems function. In this way, it also becomes easier to excavate the structural weaknesses and strengths within a system which have a bearing on the efficiency and effectiveness of the system in question. Many interviewees who work for ZIMRA in border control management pointed out that there was a smooth flow of activities within their organisation. The hierarchical structure was well defined and there were commendable levels of coordination and communication from ZIMRA's head office and regional office and to the actual officers on the ground at Beitbridge border post, following standardised organisational protocols. Any problems which existed tended to be reduced by the ZIMRA officials to technological failures. For instance, a major setback pointed out by one ZIMRA agent (R4) was that the computers used by ZIMRA had become very old, sometimes were slow or they froze, and generally malfunctioned. This resulted in processual delays and compromised intra-organisation processes. Thus, the role played by actants (as defined in chapter two) is equally important as the roles of human actors, including with reference to the clearing of goods across the Beitbridge border post. Members in the office of the president agreed with ZIMRA officials in this respect.

However, as articulated by one of the members of the president's office (R20), "[w]here the issue becomes complicated in Zimbabwean border control management is that there is no legal framework in the country setting up a coordinating authority." Accordingly, this results in confusion and disjointed practices which explains why border control management has largely remained troublesome. There is no overarching authority in border control management; rather, all agencies just run their activities as they deem fit. For instance, a ZIMRA agent (R13) claimed that "I don't care what the police or soldiers are doing, I just concentrate on my work, even if I knew what they were doing, I have no authority to command them." Thus, having one agency overseeing and supervising the entire border operations would not only create accountability but also lead to coordinated activities.

Disjointed operations create gaps in border control management at Beitbridge, and this fuels border porosity as the different agencies do not closely align their activities with others in ensuring a cohesive set of state agency practices at the border post. Each agency is mainly focused on carrying out its own specific mandate and departmental goals with little concern about what is transpiring elsewhere. This makes it easy for smuggling activities, as traders take advantage of these structural weaknesses. This even weakens national security, as borders act as the primary line of state defence. A ZIMRA agent (R16) buttressed this position in arguing the following: "Border control management is fragmented at all border posts in Zimbabwe; border control agents at the border post include security technocrats, ZIMRA, national parks, health, agriculture etc. And all these departments work with different targets with regards to border control management without proper integration… [V]arious stakeholders found at the border post act in their own realm; …until the government finds a niche to connect and unify these departments to work together for a common and unified goal, border control management will remain in shambles".

Overall, this means that state border officials tend to look outwards when it comes to identifying and explaining the many challenges they face with BCM at Beitbridge – in externalising the challenges, state agents perceived the sources of challenges as rooted either in technological weaknesses or weaknesses in inter-agency coordination, and not with any weaknesses on their part. This raises all sorts of issues pertaining to trade facilitation and the movement of ICBTs through the Beitbridge post.

5.4 Staffing Problems

The fact that the Beitbridge border post is the busiest inland port in the region emphasises the significance of having sufficient staff to make processes of border control management efficient and effective, especially in the Zimbabwean context where automation and computerisation remain deficient. However, this does not seem to be the case, as manpower shortages are clearly contributing to the massive and rampant delays associated with the Beitbridge border post (R18, an expert from from University of Zimbabwe). More staff are deployed to the border post during peak days, usually on important public holidays or during the festive season, but still this has failed to curtail delays at Beitbridge. During the period in which the observation for this study was conducted, there were many people seen at the border post who had spent more than two days waiting to be cleared. As well, I had to leave the border post without conducting any interviews with border control agents as they said they had no time for that, since they were working tirelessly to ensure they clear the long queues which had accumulated. They did agree, though, that some people had waited for two days to be cleared.

A ZIMRA official (13) pointed out that, in terms of shortage of employees, ZIMRA itself is not to blame as it takes its directives from the government through its parent ministry. ZIMRA has made pleas to hire more people for the purposes of border control management, but the central government has failed to respond positively (R14, an expert in border control management). Even if ZIMRA makes a request for more employees, it is subject to government approval which controls the scale of its budget allocation. This shortage of staff at the border post has been a long-term problem (Ngarachu, 2019; Poverello, 2012). Even the Information Centre at the border post is mostly empty and unoccupied, with no or insufficient staff. Many travellers find it extremely difficult to navigate the disorganised space making up the border control area (especially new users), and this contributes to border delays. During my observations, I noticed that some people would join wrong queue, causing unnecessary frustrations especially when the queues were very long during peak hours. This also resulted in some people asking touts (see later) for information, and this process did not always end well – as some travellers lost their properties while others were charged exorbitantly for services they could get directly from officials just because they did not know where to go. Havoc and chaos at the border post seemed to be the order of the day at Beitbridge.

There are also concerns about the quality of staff at Beitbridge**.** A former ZIMRA agent (R2) notes that "ZIMRA officials, of course, apply the skills they learnt but they get too comfortable; for instance, it would help if they constantly checked how CRiM systems are being implemented in other countries, so as to improve their own work." Retraining of staff has shortfalls, as does ZIMRA's overall failure (as claimed by some interviewees) of not continually learning more about new border control processes in other countries (R16, ZIMRA official). The issue of refresher courses is central to addressing this problem: "Refresher courses [for Beitbridge staff] are poorly managed, the government is not serious about them. People can choose not to attend and can walk away from it" (R8, ZIMRA official). There is no standardisation of procedures in terms of conducting refresher courses and there seems to be tolerance of absenteeism. This undercuts the significance and status of border control work. As expressed by a former ZIMRA officer (R2), "all parties involved in this issue, the government, ZIMRA and their workers trivialise the consequence of their ignorance. … [N]o matter how sophisticated the system of CRiM can be globally, with this kind of administration, border control management will not even show signs of improvement. … CRiM does not work on its own outside a system of human beings, its effectiveness is determined by how it has be implemented and put to practice". According to R10 (a former ZIMRA agent), this is part and parcel of the overall maladministration of ZIMRA's operations at Beitbridge, by which "we end up collecting less [revenue] than if we had taken some time to improve our systems through learning from others."

5.5 Trade Facilitation Implementation

Trade facilitation is now generally accepted as the hallmark of efficiency and effective international trade, but it is not necessarily implemented properly or fully in the Zimbabwean context. Despite the introduction of some of the key procedures of trade facilitation, border control management at Beitbridge remains problematic because of implementation failures, as suggested already in the previous two sections. This was claimed by all former and current ZIMRA officials. Thus, modern trade facilitation procedures have shaped the practices of border control officials at Beitbridge in terms of both their presence and absence. Shortcomings in implementation reflect both acts of omission (or negligence) and acts of commission (or corruption), and these problems speak to broader questions around the lack of embeddedness of trade facilitation procedures in the institutional practices of border control systems and institutions at Beitbridge. Officials sometimes

end up taking shortcuts and bending the rules as work pressure can be overwhelming and greater than what they can manage if they sought to stick fast to procedures.

Respondent 7 (a ZIMRA official) made reference to the Beitbridge Efficiency Management System (BBEMS), which is a TRIPATITE agreement between COMESA, East African Community (EAC) and SADC developed in 2009. He explained that, under this arrangement, the main objectives are to increase efficiency, reduce waiting times, lower transaction costs among other things. He added that, "[t]he overall objective of the BBEMS programme is to enhance regional economic integration through improved trade performance and trade facilitation along the North South Corridor." This is a critical form of intervention focusing on Beitbridge which hints to the failures of Zimbabwe to develop and implement trade facilitation protocols to the satisfaction of countries in the region which recognise the importance of Beitbridge in regional trade.

The regional bodies became involved to assist in resolving inefficiencies at the Beitbridge border post. Though the trade facilitation protocols provided by WCO are quite comprehensive, they need to be translated into effective practices. There is no guarantee that this takes place. In the case of Beitbridge, an additional regionalised mechanism was devised and put in place to rescue the deficient border control management system at this crucial border post. Despite this, BCM at Beitbridge remains weak. This points to the compromised character of the border control management system rather than inadequate policies, protocols and procedures. The policies and protocols for BCM and trade facilitation are well documented, and even adopted by Zimbabwe, but these have largely remained on paper rather than appearing in practice – or they have been applied unevenly. I highlight this further with reference to customs risk management and the single window concept of border processing.

5.5.1 Customs Risk Management

A system of Customs Risk Management (CRiM) exists at the Beitbridge border post. This system is, as a former ZIMRA agent (R10) put it, "basically about coordination of activities undertaken by us [customs administrations] in directing and controlling any form of customs related risks and threats." It entails the use of procedures and practices which provide border control managers with required information and details to handle cross-border cargo and goods that present risks, with risks implying the chance of some kind of loss for BCM (R8, a ZIMRA official). Possibilities of

loss may occur due to malpractices and all kinds of errors. ZIMRA has sought to increase its gathering of information and intensity of inspection to curb such losses. Thus, proper implementation of CRIM can make borders more secure, and result in effective and efficient movement of goods. This is a difficult process at Beitbridge though. As one ZIMRA agent (R16) pointed out, "there is no Standalone Customs Risk Management Unit at the border Beitbridge border post, thus customs officials in liaison with a manager had to ensure risks are dealt with." For this reason, there was near unanimous agreement amongst past and present ZIMRA officials that the in-practice operation of the CRiM system was failing and that more effort and resources were needed to create a standalone CRiM department. In terms of successful implemention of CRiM, a ZIMRA agent (R17) spoke of the need for a pre-defined structured risk cycle. As it stands, however, there is no such well-defined system in place and hence ZIMRA officials do not follow any defined procedure, with CRiM being implemented haphazardly. The inadequate implementation of a CRiM is associated with chaos, delays and long queues, the exact outcomes experienced at Beitbridge border post.

Another ZIMRA agent (R17) claimed that "[t]here exists a wide gap between written procedures and their actual implementation, a structural weakness both cross border traders [including ICBTs] and border control officials are profiteering from." In this study of Beitbridge, it was discovered that, quite often, informal cross border traders did not declare all their goods, they processed their goods through the use of informal agents, they were involved in under-invoicing schemes with the connivance of officials, or they used unofficial border posts. Such practices, though perhaps benefiting ICBTs and border officials, place the whole system in jeopardy. They contribute immensely in making the border less secure and dangerous, even allowing harmful products to easily find their way into the country. The way in which the risk management unit is operating is deeply worrisome, with one ZIMRA agent (R19) exclaiming that "thank God, terrorism is not a big threat in Southern Africa, otherwise it would have been a disaster."

Undoubtedly, an important cause of ineffectual customs risk management at Beitbridge border post is government's failure to adequately allocate funds for the establishment of a standalone unit which specifically oversees CRiM in liaison with the rest of the customs officials. Unless this crucial management system is bolstered by financing from the national budget informality taking place at the Beitbridge border post will not end anytime soon (Member of president's office, R20).

It has a series of negative feedback effects, including the amount of duty and other taxes generated through border control management, as the "proper implementation of customs risk management regime and customs intelligence is the basis for effective …. revenue collection" (ZIMRA agent, R1), as well as the smooth flow of goods and services across the border (former ZIMRA agent, R2).

5.5.2 Single Window Concept

World customs policies and procedures continue to improve in trying to make border control management more efficient and effective. This includes the single window concept, a customs procedure which allows international traders to submit their documentation online, such as commercial invoices, certificates of origin and import or export trade declarations (ZIMRA official, R1). This is undertaken prior to crossing the border to minimise the amount of time spent at the border post in submitting and processing paperwork. ZIMRA had adopted this concept and was working on implementing the single window system at Beitbridge and elsewhere at the time of the research. The same ZIMRA official estimated that, if this system is implemented, more than half of the work would be done beforehand and border control agents would only have to verify the goods to check if these correspond with the submitted documentation. If automation becomes part of the verification process as well, then the process would be even faster, but plans were underway to make it operational as soon as practical.

However, in as much as this process is important, it is a process that is limited in scope as it applies mostly to formal traders who will be crossing with their goods to and from Zimbabwe. The system may not apply to ICBTs who do not have the capacity to prepare the documentation prior to embarking on a cross-border trip. Plus, it would entail entering valid certification details, as a registered trader, to complete the process. Despite this limitation, in making clearance faster for formal traders, the system might indirectly benefit informal traders as well because of reduced pressure of customs work at the border, hence expediting their cross-border movements. However, it would be wise to also include modalities that cater for ICBTs so that they can clear their goods before arriving at the border.

5.6 Pervasive Corruption

In the context of the numerous challenges at the Beitbridge border post detailed so far, one of the most intractable problems at the post has been the issue of corruption. Corruption at

the Beitbridge border cannot be examined solitarily as an independent phenomenon. Rather, when untying the "Gordian knot", it becomes clear that corruption is not a root problem – it is a major symptom of the systemic problems embedded in the entire immigration system. The corrupt dealings perpetrated by border control agents at the Beitbridge border post is a sign of the malpractices and moral decadent deep seated within ZIMRA at an organization level. While corruption has been mentioned already, it is necessary to offer a fuller examination because of its centrality to Beitbridge border management and its relationship to the practices of ICBTs.

A former University of Zimbabwe lecturer and expert on cross border trade (R6) suggests that corruption at the Beitbridge border post is a clear result of "the Zimbabwean political squabbles which have had spillover effects on the economy affecting all facets of society: the poor, the rich and the affluent alike." The argument here is that the political economy of Zimbabwe more broadly has been marked for an extended period by economic decline and democratic deficiencies, with Zimbabweans of all walks of life having to negotiate their way through life in the most advantageous way possible. Border control officials are no exception to this as they have experienced economic distress and desperation alongside other civil servants in Zimbabwe. In part, this explains the risks they are prepared to take in consciously avoiding formal protocols and procedures when and where possible. As a former ZIMRA agent (R2) outlined it: "Zimbabwe is not united as a people; we lack the sense of identity as a people, and we lack that aspect of putting Zimbabwe first. This is a national issue, we need to address the crisis of identity we have first before anything else."

This 'identity crisis' becomes manifest in multiple ways, including institutionally within public agencies such as ZIMRA where officials engage in self-interested malpractices and corruption, with their activities sometimes being marked by nepotism and favoritism (including tribalism) at the cost of efficiency. One ZIMRA agent (R13) thus claimed that: "Corruption is … entrenched on a tribal basis. For instance, if an official sees that a person is from their place of origin, then they may be treated with favoritism and this has to stop. We have to start identifying as a nation rather than on tribal grounds or [because of our] selfish nature where our families come first –as this is detrimental to national development". This nationwide corruption has become "a national brand" (former ZIMRA agent, R2), as if officials and ordinary citizens almost expect to get by through dishonest and corrupt acts.

In tracing the problem within ZIMRA, it is necessary to consider even the process of recruitment into the agency. Recruitment practices are problematic, as they reflect – at least at times – moral decadence and self-centeredness within the revenue authority at an organisational level. According to some of those interviewed, the system of recruitment within ZIMRA is marred with nepotism, bribery and other unscrupulous practices (ZIMRA official, R1) which undercuts legitimate competition and meritocracy. This includes bribery for successful recruitment, being related through kinship networks to someone influential in the agency or perhaps having strong political ties outside of the agency.

Once successfully recruited and working within ZIMRA at Beitbridge border post, a variety of temptations arise in the light of inadequate remuneration at a time of economic decline. In this respect, a ZIMRA official (R15) raises a troubling question: "How do you expect a low-level official to live and abide by the rules, follow procedures when he is not well fed, yet those at the top are involved in high level corruption, stealing and misusing organisational funds yet they are paid even more, a practice well known to be associated with this organisation?" He freely offered the only logical conclusion from his perspective: "A sane low-level official will do likewise, we all have families to take care of and yet we have lesser benefits and salary than our superiors who even do the untold." While low-level ZIMRA officers, including at Beitbridge, engage in corrupt practices, the justification for this also comes from the fact that the chief perpetrators of corruption are high-ranking agency officers, whose malpractices have knock-on effects at lower levels (R14, Expert in border control management).

An intriguing example of corruption is what happens after traders have gone through Beitbridge and are on their onward journey in Zimbabwe. Goods may have been inspected at the border post by ZIMRA officials on entry into the country but, in less than a 100 kilometre radius from the border, there is another group of ZIMRA officials involved in "enforcement" – these latter officials repeat the process of checking goods and they may overrule or reject any decisions made by their counterparts at the borderthe process that would have been done by their counterparts. (Member of office of the president, R12). This entails inconsistencies in the standards used by specific ZIMRA officers for evaluating what is and what is not allowed into the country and the quantities permitted. Hence, traders (and indeed, all travelers) are faced with a difficult situation; in particular, traders may be forced to pay bribes to the "enforcement" officers for their goods or

risk confiscation of these goods, perhaps even in addition to bribes paid at the border. This adds to the many uncertainties faced by informal cross border traders every time they enter the country with commodities to sell. In fact, they have to take corruption into consideration when calculating their costs and determining selling prices. Overall, then, "corruption has become systematic such that it is now like in our DNA as a nation; everywhere, people have to plan for corruption and the border post officials expect to be given money like R1,000" (R18, expert from University of Zimbabwe).

Earlier in the thesis, reference was made to the government's introduction of Statutory Instrument 64 which prohibited the importation of certain goods into the country. Despite the many criticisms leveled against this instrument, it is still legally binding. Oddly, though, when conducting observations at the Beitbridge post, some of these prohibited commodities could be easily seen through the windows of buses entering the country. Further, many prohibited and banned products are still being sold on the streets and in marketplaces across the country – openly, not covertly. It can only be assumed that ZIMRA officers are turning a blind eye to these goods at the border post. It is widely known in fact that Beitbridge ZIMRA officials are being paid bribes by bus companies and drivers for not inspecting the goods of passengers travelling on their buses (R18, Expert from the University of Zimbabwe).

At the same time, other state officials offered an alternative argument, preferring to blame corruption directly on any ZIMRA officials involved and not on ZIMRA at an institutional level**.** From the perspective of one member of the president's office (R20), those ZIMRA officials speaking about corruption at higher-levels of the state agency are simply trying to "hide behind the organisation to justify wrong doing. People are naturally wicked and selfish … So whether there is corruption within ZIMRA as an organisation or there is not, officials will still be corrupt." A ZIMRA official (R15) made a similar point, arguing that ZIMRA as organisation cannot be blamed for the corruption taking place as the organisation has zero tolerance for corrupt acts. He added that, countrywide, 74 officials from ZIMRA in 2018 were arrested for corruption, which he sees as reflective of the stance of the organisation towards not tolerating any form of corruption. This is not a denial then of the presence of significant corruption. Likewise, the member of the president's office agreed with the thoughts of most past and present ZIMRA officials, namely, that the level and magnitude of corruption (at the time of the research) had reached unprecedented

rates. Some thought that the scale of corruption at Beitbridge border post is often exaggerated. For example, one ZIMRA officer (R8) said that corruption was being highlighted all the time at the expense of all the positive attributes and accomplishments of the agency. In this context, he asked me: "Did you know that since 2001 ZIMRA has maintained a clean record of surpassing revenue annual targets, and it has successfully managed to collect funds from many sectors of the economy, though challenges still exist with presumptive tax from informal sectors of the economy which has increased tremendously over the last decade?"

Another officer from ZIMRA (R13) argued that, in light of allegations of corruption and inefficiency of customs officers at Beitbridge, technological and other changes have taken place, including licensing of clearing agents, pre-clearance of goods before arrival at the port of entry, the introduction of scanners, and post-importation audits. However, these technicist solutions do not address, at least not directly, the social and cultural dimensions of ZIMRA as a state institution which contribute to the ongoing presence of serious malpractices. Hence, no amount of technological innovation, including world-class functional scanners, can overcome the problem of corruption in socio-technological systems where the 'social' dimension is characterised by moral frailty (for instance, corruption) intrinsic to the organisational culture of a state agency. It means that inspections are subjective, selective and inconsistent – in the case of some vehicles or passengers, scanning takes place while others may be deliberately skipped as officer and trader make an informal arrangement for personal aggrandisement or cost-lowering. For one ZIMRA officer, it was such a serious matter that he spoke about the existence of human trafficking: "This is why they are continued human trafficking incidences through the Beitbridge border post into South Africa because our systems are not so strong" (ZIMRA officer, R13).

5.6.1 Shady Dealings, Syndicates and Touts at Beitbridge

The level and forms of corruption at Beitbridge can be given substance with reference to some of the shady dealings taking place, with this section briefly details. For instance, the use of multiple currencies and the confusions around the multi-currency system, offered an opportunity for ZIMRA officials to engage in illicit activities. A ZIMRA official (R13) pointed out that, since border officials were not adequately paid, they embarked on schemes to make money by swapping United States (US) dollars that would have been paid to them by traders. They would swap this US currency for the worthless local currency (bond notes) in their personal possession. This was

prominent especially during the period when the government claimed that Zimbabwe's local dollar was equal to the US dollar (Expert, R14). In reality, this was a fallacy as – on the parallel market – the US dollar was valued much higher than the local currency. Thus, revenue collection agents took advantage of the existence of formal and parallel currency markets and were replacing US dollars with local bond notes – they would then retain the more valuable currency and externalise it or sell to forex dealers operating at the border post. In doing so, they would profiteer: "Most border control agents are successful; they have property, nice expensive cars etc. Where do you think they make such money, their salaries are small?" (R20 from the office of the president). Or, as one ZIMRA agent (R8) put forward: "You cannot compare a police officer working inside the country and one who is stationed here; yet they earn the same pay. Think about it, it's clear what makes them different". The insinuation is that the police officer working at Zimbabwean border posts earns more than other police officers because of shady currency deals.

In some instances, low-level Beitbridge ZIMRA officials are merely acting on instructions from those higher up in the agency, without any advantages accruing to them: "At times some low-ranking officials do not even benefit … from doing these kinds of activities, but they are instructed to act like this by high-ranking officials on particular loads [of commodities] coming into the country" (R5 from University of Zimbabwe). These loads are typically of high volume and value, and they often belong to high-ranking ZANU-PF political officials or their acquaintances, who have put arrangements in place with high-level ZIMRA officers to facilitate the entry of the load with minimal or no duty charged. In connivance with ZIMRA officials, the political elite label their private bulk imports as public or government goods to avoid custom clearance charges: "High ranking officials be it in the police, military or those at the core of government … bulldoze their way past the border post even if whatever they are importing or exporting is for private use" (Expert, R5).

It may be, then, that the self-benefit that low-level ZIMRA officers at Beitbridge obtain through their own corrupt practices is minimal compared to the self-benefit received by those at the top of the "feeding trough". This means that the corruption network stretches from the political elite down to the low-level ZIMRA officials at Beitbridge, with the former maximising financial value from these problematic BCM practices. In this way, the disorder at the Beitbridge post is functional for

high-level politicians, which might minimise their political will to make the border post less porous.

Further to this, it is common for ZIMRA officials and other border control agents to operate syndicates at Beitbridge in which they offer back door concessions to traders (or specific traders) for self-aggrandisement. These syndicates often involved bus drivers in the case of ICBTs travelling by bus. For those traders crossing the border from as far away as Harare, Masvingo and Bulawayo who, comparatively speaking, brought in larger quantities per trip, had their own networks and organised systems of manipulating border procedures manipulation. When the ZIMRA officials who formed part of their syndicates were not available, they made sure they had someone in place to take care of them in their absence. Smuggling goods across the borders, or paying less duty on imported goods, would be very difficult for traders without their contacts within the BCM system, namely, border officials. They have integrated themselves into a social web which is sustained by the interests of both parties (that is, informal cross border traders and border control agents).

For instance, some ICBTs are involved in the trading of minerals such as diamonds and gold. At times, they export some of these commodities to South Africa without proper clearance, as the traders do not have the legal right to deal with such commodities. Hence, syndicate-type networks emerged involving Beitbridge border control agents who would check the value of minerals being exported and then get their "fair share" of the deal (R15, ZIMRA agent). These activities were never recorded in any BCM system and, hence, they were completely off the books without a paper or digital trail.

This also entails the under-invoicing of goods and negation of proper and full implementation of customs procedures on a patron-client basis. A good example provided is that of informal traders who deal with cars. In this regard, one ZIMRA agent (R8) pointed out that duty on cars was levied based on the year of the vehicle, its overall condition (including dents) and other qualities. Border officials sometimes manipulate this information to reduce the charges that informal cross border traders would incur and the official receives 'a cut' from this transaction. These – permanent – arrangements also exist for other commodities, such as imported clothes and food stuffs (ZIMRA officer, R17).

In these cases, it is not unusual for syndicate members to communicate with each other on a regular basis, including traders communicating with their ZIMRA contacts before crossing the border to ensure smooth sailing when they bring their goods across the border (R6, Expert, and former University of Zimbabwe Lecturer). This point was verified by my own observations made at the border post when some ICBTs were seen dropping off some of their goods from South Africa with border control agents; meanwhile, they simply passed through the post without any clear procedure regarding the declaration of the goods they had, and then moved into the country. These (and indeed other) informal traders were observed crossing to South Africa and back more than once during the three-day observation that took place. My research assistant, who is well versed with what takes place at the Beitbridge post, indicated that these traders cross more than 4 times a week, some likely crossing on a daily basis to buy goods for resale from South Africa. According to my assistant, some of these traders made a weekly payment to officials on duty so that they spend the whole week crossing while others preferred paying such tribute on daily basis to avoid problems whenever officials changed the time of their duties.

Where necessary and appropriate, traders do not have to come into direct contact with ZIMRA officials. Bus drivers and their assistants have close relations with customs officials, as they continuously travel across the border. For 'a cut', they may undertake transactions with the border control officials after collecting money from their clients (i.e., informal cross border traders) (ZIMRA official, R8). In this context, customs officials and other border control agents only play a procedural role of searching the bus which they will just allow to pass anyway, without any serious inspection. There is no suspicion between these bus drivers and customs officials as they see each other frequently and do these deals on a regular basis. They are mutually entangled in corrupt practices in which both parties (as well as the ICBTs) obtain some financial benefit. This is a much less risky method of undertaking these illicit transactions than if total strangers sought to initiate such transactions – this would be the case for both the informal trader and the customs official. The risk for the ZIMRA officials in particular is that they might be dealing with undercover officers from the Criminal Investigation Department or Central Intelligence Office, which might apprehend corrupt officials. Thus, bus drivers are able to mediate relationships between strangers without raising suspicions (R10, a former ZIMRA agent).

Amalitsha (who normally carry goods across the Limpopo) are also implicated in the matrix of the corruption taking place at the border post. They also help informal cross borders to cross the border by either smuggling them (and their goods) into the country or engaging customs officials on the Zimbabwean side for dubious dealings. One ZIMRA official put it this way: "The *amalitsha* sometimes use undesignated ports of entries to cross goods from the South African side to the Zimbabwean side. The challenge about the use of undesignated routes is that, even though we all know them, the government does not have enough resources towards securing those routes; as such, a lot of revenue is lost to such proceedings" (R1, ZIMRA official). The researcher took some time to observe these points and people could be seen crossing over fences, while some cars use routes which avoid the official border post at Beitbridge. Border control officials have knowledge of the perpetrators of these activities as the *amalitsha* sometimes use official ports of entry. According to ZIMRA officers, at times they are arrested or caught but the cases do not go anywhere as they often bribe the police and thereby continue with their dealings.

In addition to the variety of illegal practices so far noted in this section, there is also the existence of touts at Beitbridge. For instance, a member of the office of the president (R21) attributed the unorthodox activities taking place at the Beitbridge border post to the presence of touts, whom he alleged were fueling corruption and theft. He raised the issue of touts in the context of his claim (mentioned earlier) that corruption amongst ZIMRA officials was minimal, because of the many checks and balances existing at the border post. The fact that the border control management system at Beitbridge is "disjointed" means that officials from different agencies are skeptical of, and even mistrust, each other. According to him, because of this and the existence of anti-corruption activities taking place at the border post in covert ways, revenue collection agents are wary of engaging in illicit practices (and if they do, they will be arrested and charged with corruption). Thus, he attributes the bulk of the corruption taking place at the Beitbridge border post to touts who loiter there and masquerade as ZIMRA officials. Their ongoing activities at the post may also lead to relations with officials in which they have a corrupting influence on the latter.

Overall, the interviewees do refer to the presence of touts and their illicit practices, but they certainly do not reduce corruption to these practices. Many argued that, if border control agents (ZIMRA but also police and intelligence officers) were prone to prevent corruption, then they would remove the touts from the border control area – as, in the end, they are responsible for

governing and control the border area, determining who is allowed there and who is not. It was even suggested that customs (and immigration) officials sometimes delay travelers on purpose, for them to pay the touts and other bogus agents to speed up the processes for them (with border control officials once again getting 'a cut').

5.7 Some Consequences of Delays at the Border Post

Besides border delays being a problem on their own, they also result in various other negative consequences. Ensuring border delays are limited will go a long way in reducing the presence of these consequences. Here, I mention two important ones: reduced revenue collection and prostitution.

Delays at the Beitbridge border post were resulting in reduced revenue collection. In part, this is because border users resorted to other means of crossing the border to save time, whether using other official routes or unofficial routes through undesignated posts (R1, ZIMRA official). For instance, some users (including ICBTs) were said to be diverting their routes from South Africa via Mozambique instead of just using the Beitbridge border post. The delays reduce the highest possible number of clearances which could have been done per day, per month and consequently annually. One ZIMRA official (R8) argued that if trade facilitation protocols were fully implemented, with all the necessary technological equipment in place, border control officials could do up to double the work they are currently undertaking, with implications for revenue collection. The delays worked like a double-edged sword, causing losses not only to the Zimbabwean government but also to traders themselves. Reducing clearance times would itself promote the increased movement across the border (R19, ZIMRA official).

The delays of course are also enabling conditions for illicit and corrupt practices regarding the importation of goods by traders. Traders have to wait very long times and they end up 'fixing systems' to get cleared fast or using touts at the border post to sneak the goods through on their behalf so that they can leave the border as soon as possible. This situation has fueled border porosity at Beitbridge and limited revenue collection at Zimbabwe's most important border post (R1, ZIMRA official; R12, member office of president).

Prostitution has become a serious problem at the Beitbridge border post. High unemployment rates have triggered women into prostitution and the Beitbridge border post presents opportunities in this regard. Truck drivers and traders (including ICBTs) engage in sex with prostitutes due to

prolonged stays at the border post. This has led to the spreading of sexually transmitted diseases (such as HIV) in Beitbridge and beyond as travelers carry the HIV virus to other parts of the country where they live (R2, former ZIMRA official). Beitbridge has "the highest HIV infection in Zimbabwe. I am not sure of the statistics but you should look into that, this is because the border is offering a lucrative system for prostitution" (R14, Expert in border control management). According to research conducted by Kerkhoven and Sendah (1999) in the 1990s, the border towns of Zimbabwe were the "epicentres of the HIV/AIDS epidemic." This included the following infection rates: Beitbridge (46%), Mutare (37.7%) along the Mozambique border and Victoria Falls (42.6%) along the Zambia border.

5.8 Conclusion

From the foregoing analysis one can tell that border control management in Zimbabwe is bedevilled with complex challenges not necessarily due to lack of rules and procedures of engagement but poor implementation of these mechanisms. It is therefore due to this uneven implementation of trade facilitation which has rendered most efforts to improve efficiency and effectiveness at the border in question a failure. Through detailed interaction with officials and experts this study identified, disjointed operations among various border control agencies, lack of overarching authority, lack of funding visible through poor technology and infrastructure development, corruption, shortage of staff as some of the major problems bedeviling Beitbridge border post. And these results in other externalities such as reduction of revenue and prostitution. The government and ZIMRA both share the blame on the state of affairs at the Beitbridge border post as the government of Zimbabwe has displayed lack of political to address these problems as voiced by ZIMRA officials. ZIMRA bear part of the burden as it failing to control and contain corruption which has become pervasive on all organisational levels. Having looked at this, the next chapter will then deal with economic security and informal cross border.

CHAPTER SIX: INFORMAL CROSS BORDER TRADE AND ECONOMIC SECURITY IN ZIMBABWE

6.1 Introduction

The unfortunate events related to ineffective border control management that have taken place at the Beitbridge border post have had two contradictory results. Firstly, there has been the enhancement of economic security through (secondly) the unfortunate porosity of the border. In as much as the enrichment of economic security is vital, events at the border post have negative consequences on the Zimbabwe's long term agenda of economic recovery and development. This chapter is based on themes that emerged in the various interviews that were conducted by the researcher. The findings in this chapter showed that, informal cross border trade contributed immensely to revenue collection and creation of employment. The role of borderland communities in affecting the secureness of the Beitbridge border post is also discussed in this chapter and how borderland communities also take part in informal cross border activities. Government perspective to informality was also described as an important factor shaping informal cross border trade in Zimbabwe. Lastly, this chapter discusses the effects of informal cross border trade on re-industrialisation.

6.2 ICBTs, Border Control and Economic Security

The relationship between informal cross border trade, border control management and economic security is not a straightforward one. For this reason, one of the major concerns of this research was to establish the type of relationships existing between these variables. Many respondents argued that what is happening currently at the Beitbridge border post tends to enhance informal cross border movement, because if ICBTs were to pay what is officially required by law as it stands, they would not survive, their economic activities would be tantamount to nothing. One ZIMRA official (R1) was thus of the view that:

> If all protocols are followed they will not be able to foot the charges, but due to what is happening at the border post, the chaos prevailing there is actually enhancing their economic activities…It is in their best interest that things remain the way they are as this has massive benefits for the informal cross border traders. If strict codes of conduct and protocols were to be observed at all border posts in Zimbabwe, this would be a big blow to the informal cross border trade.

One cross border trader (R11) expressed views fully consistent with the perspective of the ZIMRA official by declaring that: "Through the evasion of taxes, we can continue trading and making profits, though of course it is detrimental to revenue collection and the overall development of the country." This evasion takes place at both formal points of entry as well as at informal ones. In other words, informal cross border trade thrives on corruption and on the Zimbabwean state's overall inability to monitor its territorial borders. The ICBTs are not necessarily the ones who initiate and fuel corrupt practices, as they are often simply inexorably drawn into it by other forces, including state functionaries. Thus deficient controls and malpractices within the state's border agencies perpetuate the flourishing of informal cross border trade as an economic activity and consequently improve the economic security of the traders.

At the same time, Zimbabwe's border control management system was never crafted with the intention, at least not first and foremost, to regulate and manage informal cross border trade, it has always had an important international and regional trade dimension to it. Rather, the key function has been protecting the nation interests of Zimbabwe a sovereign state. An expert from University of Zimbabwe (R9) pointed out that:

> The issue of border control management and so on started as a way to protect national sovereignty; threats from unwanted elements such as unwelcomed travelers…, while protecting national sovereignty. [As well] trade facilitation brought standardisation of international trade to make trade more efficient and smoother by removing trade barriers. Informal cross border trade was not the primary concern of the initiative of border control management – rather the main target was to protect nations from mostly criminal elements of all kinds, protection of national interests, while promoting trade. Hence, from this angle, informal cross border trade was not even the target of customs procedures but it was mainly [designed] for multi-corporations, formal companies and countries engaging in trade. There is nowhere border control management and customs procedure can ever be dependent on [focusing primarily on] informal cross border trade.

This argument implies that, beyond the corruption and malpractices, there is simply no overall intent on the part of the state to ensure that ICBTs become fully formalised, and that space therefore exists for state functionaries (including ZIMRA officials) to act in illicit ways. For those more directly involved in the relevant agencies of the state, this might appear as a problematic claim. For instance, a member from the President's Office (R21) highlighted that, in the Zimbabwean context, the financing of border control management relies in part upon informal cross border trade

as a source of state revenue including for payment of ZIMRA salaries. Particularly given the fiscal and revenue crisis being presently experienced by the Zimbabwean state, regulating informal cross border trade to maximise tax and duty collection becomes critical, according to this interviewee and others as well. In this sense, maximising the efficiency and effectiveness of border control management may undercut the economic security of informal cross border traders, while perhaps enhancing national economic security (i.e. economic growth) through increased fiscal revenue. But the interviewed ICBTs brought to the fore that the current situation is not desirable nor sustainable, as cross border trade (even when sidestepping duty-tax collection) is just a safety net for survival and does not generate meaningful levels of profit.

Pursuing and adhering to proper procedures of border control management have a bearing on the fiscal basis of the state for purposes of implementing development programmes for the wellbeing of all citizens. In the meantime, in the Zimbabwean case, border control mechanisms have largely remained deficient, characterised by high levels of border porosity, a problem which has been used by those practicing informal trade to enhance their own personal economic security. However, this benefits other Zimbabwean citizens as well, particularly those who form part of the ICBTS' networks as customers. Through ICBTs, these ordinary citizens have access potentially to cheap and affordable products, and to commodities which might otherwise not be available on the Zimbabwean market. In this way, border control problems become 'functional' for the customers of ICBTs.

6.3 Contribution of ICBTs to the Zimbabwean Economy

The ineffectiveness of the border control management at Beitbridge appears to be a blessing in disguise for informal cross border traders in Zimbabwe and for the general populace (specifically, customers of ICBTs) in terms of generating some level of personal economic security in the midst of systemic economic problems at national level. According to the Poverty Atlas (2015), in 2011/12, 62.6 percent of households in Zimbabwe were deemed poor and 22.5 percent of the population were living in extreme poverty. In this context, the provision and supply by ICBTs of comparably affordable goods to poor or extremely poor Zimbabweans, who cannot afford to buy goods from commercial retailers, is of some significance. Consequently, this section reviews the contributions that ICBTs are making to Zimbabwe economically, despite the challenges they face at the Beitbridge border post.

6.3.1 Informal Cross Border Trade and State Revenue Collection

Informal economic activities are now the backbone of the Zimbabwe's economy and of the livelihoods of most Zimbabweans. Unemployment rates in the country, although highly disputed and difficult to ascertain, are considered to be above 90 percent and among the highest in the world. Relative to the formal economy, Zimbabwe has the largest informal economy in Africa. Informal cross border trade and traders are an important part of Zimbabwe's informal economy. One respondent (R20) from the office of the president spoke of the importance of informal cross border trade in generating revenue for the government as some traders do in fact declare their goods and pay taxes. Not all informal traders use unofficial ports of entry or engage in unethical practices to import and export wares. Even those who are involved in activities such as under-invoicing contribute to some extent to national revenue (even though it might just be a fraction of the taxes and duties they should be paying). In this respect, there are different types of commodities brought into Zimbabwe by informal traders, including relatively high-cost items such as vehicles. As one ZIMRA official (R1) pointed out, "some informal cross border traders are also involved in the sale of cars, and there is no doubt that these cars are declared…there is no way they [vehicles] can operate in the country without full clearance." Another ZIMRA agent (R19) likewise spoke of this, and highlighted in particular the significance of presumptive tax for state coffers. Although the general feeling of the state towards the activities of ICBTs is largely negative and is documented as detrimental to the economy, because of tax evasion and illegality, their informal economic activities do perform some role in financing government activities through payment of duties and taxes. Overall, Zimbabwean government generates a significant amount of its revenue from collections made at Beitbridge border post.

6.3.2 Creation of Employment

Zimbabwe's fast growing informal sector is now the country's largest 'employer' as the economy is failing to absorb job seekers into formal employment. Once one of the region's most viable economies, Zimbabwe's economic fortunes took a turn for the worst in the late 1990s, resulting in the closure of companies and many of the country's industries. The meltdown became more pronounced from the year 2000 to 2008, a period from which the country has never fully recovered. Some economic growth and political stability was witnessed during the Government of National Unity (GNU) era from 2009 to 2013. After the disbanding of the GNU, the systemic economic problems resurfaced again vividly. Employment in the private sector is lower than employment

within the public sector, including the multitude of civil-service bureaucrats, security sector staff, teachers and nurses among others. The informal economy, including informal cross border trade, generates significant employment though typically precarious.

A member of the office of President (R20) pointed out that, as Zimbabwe's formal sector is continuously shrinking, compounded by the freezing of public service posts by the government, the informal sector continues to grow in leaps and bounds. As long as the education sector continues to churn out graduates without a substantial increase in formal employment, the informal sector will grow even larger than it is currently. In the 1990s, the informal sector was the preserve of women but the current economic environment has resulted in the number of men increasing tremendously in this sector. Since the informal sector has become the main form of economic activity in Zimbabwe, gender dynamics have shifted as more males are finding themselves in the sector, as this is the only option available.

The importance of informal cross border traders in Zimbabwe at a time of economic decay cannot be ignored. Such a sentiment was echoed by R8 (a ZIMRA agent) who noted that this trade has brought about some indirect positives that most people fail to recognise. These positives included for instance: "Reduction of crime levels, reduction of rural to urban migration and reduction of poverty levels. Many households are able to break out of extreme poverty, as this economic trade is providing opportunities for many." Cross border trading activities are undertaken by both rural and urban Zimbabweans, such that Zimbabweans in rural areas experiencing deprivation may decide to travel outside the country to purchase goods for resale in their rural spaces, rather than travel to urban centres in seeking employment. However, R 21 (from the Office of the President) claimed that trading in the countryside is still very limited, as are other sound income-generation projects, such that youths continue to travel to urban areas like Harare in search of the elusive job in the formal sector.

Informal cross border traders create job opportunities for others as the nature of their trade requires extra help at times. One interviewee (R7 ZIMRA agent) even spoke about the growth of certain cross border trading enterprises, indicating that **"**[s]ome informal traders including informal cross border traders with time can develop their business to small and medium enterprises. I have seen many clothing shops that are now popular in town which grew from mere flea-market tables."

Hence, there is some evidence of ICBTs being able to scale-up their activities, a process which would be enhanced by government support.

One informal cross border trader (R3) pointed out that employment is created by ICBTs mostly because the traders have to spend time travelling to buy their wares; so, they require someone to take care of their business in their absence and, eventually, these people remain working even when the owner of business is present. Some may use family members but others resort to hiring paid workers which promotes economic security for others. This trader said that ICBTs often require assistance. For example, "if you visit bigger markets such as where I work, there are a group of people called 'Jaggers' who specialise in lifting heavy bags or sacks of clothes to safe rooms." Therefore, there are various support positions with specific responsibilities assisting ICBTs, which may be taken on by a range of Zimbabweans, young and old, educated and uneducated. Hence, informal cross border trade provides livelihoods and promotes economic security for many households.

The research discovered that there are many people who are directly hired by ICBTs who do for instance the day-to-day selling of their goods. The researcher visited various flea-markets and made observations as people worked. From the observations made, almost three-quarters of the traders had one or more employees depending on the quantity of their wares and how many tables they occupied in various marketplaces. Some had more than one table in one market, while others had many tables spread out in different parts of Harare. Secondly, this trade has also created employment for *malaitshas,* who are the individuals who mainly transport or smuggle goods across the Beitbridge border post from South Africa into Zimbabwe. Of course, the *malaitshas* have other clients (like people working in South Africa) who also send clothes and groceries once in a while back home to support their families, but the biggest proportion of their clients are informal cross border traders.

A more recent development in the ICBT network is a new group called runners. As one ZIMRA agent (R1) claimed: "The system has now developed immensely that there are now people called runners, who travel to South Africa to find where cheap goods are being sold and they come back and report these findings, directing informal traders where to go." The runners solicit information, and they get paid by the cross-border traders for whom they gather this market information. From the perspective of another interviewee (R21 from the Office of the President), though, "runners

taking goods to Zimbabwe make a living through charging about 25 percent to 30 percent of the value of the items as their fee". From this perspective, the role of runners is not only to look for locations where cheap goods can be obtained, but they act in the same way as the *malaitshas* as they use their own connections to take goods across the Beitbridge border post using the standard tax evasion practices, which may include using unofficial points of entry. The runners might also use official ports and bribe customs officials in the process, therefore becoming involved in under-invoicing or the evasion of paying any and all duty. Either way, they do not pay full border taxes. In this way, they contribute to the profits of the ICBTs to whom they are bringing goods, though supposedly taking a significant cut of the value of these goods.

Though entailing some form of illegality, the runners provide a reasonably cheap and reliable service for informal cross border traders. More consistent with the views of the ZIMRA agent (R1) than with those of the member of the President's office (R21), one cross border trader (R11) spoke positively about the runners. He noted that runners make arrangements with bus drivers and border control officials to get the ICBTs' goods through the border undetected. Their tactic is simple: they do not carry goods themselves across the border but use bus drivers and their assistants instead. Runners sometimes spread and distribute goods to numerous passengers in the bus, such that the value of the goods per individual will invoke the application of the $200 duty free allowance which is given to every individual with goods worth less than $200. However, border control officials are informed about the runner's intentions ahead of time (before the goods reach Beitbridge border post) including the bus which will be transporting their goods, such that these officials are given their fair share of the deal, as are the drivers themselves. When the bus arrives at the border, clearance is done procedurally even though the mutually-beneficial arrangement would have been concluded before the arrival of the bus. The bus is then allowed to pass through the border post after "satisfying" clearance procedures.

Such maneouvres by the runners show that the systems of manipulation at Beitbridge are getting increasingly organised and sophisticated, and this problem requires extraordinary and well-thought out strategies to curb these unorthodox practices, if maximum revenue is to be collected at the border. All respondents interviewed agreed that runners' activities were confined to specific tasks and that they were essentially middlemen, running about to ensure the facilitation of ICBTs' goods across the Beitbridge border. Runners could potentially buy wares from different countries in the

region and ensure that the goods arrived in Zimbabwe; or they could simply help in identifying where affordable goods could be found on markets particularly in South Africa; or they could also help in clearance and importation. For all these roles, they charge a fee, somewhere between 10 and 30 percent of the value of goods identified, cleared or bought.

It is beyond any doubt that informal cross border trade has created employment for many others, thereby promoting some level of economic security not only of traders but for the nation more broadly. ICBT has evolved immensely and, at the same time, creating employment for thousands of people undertaking various roles, such as cash handlers at the marketplaces, touts, 'jaggers', *malaitshas*, runners and the entrepreneurs themselves. These kinds of activities may not generate wealth as they often act only as a safety net in times of distress and need. Nevertheless, the ICBT sector can now be said to have a structured and dynamic division of labour without an overall centre for coordination of activities. All actors involved in these social networks benefit from the process either as paid workers or as individual entrepreneurs neatly integrated into the process for making a profit. These networks typically require high levels of trust, particularly on the part of the informal cross border traders who have invested capital into their business. In this context, they might suffer losses if they are swindled by runners or others in the ICBT-centred networks.

6.3.3 ICBT as a Key Safety Net

Being an ICBT is often survivalist in character. However, informal cross border trade acted as a safety net for many people in Zimbabwe. The economic problems in the country have rendered the local currency valueless and devoid of any real purchasing power. The extremely high levels of inflation have eroded incomes which resulted in the ordinary Zimbabwean being unable to afford basic commodities such as bread, cooking oil and mealie meal. This sad state of the nation's socio-economic affairs has seen the astronomical rise in informal cross border trade as basic commodities are significantly cheaper in South Africa and other neighbouring countries. Many respondents revealed that ICBT had transformed their lives completely from a place of hopelessness to self-sufficiency.

Many traders who partake in this type of trade do end up with increased income, resulting in these entrepreneurs being able to accumulate savings and hence continue to invest and reinvest in the informal sector. One informal cross border trader (R23) pointed out that "I started with R5, 000 when I entered this business but now I can buy wares for over R20, 000". Respondent 33 (an

informal cross border trader) noted out that most traders with whom he worked started very small but "they were working hard to reinvest in the business and some of the traders ended up with clothing stores around Harare". Some informal cross border traders also spoke about how their capital increased through re-investment; for instance, they had diversified their trade to include some food items which they sold separately from their clothing items.

The study thus shows that most traders were seriously concerned with growing their businesses, and moving beyond the survivalist status. Some traders highlighted that they had such priorities as building houses and buying cars, but they had to make sure their capital remained large enough to keep them afloat and grow their business. Hence, purchasing expensive goods for consumption often had to be put aside to avoid undercutting the business.

One ICBT (R22) narrated a story about how she and her husband had left their civil service jobs to become full-time informal cross border traders. She revealed that she takes turns to travel with her husband so that there is always someone who stays behind to look after their children and the business. The trade has become so lucrative for them that neither of them would consider rejoining the formal job sector at present. She noted that the money they earned monthly from their jobs in government they earned in less than a week as cross border traders. As she indicated: "Now our lives are stable, we have an income and various tables where we sell our wares and we can comfortably take care of our bills and our children."

Similarly, R38 (an informal cross border trader) pointed out that, given the current state of Zimbabwe, if it was not for informal cross border trade, he was not sure where he would be – as this trade has completely transformed his life. He also had a positive story to tell: "After I finished school ('A' level), I could not find any formal job. I relied on my parents for survival and, six years ago, I got married and you know how hard it becomes to keep depending on parents once you have a family of your own. I joined cross border trade and the rest is history. Now I can take care of my family and my parents as well." He added that, while he goes across the border to buy the goods, his wife helps him by selling the wares at home. He spoke of risks that come with being an ICBT and states the trade can sometimes become dangerous. Because of this, he does not want to put his wife in harm's way and, hence, he prefers to go alone to South Africa while she stays behind.

Another ICBT (R26) talked about being involved in cross border trade for over 12 years and that everything she had, she owed to the trade. She revealed that she had bought a stand and constructed her own house and manages to feed and educate her children despite being a single mother. This might seem trivial, but it is important to note that the economic situation in Zimbabwe has rendered many parents unable to feed and send their children to school; so, her accomplishments cannot and should not be taken lightly. Most ICBTs referred to similar achievements, including merely being able to look after their families in a general way and to take care of their household bills. Levels of success varied: some pointed out that they had bought cars, others houses, some both houses and cars. Others were renting homes but were in a position to pay their bills too; while others were just happy that they had found something to do after years of being unemployed.

As another ICBT (R11) put it: "Our lives have improved for us as cross border traders. Most of the people I know that I work with are doing well, at least they can afford food, shelter, clothing and education for their families. We all have our problems here and there but it's better than nothing." The ability to make a reasonable or decent living for oneself is an essential part of economic security and the interviewed ICBTs generally noted that, since they embarked on their trading activities, their lives had changed for the better. Most of the ICBT interviewees had been involved for more than 10 years in cross border trade, while the younger ones (age 25 and below) had been active for fewer years – yet, they also explained that it was better for them too as they now had a source of income.

Another advantage of cross border trade, which many of the ICBTs pointed out, was that they had the means to access better healthcare facilities across the borders than in Zimbabwe. The Zimbabwean health system has all but collapsed in recent years, with most of the country's major hospitals in need of major renovations and lacking basic facilities such as water, electricity, gloves and the most basic of tablets such as paracetamol. While private hospitals in the country still have the capacity to treat patients, they are priced beyond the reach of most citizens. In this light, cross border traders use the opportunity to cross the border to seek medical attention in South Africa, as well as for buying medication at cheaper and affordable prices. Some even supply local pharmacies with medication they buy from neighbouring countries.

One ICBT (23) hence highlighted that public hospitals in Zimbabwe had no capacity to treat patients and that health sector professionals spent more time than not on strike or go slow.

Likewise, R22 (as an ICBT) noted that going to public hospitals was no longer a viable option for most of the people in the country who are classified as poor. She revealed how some Zimbabwean women, cross border traders included, were choosing to give birth in South Africa before returning home with their newborns. High maternal and infant mortality rates have been on the rise lately in Zimbabwe due to unaffordable healthcare which has left many women with no option but to give birth at home with no proper medical care.

Besides access to quality healthcare, ICBTs are generally better off than the average Zimbabwean, as pointed out by R3 (an ICBT):

> Our situation is very tough but it is a lot better when compared to others who are not involved in our activities. In the locations we reside in, people are really struggling, and almost suffocating in extreme poverty. Those employed formally, such as civil servants have it worse as they make peanuts, with the salaries easily eroded by the ever-increasing inflation. Worse off are those without any form of employment or any income-generating projects, and they do not have any means to fend for themselves. The tough economic situation has resulted in people living from hand-to-mouth as it is a huge struggle just to get food to eat, let alone clothes and shoes. At least, as cross border traders, we buy and sell goods in foreign currency, mostly in Rands and US dollars so our ability to deal with some daily problems and expenses is much better.

Thus, there was general consensus among the studied ICBTs that, although they were struggling like many other Zimbabweans, their predicament was much better compared to the general populace.

At times, the ICBTs also pointed out that they were struggling and some had gone through rough times due to a number of reasons. Some mentioned they had their wares confiscated several times by the police at the border and, in selling them, others mentioned that the profit margin was very small after deducting all their expenses (hence they were struggling to stay afloat). Others lamented that they had on several occasions been robbed clean of their goods, personal documentation and money, and that the rebuilding process was not easy. Replacing or acquiring for instance a passport in Zimbabwe is very laborious as the passport office has a backlog of hundreds of thousands of passport applications. Once you lose a passport, it is difficult to replace it and it can sometimes take over a year to acquire a new passport. Hence, robbers set ICBTs back heavily by stealing their goods and documentation, a situation from which some never recover from.

Debt is another challenge as most informal cross border traders start by borrowing money from friends and relatives, and sometimes loan sharks, to kick start their businesses. The problem arises when the trader fails to make the expected profits and consequently fails to pay back what is owed. One ICBT (R28) referred to the fact that "I have a heavy debt burden at the moment. I owe the schools of my children money; I owe lenders money and my business is not doing well. I don't know how I am going to manage this situation." Thus, in as much as cross border trading has given thousands of Zimbabwean people decent livelihoods, not every trader has met the desired outcomes as some are still struggling to get the best out of the trade.

6.4 Borderland Communities

Borderland communities also tend to play a role in activities taking place at border posts, which is the case at the Beitbridge border post. Respondent 9 (An expert from University of Zimbabwe) pointed out that people living in Beitbridge were directly involved in informal cross border trade due to their proximity to the border. The short distance they have to travel to the border, on foot for some, makes it comparatively easier and cheaper to cross the border resulting in them going to South Africa as frequently as they can. Respondent 13 (another ZIMRA official) indicated, in engaging in the business of reselling, some Beitbridge residents crossed the border every day or several times a week to restock. Certainly, not all residents from Beitbridge cross the border as informal traders, as many simply cross the border for ordinary shopping for household composition as one would in their local supermarket. This is more so because basic commodities such as bread and maize meal are more affordable in South Africa than they are in Zimbabwe. For these residents, crossing the border was less frequent relative to those involved in buying and selling, as ICBTs.

As residents of Beitbridge who know their way around the town, R16 (a ZIMRA agent) highlighted that people who make up the border community of Beitbridge mainly use unofficial routes of entry in crossing the border into South Africa. The Beitbridge border is in 'their neck of the woods' and hence they are well versed with the intricacies of the area – more specifically, they know how to 'navigate the woods' and thereby avoid calamities or at least deal with calamities that may fall their way during border-crossing. This is a special advantage as the unofficial routes are akin to 'a jungle of lawlessness' and tend to attract many mishaps. Another ZIMRA official (R17) spoke about crossing the border using unofficial routes as a risky affair and very dangerous. For example,

the Limpopo River is difficult to cross (especially when flooded) and many border jumpers have lost their lives due to underestimating the depth of the river and sometimes being attacked by crocodiles that infest the river.

There are also the *amaguma-guma*s (known as groups of dangerous thugs) that operate along these illegal entry points and they rob and rape those crossing the border through these routes. However, due to their proximity to the border, and knowledge of it, people from Beitbridge typically know the safe routes to cross the border. They also know the procedure on how to deal with the *amaguma-guma* so that they are not harmed by them. This has resulted in some informal cross border traders and other undocumented people seeking to go to South Africa for various reasons, and who are not from Beitbridge, employing the services of these local borderland people. Hence, residents from the borderland community of Beitbridge play a pivotal role in crossing people across national boundaries into South Africa using unofficial ports of entry. Indeed, some Beitbridge residents were actually making a living out of helping cross border traders cross the border safely though the unofficial ports, thus enhancing their economic security as well (R20 from the Office of the President).

The activities of this category of local residents are becoming increasingly prominent at the Beitbridge border post. These residents have been undertaking these activities for some time, and they have been able to establish ties with South Africa soldiers who guard the unofficial routes (R1, ZIMRA official), Using these ties, they bribe and negotiate with the soldiers and, therefore, make a passage for them and the people they escort. By so doing, ICBTs who resorted to using such channels to cross the border often sought the services of these residents to import and export their goods across the border without hassle.

However, a ZIMRA officer (R13) stated that not all of the borderland community residents use informal points of entry, as some use official ports of entry and exit. Those that use the official points of entry do so on a frequent basis and, in the process, they have developed conducive and friendly relations with a range of border control officials. This type of interaction was compatible with the observations made by this researcher. Some people walking on foot were seen crossing the border without seemingly following any of the official procedures. Some were carrying bags of goods while others stopped for a while and could be seen chatting up police and soldiers, in ways that showed they had solid rapport. At times, the researcher observed the informal traders

giving the border security officials certain items, mostly food, from their bags. The same can be said about the clearing agents who have also become friendly with local Beitbridge residents, resulting in them being given a pass to by-pass the formal clearing procedures. Thus, people from the borderland community were quite accustomed to informal systems of navigating through the border as they frequently crossed the border and were well known by officials.

One member of the Office of the President (R21) explained that it was pointless to try and maintain protocols with Beitbridge residents as they were only trying to feed their families:

> Apart from the border with South Africa, there is not much economic activity here in Beitbridge. The town is very small and there are very limited job prospects outside of border control management. The economic hardships which have resulted in closure of companies nationwide have also had the same effect on the town and there are no formal jobs for residents to take up. Living here you get to see the struggle these residents face daily in trying to make a living, so there is no use in trying to be too bureaucratic. Most of them cross the border for basic commodities such as bread which is expensive in Zimbabwe. With this in mind, there is no need to be procedural with them as they are only trying to put food on the table for their families. At the end of the day we are all humans and we have to understand things from a humanity perspective despite of our jobs.

This respondent also revealed that officials on the South African side of the border have developed the same compassion for ordinary local residents and have developed cordial relations with them in terms of 'giving them a free pass' when crossing into South Africa. In doing so, these officials are contributing to the economic security of Beitbridge people (and other Zimbabweans) in these tough times, seeing as there are no other means for them to survive. Thus, border control agents were deliberately showing compassion to these people in these difficult times, without necessarily or always receiving benefits themselves in facilitating these border crossings.

The people living in the Beitbridge area comprised as well the majority of people selling goods to users of the border post, mostly food stuffs and airtime (R10, a former ZIMRA official). However, observations showed that not all traders undertaking some form of business activity at the Beitbridge border post were locals. Some of them revealed they were from places as far afield as Harare and had decided to come to work at the border post due to the place being a hub of economic activity, thus according them more opportunity to sell their wares. Besides trading at the border, crossing it as an ICBT or facilitating crosses for other ICBTs, some Beitbridge residents were

involved in hardcore criminal activities (R18, an Expert from University of Zimbabwe). As mentioned, many Beitbridge residents import and export their wares using unofficial channels and some make a living from helping informal cross border traders to cross the border illegally and thus avoid taxation which prejudices the state of much needed revenue. However, others engage in armed robberies of informal cross border traders (to give up all of their belongings), the raping of women and sometimes even murder. Some connive with criminal syndicates in South Africa to bring in stolen goods, mostly cars, from South Africa into Zimbabwe. Beitbridge had become infested with criminal syndicates due to the border post, and border users feared these gangs (R11, a cross border trader). Several arrests had been made but most of them end up being released and going back to their criminal activities, which has made the syndicates a permanent fixture of the town. As such, borderland communities are very much involved in activities taking place at the Beitbridge border, be it legal or illegal.

6.5 Government's Perspective on ICBTs

For any economic activity to flourish, it requires considerable levels of support from government. Government support may be manifested in different ways, be it financial support or policy support, thereby facilitating the needed enabling environment. From this perspective, it is possible to identify and analyse in what ways the Zimbabwean government has sought to further the cause of ICBTs in Zimbabwe. Overall, though, it seems that the government's perspective has been largely negative with regards to informal cross border trade. As one ZIMRA official (R8) revealed: "The government seems to be more against the informal cross border trade than in support of it. This state of affairs can be analysed from a historical perspective given that the colonial government was totally against informal activities and informal cross border trade which at the time was the preserve of black Zimbabweans." This entails the failure to offer conducive conditions for low-level entrepreneurship to grow and thrive.

When the colonial government came into power, it sought to compel black people to take up employment in the colonial economy and, simultaneously, it criminalised the informal economic activities of blacks. In this context, one interviewee (R5, Expert) argued the following:

> Zimbabwean politics reflects the failure of the government to overcome the temptation of colonial continuity. This is why the Smith [colonial] regime used 'acrobatic statistics analysis' whereby they would tilt numbers to suit what they wanted, to the extent of reporting that there was no

> unemployment in Rhodesia ... That policy has continued in Zimbabwe and other African countries because these governments are ashamed of their failures and they want to manipulate figures to try and limit the margin of their failures.

In essence, it is claimed that the government of Zimbabwe has inherited colonial tendencies which view African entrepreneurship as somewhat incapable of success. The government has remained rigid on the idea that local initiatives and enterprises cannot be the panacea to Zimbabwe's economic problems and, instead, it remains focused on attracting foreign direct investment (which, unfortunately, continues to be elusive). This goes contrary to the indigenisation policy initiated during the Mugabe era, with the post-Mugabe government tending to downplay the significance of this policy (R19 a ZIMRA official). This is despite ongoing claims about the importance of black empowerment through the promotion of small businesses. Meanwhile, the government tends to sabotage the work of informal cross border traders through exorbitant taxes and restrictive procedures and laws, leading at times to ICBTs abandoning their economic activities. Thus, contradictions and inconsistencies exist regarding the Zimbabwean government's stance and practices with reference to informal cross border trade.

Many interviewees referred to draconian policies such as anti-hawking programmes and the 2005 Murambatsvina clean-up campaign as clear signs of the government's approach to informal traders. Legislation such as the Statutory Instrument (SI) 64 is also reflective of this approach but, at the same time, this legislation undercuts state revenue; hence, the state is 'shooting itself in the foot' (R5, expert). A major reason why the government is pessimistic about the economic value of ICBTs is articulated in the following way by a member of the office of the President (R20): "The government thinks that a lot of illegal activities take place in the informal sector and informal cross border trade, which is true to a limited extent. However, most of the illegality occurs due to stringent requirements for company registration which require high registration fees; otherwise, their businesses are legit[imate] as they buy and sell legally acceptable products." One ZIMRA official (R19) made a similar point: "Informal cross border trade is more often than not associated with smuggling, tax evasion and illegality than it is associated with innovation, enterprise and job creation. It is perceived as an enterprise for lawlessness and people who deal with dangerous, illegal and harmful products, which essentially is not the case." A major challenge lies in the unnecessary restrictions constantly being introduced by the government that inevitably force the

ICBTs to smuggle some of their wares (such as blankets and cooking oil) which, on their own, can be hardly classified as dangerous goods.

In the end, the government of Zimbabwe seems to be actually acting retrogressively as it is reversing the gains of the trade liberalisation trajectory, by introducing artificial trade barriers (R9, Expert from the University of Zimbabwe). These barriers target ICBTs as large companies with more resources can easily obtain licenses or permission to import goods, even with the restrictive SI64 policy in place (which makes certain goods, such as the aforementioned blankets and cooking oil, illegal to import unless one has special licensing to import them). As well, as highlighted by a ZIMRA officer (R17), going to such lengths to place restrictions on informal cross border traders is deeply problematic given that there is a massive shortage of formal jobs in the Zimbabwean economy: "Over 70% of the country's industries closed or scaled down operations decades ago, and those still in operation cannot meet market demand; hence, the informal cross border traders are helping to strike the balance between demand and supply [of commodities]." The political elite under Mnangagwa embrace the idea of having large international corporations revitalising the Zimbabwean economy after years of decline.

Suggested rules and regulations relating to how informal cross border traders should be treated have largely been ignored by policy makers in Zimbabwe. The Zimbabwe Cross Border Traders Association has tried on several occasions to engage the government in order to negotiate on the issue of the costs for importing and exporting goods, but to no avail. Even a ZIMRA agent (R13) pointed out that, if special arrangements were put in place at Beitbridge border post for informal cross border traders, significant funds could be collected by limiting the revenue lost to unscrupulous activities.

Not all interviewees were critical of the Zimbabwean government with respect to ICBTs. For instance, one ZIMRA officer (R1) spoke about the downside of the practices of the ICBTs, including the smuggling of goods into the country which could pose a danger to national security and health, including drugs and firearms. This officer spoke positively of government's efforts:

> The government appreciates informal cross border traders as it is a two way system in the sense that it [cross-border trade] enhances livelihoods of the nation and it brings in various goods … and, on the other hand, it ensures that government gets foreign currency through trading activities. The government acknowledges the existence of ICBTs and the government is pro-ICBT by supporting

> initiatives that provides loans to ICBTs, though the process is marred by lack of funds. … While it seems like the government is anti-ICBTs, Zimbabweans need to appreciate that the government is in actual fact trying to help the ICBTs from different angles; [to] help them escape extortion and also provide loan facilities which are relatively cheaper than [those at] the official rates.

He added that the government has also been working hard to uproot the systematic corruption at all border posts and in urging the ICBTs to report any officials that request bribes from them. However, the controversy surrounding this view is whether or not the government has in fact engaged in anti-corruption activities – in any meaningful fashion – to promote informal cross border trade. According to most of the ICBTs interviewed, very few loan facilities have been provided for these traders by the government. They revealed that the manner in which lines of credit were availed was highly politicised and most of the loans are therefore distributed along partisan lines.

ICBTs, frustrated by the lack of government support, often have to find other means for accessing capital to support their businesses. As noted by a former ZIMRA agent (R2), "[i]n order to start or support their businesses, ICBTs inevitably resort to *zvimbadzo* [borrowing money from loan sharks who charge high interest rates], while some may borrow money from friends and relatives for start-up capital but, because of this economy, people are reluctant to lend anyone money." Many entrepreneurs in the informal sector have no access to banking facilities at all, as they do not have collateral for credit facilities. Thus, rather than relying on government for assistance, ICBTs hustle to get money for their business; in this sense, traders are on their own, as one ICBT (R11) lamented.

Despite this, another state official (R21, from the office of the President) also claimed that the Zimbabwean government is sincere about facilitating informal cross border trade. He noted: "The government is trying to help the informal sector including informal cross border traders through the activities of the Ministry of Small and Medium Enterprises and organs such as Small Enterprises Development Corporation (SEDCO)." This state ministry is supposed to support the informal economy broadly and to help realise growth and expansion of the informal sector. He further argued that the government views ICBTs as a vital part of the national economy, particularly given their contribution to the economy, particularly during the 2005-2008 economic hardship period which was characterised by the shortage of basic commodities. He speaks of ICBTs working overtime to bring in these basics from neighbouring countries at a time when the

government was incapacitated and unable to provide relief for its citizens. Worryingly, this scenario seems to be slowly returning as the price of basic commodities (including foodstuffs) continues to soar beyond the reach of many Zimbabweans. Though the government acknowledges the importance of ICBTs in terms of revenue collection, they still remain sidelined according to another member of the office of the president (R12), who said: "Efforts to liberalise trade have largely remained a preserve for the formal sector and not ICBTs". The government has tended to show bias in support of formal international trade as its efforts to harmonise trade policies mainly involve the formal trade sector – though, to some extent, the concerns of ICBTs regarding trade facilitation are taken into account.

Informal cross border traders, as regional and international traders, require foreign currency to import goods from the different countries to which they travel. The lack of Zimbabwean government support is worrisome in this respect, as there are no provisions to help these traders to secure foreign currency for their businesses. One ICBT (R3) recognised that the government was having problems in accessing foreign currency, but there was no effort at all from the government to help these traders – no clear mechanism exists that can assist traders in buying foreign currency at affordable and regulated prices. Rather, ICBTs have to go to the black market to buy foreign currency.

Despite this negativity from the government, informal cross border traders continue to pursue economic security for their families and have also enhanced the wellbeing of other Zimbabweans, either via direct employment or the supply of basic commodities. More broadly, it is unlikely that the Zimbabwean economy could have managed to be where it today, even in its dilapidated state, without the ongoing contribution of informal cross border traders.

6.6 Reindustrialisation

Another point that may help to explain the government's attitude towards informal cross border traders is that ICBTs apparently are proving to be a hindrance towards government's reindustrialisation efforts. This is because, at least according to an interviewee from the Office of the President (R12), ICBTs were bringing in affordable goods from neighbouring states (notably, South Africa) at prices which are much cheaper compared to local products. Local industries that the government is seeking to revive are unable to compete with the imported goods brought in by ICBTs. They simply cannot survive economically considering that most Zimbabweans are cash

strapped and would inevitably go for the cheaper imported option. Despite the cheapness of Zimbabwean labour, the costs involved in producing goods in Zimbabwe are comparatively higher – yet, unless heavily subsidised by the state, manufacturers cannot compromise on selling prices or else they would be running at a loss. In addition to this, foreign currency shortages have made it very difficult for any industries in the country which require imports for their production process. The local currency has been rendered powerless by inflation and, in order to get their hands on foreign currency (such as US dollars and Rands), these companies have had to exchange at times the local currency on the black market at extremely high rates. The recent introduction of the foreign currency auction system may go some way in alleviating this.

On top of the foreign currency woes, the chronic electricity shortages in the country mean that these companies also have to find other sources of electricity, mostly generators which are expensive to run given the exorbitant prices of fuel. Water is a major challenge as well and many companies have had to install boreholes which require electricity to operate. Given such dilemmas, these manufacturing companies are left with no choice but to price their goods at a level which enables them to at least recoup their expenses. Thus, from this point of view, there is no real competition between local and foreign products as consumers with limited disposable income will invariably turn to the cheaper imported products. As such, it is understandable that government enacts protectionist policies to promote the growth of the local industry, thereby trying to restrict the inflow of imported goods by ICBTs.

However, one interviewee (R5, Expert) questioned government's efforts in the reindustrialisation process stating that, if the regime was serious with the reindustrialisation drive, then it would allocate industries with sufficient foreign currency and electricity. This would be of particular importance for those industries involved in exporting of commodities either regionally or internationally. Exports are critical for the generation of foreign currency in the first place and for broader socio-economic development. Admittedly, ICBTs are only involved in importations but, according to this political scientist, ICBTs are not solely to blame for the stagnation of the manufacturing sector in Zimbabwe. The so-called efforts to reindustrialise were sluggish and ICBTs are only trying to fill the glaring gap that has appeared on the market due to the incapacitation of local industries.

Further, as a ZIMRA agent (R17) noted, informal cross border trade is not the first choice for ordinary Zimbabweans when it comes to income generation. Hence, in the event that serious reindustrialisation was to take place, many people including informal cross border traders would likely seek employment in the manufacturing sector. Zimbabweans are involved in cross border trade out of necessity, not out of choice. There are risks that come with being a cross border trader and, according to this ZIMRA official, Zimbabweans would trade it in a heartbeat for steady formal employment:

> We do not enjoy leaving our families behind and going to extreme lengths to cross the border. It is out of necessity and, if we do not do so, we will add to the national hunger statistics. If given the chance, every cross border trader would take a job in those industries if it enabled them to live decently, put food on the table for their family and send their children to school. The journey across the border is risky as you might get robbed, raped or even murdered along the way and leave your family destitute.

In essence, those involved in informal cross border trade do so as the default option. Reindustrialisation would undercut in part informal cross border trade alongside the flooding of cheap foreign goods onto the local market, thereby contributing to ending the vicious cycle involving imported goods and the local manufacturing.

6.7 Conclusion

The trajectory of post-independent Zimbabwe has been infused by various challenges with the major one being the unending economic woes that continue to wreak havoc on hapless citizens. As a result of lack of jobs in the formal sector, a huge chuck of the population has turned to the informal sector as a means of survival. For over a decade now, the country has relied on imports from neighbouring countries such as South Africa as the local manufacturing industry has all but collapsed. As such, Beitbridge border post which divides Zimbabwe and South Africa has become a hive of informal cross border trade activities. However, the government appears to be not too fond of ICBTs which has seen the latter being the target of the several repressive, militant policies towards the enterprise. Despite these differences, it cannot be denied that informal cross border traders' endeavors have led to the creation of employment and have also increased government revenue thereby directly contributing to the economy of Zimbabwe. Thus, there is a unique relationship between border control management, informal cross border trade and economic

security. This research has excavated that, poor border management practices and border porosity have largely enhanced informal cross border trade thereby promoting economic security of both the traders and ordinary Zimbabweans. Despite not being supported by the government due to allegations of tax evasion and criminality, this form of trade has become a pillar of the economy in Zimbabwe at a time when the formal sector has shrunk and become devoid of ideas to revive the economy. The following chapter, Chapter 7, will unpack the various challenges that have affected effective border control management in Zimbabwe.

CHAPTER SEVEN: INFORMAL CROSS BORDER TRADE IN THE FACE OF COVID-19

7.1 Introduction

As the previous chapters have shown, the informal sectors of the economy have played a cardinal role as safety net in an era of economic decay and cross border trade has contributed immensely in this respect. However, Covid 19 pandemic has indiscriminately affected both formal and informal sectors globally, resulting in a complete stand still of all economic activities. Grave effects of the pandemic has mostly been felt in developing countries like Zimbabwe where social security amenities are almost non-existent due to economic hardships bedeviling such countries. Therefore, this pandemic has worsened livelihoods and economic security of informal cross border traders and the general populace causing extreme endemic poverty. The government of Zimbabwe has not done anything meaningful to help not only the traders but the entire population but instead has added the burden by putting in place heavy draconian measures, such as forceful crack down on survivalist activities during the pandemic. It is in this light that this chapter seeks to excavate impact of Covid 19 on ICBT and its implications to economic security from a territorial border control window. Only ICBT traders took part in this separate study, and all respondents therefore were ICBTS.

7.2 Buying Wares for Trading

Covid-19 disrupted the movement of ICBTs across national boundaries to a point where this form of trade came to a complete halt, as all countries closed down their borders fearing the spread of Covid-19. At the beginning of the lockdown, informal cross border traders in Zimbabwe explained that the effects of the pandemic lockdown were deeply problematic for them, as the government restricted movements of people and entry into the Central Business District. One ICBT (R22) pointed out that, "it was hard to conduct business as I had to localise my activities in Kuwadzana [high-density areas in Harare] where I stay. I could only sell my products there and even getting the stuff [wares] was not easy for me since many businesses had closed down in South Africa too." The spread of Covid-19 did not only result in the closure of businesses in both countries (that is, Zimbabwe and South Africa) but it also led to the closure of the Beitbridge border post. This had the effect of stopping all informal trading activities (through official border posts), although commercial cargo was permitted to move across the borders. Thus, the sales of ICBTs dropped

significantly because they did not have access to South Africa where they bought their wares; plus, selling of wares became more difficult in Zimbabwe due to the pandemic-related movement restrictions. In this regard, another ICBT (R23) highlighted that: "Getting wares has been really hard for most us, most places [shops] where we get our clothing have closed down, the border too is closed."

Thus, at the beginning of the Covid-19 lockdowns, cross border activities stopped completely as both Zimbabwe and South Africa closed their borders and businesses in a bid to fight the spread of Covid-19. As the countries started to slowly reduce the hardness of the lockdown measures, spaces and organisations started reopening, albeit with health hazards precautions still in place (such as wearing of masks, social distancing, and the use of gloves and controlled entry of people into buildings). Notably, though borders remained closed including the South African-Zimbabwe border (Beitbridge). Hence, the loosening of restrictions took place internal to the territorial boundaries of the country, and did not lead to a revival of informal cross border trading activities, at least through official border channels. One ZIMRA official (R17) spoke about the alternative established by many ICBTs, noting: "Despite the travel restrictions imposed on national boundaries, getting wares did not remain a challenge for long; runners became the salvation of our economic activities." Informal cross border traders were thus quick to improvise, with most of them leaving the task of crossing the border (to and from South Africa) to runners. Runners helped to procure and bring wares into the country from South Africa, even though the Beitbridge border remained closed – as one former ZIMRA officer (R10) also discussed.

7.2.1 Role of Runners in Importation of Goods

An ICBT (R27) explained the overall process in the following way: "I only give my runner the money for the things I want, and wait for him to deliver them for me. He buys the goods from South Africa and organises all logistics including transportation and I only have to pick up the goods here [in Harare] once they arrive." Other ICBTs mentioned this as well, indicating that their runners notified them once their wares had arrived; further, they normally agreed on a pick up point in advance, unless there was an emergency and then the runners would notify them of a new pick up point. An almost complete reliance on third parties (i.e. runners) to procure goods across national boundaries due to Covid-19 became the "new normal" for informal cross border traders, as they could no longer travel to other countries to buy wares due to travel restrictions brought

about the pandemic lockdowns. The ICBTs tended to rely upon the same person or group of people as their runners, since they (runners) would return to the trading places of the ICBTs to get further orders from the traders. This obviously entailed the building up of trust between the traders and runners, with some of these relationships existing prior to the lockdowns.

The runners used the official border crossings, such as Beitbridge, and worked with border officials in facilitating their crossings. As a member of the president's office (R21) indicated: "Runners made their business possible because they already had connections with border post officials". Though Beitbridge border post was closed to passenger/pedestrian travel, runners were able to cross the border to buy wares and clear goods because of these well-established connections. Their transactions occurred off the record due to the strict official restrictions on movement of people through the Beitbridge border post. This was confirmed by ICBTs, with one trader (R30) pointing out that "[r]unners were well known and connected people, so from us they charge money for transport which is inclusive of proceedings for clearance of goods as well as their own personal fee to run up and down buying our wares in South Africa." Similarly, another trader (R29) explained that, "these runners pay a certain percentage of money to border control officials who then allow them to pass through the border with their goods. Without these runners it was going to be difficult for us to stay in business." Other ICBTs made similar comments. For instance: "The runners brought so many things. Even Zimbabweans living in South Africa send food stuffs and money plus our goods as traders and they make sure they deliver our goods" (R24). As well, given the illegality of the process: "Sometimes they request for extra money [from us] especially when they get into trouble with police, because sometimes they are caught and threatened with arrest or confiscation of our goods. So, to avoid such a major fall out, we the traders would contribute [extra money] to ensure our goods arrive safely to us" (ICBT, R31).

In this context, as one ICBT (R28) brought to the fore, it seems that smuggling, illegality and the use of runners intensified under the pandemic lockdowns as the basis for importation of goods by ICBTs:

> We are not proud of it but we have no choice and, in the same manner, that is the same way runners get goods into the country. Imagine no one is allowed to travel across national boundaries [like during the lockdowns], but they do: because, in it, they [runners] benefit from these activities just like those working at the border as they [border officials] benefit from this process. It's a win-win

> situation and also some goes to the government coffers in form of revenue, so we all go home happy. So, through smuggling, hooks and crooks, however you want to define it, we are getting our stuff and we can continue our activities in these hard times.

During the lockdowns, runners became a central node in connecting informal traders and border control managers in a way that contributed in some way to the economic security of traders at a time of severe livelihoods disruptions more generally for Zimbabweans. This reiterates and reinforces the point made earlier about the porous character of the Beitbridge border post and the ways in which this facilitates and enhances the activities of ICBTs. Even what seemed to be a fundamental closure of the border post (i.e. pandemic lockdown) did not undercut the pervasiveness of this porousness, again to the advantage of ICBTs and those who work alongside them.

Besides or instead of runners, some informal cross border traders made use of truck drivers at the time of the lockdown, as one ICBT (R23) noted. Just like runners, the truck drivers often smuggled the goods into Zimbabwe as the searching mechanisms at the Beitbridge border post were deficient; others paid bribes to officials on behalf of the ICBTs to ensure that the latter still received their goods. Therefore, informal cross border traders had options (runners and truck drivers) in terms of importing and (or) transporting goods from South Africa across the Beitbridge border post into Zimbabwe. The major downside with truck drivers was that they did not have enough time to undertake the necessary shopping of wares for ICBTs and sometimes they ended up buying commodities which the trader did not request, resulting in revenue losses. However, they had similar connections to runners amongst officers at Beitbridge border post for expediting the movement of goods into Zimbabwe. They were also often cheaper than using runners.

Some traders complained as well about the quality of the goods they were receiving via runners or truck drivers. For instance, (ICBT, R42) noted that, when it came to clothing and clothing taste, the ICBTs at times received items which were difficult to sell because their regular clientele found them distasteful or unsuitable. This problem arose because they were reliant upon others (such as runners) to purchase clothes and other items on their behalf. One ICBT (R38) indicated that she struggled to sell these items because they were deemed by their customers as of poor quality and cheap-looking, or they were simply the wrong size. Other ICBTs pointed out that they had to change runners because they were bringing in goods of sub-standard quality. Ideally, from their

perspective, it was best that they purchased their own goods in South Africa, but the pandemic lockdowns prevented this from taking place and hence they had no choice but to rely upon others.

7.2.2 Informal Traders Buying their Own Wares

During the pandemic, there were a number of informal cross border traders taking the risk to navigate their way into South Africa through unofficial borders to buy their own wares. They did this in order to reduce the costs arising from the increased charges demanded by runners (R44, R48, ICBTs). There were a number of risks associated with such a move, as the traders could lose their wares or their money to robbers (known as *amagumaguma*) in the woods. As a ZIMRA officer (R8) pointed out, there were news or at least rumours of women who had been raped while trying to cross the border on their own to go and buy wares. As one interviewee added: "This becomes more dangerous as they are exposed to STIs and AIDs. Yet hospitals were not working properly here at home [at the time of the pandemic] to help people who needed urgent help with such matters unless they went to private doctors" (ICBT, R35). Thus, in an effort to import their own goods, some informal cross borders ended up in danger. As one ICBT trader (R34) pointed out, traders were caught between a rock and a hard place: "We are dead already, Covid-19 is ravaging us: poverty on the one side and then, as though that was not enough, the government also unleashes soldiers against us [when we try to bring in our goods]. How do they expect us to survive?"

In this light, one informal trader (R38) explained of an informal trader who had been driven by hunger to sell his wares, and was chased by law enforcement agents and they ended up shooting him in the leg – such incidents were also reported in at least one publication (Zimbabwe Peace Project 2020). This was part of a broader clampdown by Zimbabwean security forces of informal trading activities during the days of the pandemic lockdowns. Clips of soldiers beating up people simply sitting outside of their homes circulated on social media and local newspapers, and the use of such excessive force reflects the government's overall perspective on informal trading. An ICBT (R22) spoke about how the expeditions of some of his trading colleagues (i.e. ICBTs) to cross the border had proved futile as they captured by South African troops and sent back home without having bought anything. Though this translated into a financial loss (having spent some money to get to South Africa), it was not as bad as having already purchased goods in South Africa and then losing them (for instance, through theft) on the way back. It was just frustrating that they

embarked on a journey and returned home empty-handed, as it cut into the viability of their trading activities.

So, travelling themselves, and not using runners or truckers, was not necessarily any more successful (ICBT, R42). Given this repressive context and the challenges of crossing the border into South Africa for purchasing goods for resale in Zimbabwe, many informal cross border traders dealing with foodstuffs would often consume these food commodities at household level (R45, ICBT).

7.2.3 Cost of Trading

All ICBTs expressed similar sentiments on the issues of transaction costs during the Covid-19 pandemic lockdowns in Zimbabwe. For instance, one ICBT (R37) pointed out that: "'Desperate times, calls for desperate measures', you know the old saying…; we have to play along, we have no option. Operational charges are higher now than before, as runners demand more money." Echoing this, another trader (R30) noted that, "[b]ecause we cannot travel on our own due to the risk of Covid-19, runners are charging us a lot of money." Traders had no option than to pay whatever was requested by runners, because not doing so would put them out of business and thereby jeopardise their economic security. Conducting business had become more expensive, given not only the transport charges and the money paid to ZIMRA agents but the funding of runners who knew that ICBTs were in a desperate situation under Covid-19 (ICBT, R26, R49). Therefore, Covid-19 resulted in increased operational costs for ICBTs, due to the movement constraints it caused.

The increase in operational costs had knock-on effects, leading to limitations to the quantities that traders could import (ICBT, R41). Some of the money which would otherwise be used to import wares had to be set aside to pay runners who had increased their charges. One trader (R32) explained that, every time she wanted to import a fresh round of goods, she would budget two thousand Rands (R2, 000) more than usual. As she indicated: "Going to Messina on my own [before the pandemic] I would use R100 (South African currency) to go there and another R100 to come back, and a little more would be spent on the border post to get the goods into the country; but, now, I have to spend more than usual". Even though she and other ICBTs were happy that, despite the challenges brought about by Covid-19, they managed to continue with their activities, they were worried about increased costs inhibiting the generation of profit.

The ICBTs also highlighted the harsh difficulties experienced in bouncing back into business subsequent to the initial closure of businesses due to Covid-19 and before they could adjust to the 'new normal': "We stayed at home with no wares and we even got to the point of using our capital for survival, until we found a way to get wares through runners". Because his capital had dwindled as it went into household consumption costs, this trader had to engage in negotiations with the runners. In particular, he had to negotiate with the runners to pay them after he sold his goods, and this took some time before they eventually agreed. Thus, Covid-19 complicated the many challenges for informal cross border traders, who already were confronted with vast problems relating to the character of their trade, including its informality and often illegality. Overall, the economic security of traders declined compared with the time before the pandemic.

7.2.4 Inflation and Foreign Currency

Globally, Covid-19 caused economic shocks for many nations and it led to further economic decline in Zimbabwe specifically. In particular, inflation has been on the surge in Zimbabwe, with prices of commodities sky-rocketing. This means that informal cross border traders have to be constantly in a race with inflationary pressures, with a particular sensitivity to the fluctuating exchange rates with foreign currency in order to maximise what they can purchase in South Africa. In this respect, as R37 (an ICBT) notes, the Zimbabwean government's decision to re-introduce for the use of a multi-currency system in March 2020 was a positive development, making the lives of ICBTs somewhat more bearable. The use of multi-currency relieved the ICBTs of some financial pressure, as highlighted by another ICBT (R46): "Now we can charge our prices in any currency… US dollar, South African Rand without the need to hide our activities." The legality of the circulation of foreign currency meant that the ICBTs could openly tell their clients to verify current exchange rates if the latter so wished (if they thought they were being ripped off). Further, it allowed the traders to more easily purchase currency from foreign currency dealers for purposes of purchasing goods outside of the country.

In terms of this multi-currency arrangement, being an informal cross border trader meant having to constantly check the rate of various currencies to keep abreast with exchange rate trends, to keep abreast with inflation incase of clients who want to buy using local currency. One ICBT (R30) spoke about the centrality of this for keeping the trading business afloat – this involved making sure that money received through local sales was exchanged at a favourable rate with foreign

currency as soon as possible, as the value of the local currency was decreasing constantly because of the rise in inflation. This was particularly important because of the uncertainties of the time arising from the Covid-19 lockdowns. Thus, R24 (an ICBT) noted that, in such harsh inflationary times, it was difficult to even acquire loans from money-lenders, as they likewise were trying to protect themselves from the inflationary pressures under the lockdowns.

7.3 ICBTs and Covid-19 Transmission

Initially with the worldwide outbreak of Covid-19, many non-African countries were heavily impacted while Africa recorded comparatively fewer cases. After some time, though, infections and transmission increased dramatically (especially in South Africa), with Zimbabwe also experiencing a worrying number of cases. On this note, one ICBT (R47) suggested that the activities of runners were contributing to the increase of Covid-19 in Zimbabwe, as they had contact with many people outside of the country (notably, South Africa) and then brought the infectious disease back home. This is the reason why some informal cross border traders had not yet returned to trading, i.e. they feared the risk of being infected too if they got into contact with runners (ICBT, R34). Many ICBTs, however, had no option but to just brave it and work in the risky Covid-19 environment, working with the runners and, whatever happened, they would need to face it: “We stay at home, we starve to death; the economy is bad, and so we just have to brave it.” (ICBT, R22). Whether or not runners’ activities in fact played a role in the spreading of Covid-19 in Zimbabwe is unknown, but certainly some traders believed that this was the case.

Runners brought all kinds of goods into the country, such that they did not only specialise in assisting ICBTs and the importation of the latter’s goods. Runners also brought groceries from Zimbabweans living in South Africa to relatives in Zimbabwe, as well as even the dead bodies of Zimbabweans who died in South Africa (ICBT, R50). This caused significant concern: “Runners sometimes were not careful. They just threw these things mixed together and, who knows, maybe some of those dead bodies were victims of Covid-19, and then they bring those things to us, we risk being infected too” (ICBT, R32). There is also evidence that some ICBTs (as indicated by the traders themselves) succumbed to Covid-19, but it was not known where and how the trader became infected. Traders spoke about other traders with whom they worked dying because of Covid-19, and they mentioned they were scared that it would catch up with them too. A number

of ICBTs (R33, R36 and R44) raised a similar point regarding runners – they knew runners who had died of Covid-19 and they assumed it was due to their cross border activities.

Therefore, the pandemic brought with it new challenges for ICBTs including the threat of death. It was not easy to be in the shoes of informal cross borders during these unprecedented times. As an ICBT (R45) exclaimed: "Look at the market right now: the place is crowded and there is no social distancing at all; the place is packed. If one person is contaminated it would be just a time bomb ticking; many will fall [in death], this is very dangerous for all of us." There is no doubt that the working conditions for ICBTs were not safe at all, and there were no real health-hazard measures put in place to protect them. In part, this is because the government considered their trading activities as having been suspended during the lockdowns.

7.4 Economic Security and Informal Cross Border Trade

Covid-19 has had adverse consequences globally, not only in terms of the health and wellness of people but also economically. To their disadvantage, ICBTs in Zimbabwe do not have social security insurance and hence any disruption of their activities will have a huge impact on their livelihoods, perhaps more so than their counterparts in the formal sector. One ICBT (R37) lamented that the "[c]losure of companies at the outset of Covid-19 had a great impact on our financial resources, as some of our clients lost their income, thereby dwindling our market base." Another ICBT (39) raised a similar concern, declaring that, "I did not even have a clue what I would do if any of my kids were to get ill, because I did not have the financial capabilities to pay health care facilities." Many other traders also noted various limitations and challenges they experienced as their financial capacity to deal with daily live and expenses declined. One ICBT (R46) even noted that he at times had to go to bed on an empty stomach. The Zimbabwean government did not have any meaningful plan to support its citizenry during Covid-19 and hence the vast majority of people fell deeper into poverty. Certainly, ICBTs were not an exception. They were greatly affected especially during the beginning of the pandemic which led to closure of businesses and they, too, had to close down due to lack of supply of wares and trading spaces.

One other ICBT (R50) indicated that the loosening of the lockdown restrictions over time did not lead to a major improvement: "Despite the fact that we are back here [trading], the income we are getting is very little as the people in general [i.e. customers] do not have money; most things are not operating well due to Covid-19, so even now our finance base is still very small." Similarly,

R30 (an ICBT) pointed out that, “things are still tough for us, but half a loaf is better than nothing, so it’s better we are surviving.” All traders unanimously agreed that they had been affected economically by Covid 19 in a detrimental way. Thus, the economic security of traders had declined significantly, and they were confronted with pervasive economic challenges. Many respondents reiterated this point, noting that the general populace had no money, and that even government employees’ salaries had been undercut by skyrocketing inflation (and hence their customer base was not strong enough to sustain their trading activities).

The cost of living remained very high yet their income levels were plummeting. This left the traders in a very difficult position as they had to pay runners, transportation, their workers as well as prices for their tables (where they traded). All these expenses were in addition to their household expenses in caring for their families. Hence, some ICBTs said they did not make any significant profits under Covid-19 which had left them very vulnerable to any worsening of economic conditions. In this respect, an interviewee (R34, ICBT) pointed out: “It’s better that schools are also closed, because under these circumstances I do not even know how I was going to pay for my children’s school fees, books and uniforms.” Clearly, Covid-19 had greatly affected the economic security of traders, to the extent that they could not adequately finance their living expenses as they had done in the past. As one ICBT (R27) articulated the dilemma, “[w]e only hope that this madness would soon come to an end and we could return back to our normal lives because we are suffering very much. The economy is bad, and then Covid… it’s too much.”

Further, most of the traders pointed out that lack of savings posed a great threat to their livelihoods in the face of Covid-19. It was thus claimed by one trader: “With the amount of goods I have and the sales I make, I do not make much, so I it’s mostly hand to mouth, for me and my family. So, if I stop selling I don’t think we can survive” (ICBT, R30). Another respondent (ICBT, R24) made the same point, namely, that he had very little savings from his business which would not last him long in looking after his family. Most traders interviewed echoed similar sentiments, pointing out that the trade had become even more survivalist in nature, and that generating any savings was now very difficult. Thus, “I can pay my children’s school fees, food and rentals; that’s it” (ICBT, R24). Only a few traders spoke about having considerable savings from the pre-pandemic period, as their businesses had expanded. They could afford to survive based on their savings, though such

a situation was highly undesirable – the pandemic had led to uncertainties and many ups and downs in their business.

A key challenge for informal cross border trade in Zimbabwe comes from the fact that it never operated remotely (i.e. digitally), as the bulk of Zimbabweans were not accustomed to such a system. Firstly, for traders importing from within the region, there were no real options for them to buy wares online. This is because they had to scout out and find shops selling cheap items (for instance, cheap clothes) in order for them to make a profit, and most of these shops had no facilities for buying and selling online and shipping to Zimbabwe. Secondly, their market in Zimbabwe has been mainly characterised by walk-in customers who knew what they wanted to buy (but would mostly buy after being attracted by the goods they saw visually and physically in-person). As one interviewee (ICBT, R26) pointed out: "Here in our country, people are not used to buying goods online, they want to see real commodities not online. Some do not even know how to buy online, so we cannot work from home or online like professionals do." Thus, such limitations meant that, with a strict lockdown, informal cross border traders were in a quandary as they could not reach out to their larger market. Hence, they were more likely to plunge into economic insecurity, as they did in particular during the beginning of the Covid-19 lockdowns.

7.4.1 Clientele Base for ICBTs

During Covid-19, the challenge for informal cross border traders not only related to restrictions on their movements across borders to buy wares. Traders also noted with concern the impact of the pandemic on their clientele base, as the economic activities and security of their customers was being undercut as well by the pandemic. In Zimbabwe, where the majority of economic activities are now in the informal sector, traders' activities depend quite significantly on the movement of people who pass by their trading stalls. Accessibility to markets was compromised by the lockdown measures, as the government limited the movement of people into the main business areas, unless they had letters allowing them to enter into such areas; in turn, this affected the customer base for the ICBTs.

Worse still, as highlighted by one ICBT (R42), "people who buy from us are also informal traders, who specialise in other sectors of informal businesses; for instance, hair dressers, taxi drivers and people like street vendors. Now that this group generally is also out of work, our gains have also shrunk". Thus, the disruption of the informal economy in Zimbabwe under the lockdowns

disrupted the lives and livelihoods of a multiplicity of informal traders, with the knock-on effect of lowering their capacity to purchase goods from ICBTs. Additionally, as many ICBTs claimed, government employees were also some of their best clients, especially on their pay days, but deepening inflation (including during the lockdown) meant that they no longer had the financial means to make significant purchases from ICBTs.

There were specific times or intervals when trade for ICBTs was reasonably brisk and all traders benefited from this. During these peak periods, traders would ensure they had large volumes of wares available for sale. These periods usually took place when students are returning to school, as well as public holidays: "we make a lot of money as parents buy uniforms, school shoes and satchels for their kids" (ICBT, R31). However, because of the strict lockdowns, schools did not open or re-open as scheduled and they remained closed at the time of writing. Another ICBT (R25) raised similar concerns noting that, besides school holidays and re-opening of schools, public holidays were in the past a source of significant financial harvest for ICBTs. Customers typically bought new clothes for various holidays. However, as the lockdown started, most of these public-related activities were not commemorated due to social distancing. People could not gather around freely; hence, even their expenditure on clothing and other things declined immensely. This was due to the fact that people either had no money to spend or they had no functions to attend. Either way, this factor heightened the economic insecurity of ICBTs.

7.4.2 Effect of Strikes on Economic Security for ICBTs

Covid-19 has worsened the economic situation in Zimbabwe and many people are living in extreme poverty as they cannot pursue any meaningful livelihoods to improve their economic security. This situation has triggered at times discontent and demonstrations in the country, with the government responding through the use of the security forces. In this regard, "[t]he security forces were brutal, beating anyone on the street or even moving in residential areas. This worsened our economic activities" (R36, ICBT). Talks of mass strikes and work stayaways have also reverberated through the social media and other mediums of communication. One ICBT (R43) spoke about this in the following way: "These activities [calls for stayaways] have had negative consequences for us at a time when we thought we had finally made a plan. Runners were bringing goods for us, and our market reopened [with the loosening of the lockdowns], and at least we had something to hope for. Then, all of a sudden, everyone is forced to stay home because there is a

possible strike." Although traders were being forced to avoid moving into the central business districts of cities and towns in Zimbabwe for purposes of trading, even selling in suburbs became increasingly difficult as freedom of movement was greatly constrained at times.

The political conflict under the Mnangagwa government, between the ruling ZANU-PF party and the main political opposition, had negative consequences for ICBTs. The opposition claimed that the lockdowns were being used as a pretext to quell political dissent, as the lockdowns inhibited physical movements and the gathering of even small groups of people in any one place. One ICBT (R45) thus lamented: "These political squabbles limit our financial resources, we cannot sell our wares as there would be confusion and chaos everywhere. We have to stay at home, but we have kids, what do they eat? … We have stayed at home for a very long time due to Covid-19 and now the government crackdown on opposition forces worsens the situation for us". The government's reaction to opposition-driven agitation was to close down the political space even further. Simultaneously, though, this led to the closure of economic space as well, including the trading spaces of ICBTs.

Overall, then, informal cross border traders, just like other informal traders, were faced with a number of problems during the Covid-19 period, emanating from various matters, both socio-economic and political.

7.5 Conclusion

Covid 19 has altered virtually everything, the way people engage their businesses and maintaining minimum intercourse between people and countries. This has also changed the way in which informal cross border traders conduct their business. Due to limited movements across national boundaries, informal cross borders cannot travel to buy wares as they had often done in the past which is a defining activity of their trade. Instead they are resorting more to a new mechanism whereby they resort almost completely to sending those who improvise to make their way across national boundaries to bring wares for them. This has had an effect of increasing their operational costs while markets have dwindled due to limited movements within national boundaries due to the pandemic. This has had a negative effective on the economic security of traders crippling their financial capacity to foot their bills as they have normally done before the pandemic.

CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSION

8.1 Introduction

This thesis has examined and analysed the nexus between border control management, informal control border trading and economic security in Zimbabwe with specific reference to the Beitbridge border post. In concluding the thesis, the main purpose of this chapter is to show how the objectives of this study were addressed. To achieve this end, this concluding chapter revisits the central arguments in this study. I start with the subsidiary objectives (as set out in chapter one) and then turn to the main objective because, when considered in combination, addressing the subsidiary objectives indirectly entails addressing the main objective. The focus on the main objective will also involve indicating the manner in which the theoretical framing of the thesis contributed to pursuing this objective, and how the thesis as a whole contributes to the pertinent scholarly literature. I end the chapter by detailing some limitations to the study, possible areas for further research and policy implications arising from this study. To remind the reader, the main objective of the thesis is to: analyse the relationship between territorial border controls, cross border trading and economic security in Zimbabwe, with specific reference to Beitbridge border post.

8.2 Addressing Subsidiary Objectives

The subsidiary objectives, all in relation to Beitbridge border post, are:

a) To analyse the contribution of informal cross border trade crossing Beitbridge border post to the economic security of informal cross border traders.
b) To analyse the contribution of informal cross border trade crossing Beitbridge border post to the economic security of Zimbabweans.
c) To examine the practices and navigation of informal cross border traders at Beitbridge border post.
d) To examine the practices and problems of border control management at Beitbridge border post.

The first subsidiary objective was to analyse the contribution of informal cross border trade to the economic security of informal cross border traders. The review of literature in chapter 3 showed how poverty was rife in Zimbabwe and, due to high unemployment rates in Zimbabwe, economic

security had declined immensely. Despite such unfortunate events unfolding in Zimbabwe, a different story could be told for informal cross border traders as informal cross border trade absorbed the economic shocks for many struggling Zimbabweans. Chapter 6 showed that informal cross border trade had transformed the lives of the traders from a place of hopelessness to a reasonable level of self-sufficiency. Many traders who partake in this type of trade ended up with increased income, resulting in these entrepreneurs being able to accumulate savings and hence continue to invest and reinvest in the informal sector. The traders in question were able to cover medical bills, education, accommodation, food and clothing for their families.

Chapter 6 also showed that most traders were seriously concerned with growing their businesses, and moving beyond the survivalist status. In fact, some were actually realising such goals as they had opened boutiques, and had an array of tables selling their wares in Zimbabwe; which is reflective of business growth. Thus, most traders (even those that were still struggling to get their trading activities off the ground) agreed that informal cross border trade had improved their economic security.

The second subsidiary objective was to analyse the contribution of informal cross border trade to economic security of Zimbabweans. Chapter 6 addressed this objective by looking at various benefits brought about by ICBTs to Zimbabweans. One of the key points discussed was supply of affordable goods in the country at a time of unprecedented economic decay. To a significant extent, ICBTs 'fed the country' in 2008 when formal businesses and the government went into deep crisis, and the evidence from this thesis shows that they have continue to play a crucial role in the supply of basic goods at an affordable price.

Due to their persistent activities, ICBTs have contributed to revenue collection for the government through the importation of goods. Clandestine activities at the border post do take place amongst ICBTs but this does not necessarily imply complete tax evasion. In some cases, corrupt dealings such as under-invoicing occur, while ICBTs do also often pay the full duties; though, of course, some traders devised mechanisms to avoid paying duty at all. The duty paid by ICBTs contributed meaningfully to government revenue during an era of economic decay, where most companies have closed down and government has little alternative avenues for taxation.

In its diversity, informal cross border trade has contributed immensely to job creation in Zimbabwe at time when unemployment is rampant. Chapter 6 showed that this trade was creating employment

for people from all walks of life; educated, uneducated, old and young people. This activity provided job opportunities not only for the entrepreneurs themselves, but for a range of workers of ICBTs as well – those who sold the wares, their touts, 'jaggers' and even runners and transporters also made a living because of cross border trade. Thus, this trade has become a solid safety net in Zimbabwe at a time of economic decline, serving both borderland communities (like Beitbridge) and more central parts of Zimbabwe.

The third subsidiary objective was to examine the practices and navigation of informal cross border traders at Beitbridge border post. To address this goal, Chapter 5 excavated channels, systems and nodal linkages which facilitate importation of ICBT wares across the Beitbridge border post. The entanglement of unorthodox relationships at the border post was found to be key in the enhancement of the activities of the ICBTs. Most traders resorted to the use of *Amalitshas* and bus drivers to cross the Beitbridge border post, and these in turn had "cordial business relations" with border control agents and found it easy to navigate through the border post with their wares. Touts could also be used for the same goal but these were mostly treated with skepticism by both ICBTs and border control officials as they were branded thieves and crooks. Some *Amalitshas* used unofficial routes to cross the border in a bid to completely evade taxation though it was a risky enterprise as such routes were unsafe due to activities of robbers (*Amaguma-guma*). Some traders had their own syndicates with border control officials; however, this was unpopular among officials as they wanted to keep their circle closed to avoid falling into anti-corruption traps.

Covid 19 was a game changer, Chapter 7 showed that ICBTs could no longer cross national boundaries with ease as they often did, as countries closed their borders to combat the spread of the pandemic. This led to ICBTs' heavy reliance on runners who had their own means of navigating through the Beitbridge border post to import goods into the country. Truck drivers were also found to be part of the network transporting ICBT wares across the Beitbridge border post, just like bus drivers and runners. Indeed, Covid 19 has further engendered – for ICBTs – well developed and complex channels and systems which facilitate the flourishing of informal cross border trade across the Beitbridge border post.

The fourth subsidiary objective sought to analyse practices and problems of border control management at Beitbridge border post. Chapter 5 of this thesis addressed this crucial objective, showing that complicated and inefficient customs and security procedures remain a major setback

along the border at Beitbridge. The lack of an overarching authority in border control management resulted in disjointed operations. As argued, despite the introduction of some key procedures of trade facilitation aimed at boosting border control management and the efficient flow of goods (such as harmonisation of trade protocols with international norms), border control management at Beitbridge remains problematic due to poor implementation of such procedures. The use of technology and the internet is at the heart of trade facilitation, but considerable human effort still exists at the Beitbridge border post, which limits and compromises trade facilitation in its comprehensive sense.

Inter-agency coordination among border control agents was found to be a serious problem, compromising border control management and trade facilitation at the Beitbridge border post. These disjointed operations create gaps in border control management at Beitbridge, and this fuels border porosity as the different agencies do not closely align their activities and, in the worst case scenario, it results in duplication of activities and thereby exacerbates delays.

This research shows that border control management has remained in shambles inhibited by factors such as shortage of staff, poor infrastructure and technology, and corruption – compromising the very integrity of the control system. Overall, shortcomings in implementation reflect both acts of omission (or negligence) and acts of commission (or corruption), and these point to the lack of embeddedness of trade facilitation procedures in the institutional practices of border control systems and institutions at Beitbridge.

8.3 Addressing the Main Objective

As stated, *the main objective of this study is to to analyse the relationship between territorial border controls, cross border trading and economic security in Zimbabwe, with specific reference to Beitbridge border post.* Indirectly and combined, the four subsidiary objectives address this main objective. In this respect, the intricate task of establishing the complex relationships between the three variables (economic security, informal cross border trading and border control management) highlights the value of this study. Weak border control mechanisms have contributed to the porousness of Beitbridge border post, and this enhances informal cross border activities. The cost of engaging in international trade in the light of the high customs duty charged at Beitbridge border post was highlighted as a likely basis for inhibiting informal cross border movement – in this context, if border control procedures were properly followed, the businesses of ICBTs would

be affected negatively because they lacked the capital and finance to fund international trade. Hence, informal cross border trade thrives on corruption and on the Zimbabwean state's overall inability to monitor its territorial borders. Thus, deficient controls and malpractices within the state's border agencies perpetuate the flourishing of informal cross border trade as an economic activity and consequently improve the economic security of the traders. Just like any social process which is characterised by nodal linkages and connectedness, this system had spillover effects in terms of enhancing the economic security of Zimbabweans more broadly, including through access to goods and employment. In this way, the dysfunctionality of the border control system at Beitbridge was functional for ICBTs and Zimbabweans generally.

Theoretically, this study was hinged on the Actor-Network Theory (ANT). In seeking to understand border control management, and how it relates to the practices of ICBTs, the ANT provided a number of analytical advantages – in particular, it allows for 'following the actor' throughout a network-system, including human agents (both ICBTS and border control agents) and their practices, but also inanimate objects as subjects with material effects.

Understanding the structural weaknesses at the Beitbridge border post became a key issue in grasping the challenges thereof, for both border control agents and ICBTs. Considering 'the human and the technical' as equals in an action-system, made it possible to excavate the problems associated with trade facilitation at the Beitbridge border post. Deficiencies in the human and the technical, and the ways in which they failed to strengthen the potential capacities of each, are central to the problems almost crippling border control management at Beitbridge and likely at other Zimbabwean border posts as well.

Overall, ANT offered a comprehensive understanding of the processes and practices of border control management at Beitbridge, and of the nodal linkages connecting the border control systems with their immediate source of action (ICBT traders). While the border control management system of Zimbabwe exists in the form it does for a multiplicity of reasons, there is no doubt that the activities and strategies of the ICBTs crossing through the Beitbridge border post play a role (unintentionally) in configuring the character of the border system at Beitbridge.

The thesis contributes to the pertinent literature on border control management in Zimbabwe in two main ways. Firstly, it offers a unique and different way of understanding the lives and livelihoods of ICBTs by focusing primarily on one particular node in the network-system, namely,

the border control management system. This prism for viewing the ICBTs brings to the fore more fully the depth and forms of the agency they enact in order to pursue their lives, as they turn something dysfunctional into something quite functional. Secondly, this study has meaningfully applied the ANT in border control studies in Zimbabwe, and hence shows its potential contribution for furthering our understanding of border control management. The ANT facilitated an exposition of the structural mayhem which results in discord and inefficiencies of border control systems. It also enables an examination of the activities of ICBTs through a territorial border control lens, and in a way which demonstrates the complex entanglements between border control agents and ICBTs as they both pursue their own goals, sometimes in antagonistic ways and sometimes for their mutual benefit.

8.4 Study Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

This study examined border control management, informal cross border trade and economic security in Zimbabwe. However, the thesis did not analyse what happens on both sides of the border post. A fuller analysis is required to comprehensively understand challenges at the Beitbridge border post as a result of border control functions of both sides, including the lack of harmonisation around trade facilitation at cross-border level (for example, between South Africa and Zimbabwe in the case of Beitbridge). Such a transborder understanding would have also deepen our understanding of the activities of ICBTs, as the border post on the South African side is an important nodal point in the entire network-system.

The thesis also suffered from methodological limitations as the border area is considered sensitive. Because of this, officials sometimes declined to give their perspectives on certain issues to avoid compromising national security as borders are a first line of defence. In fact, some border control officials completely refused to take part in the research and, likely, their contributions could have added value to the empirical findings of this study.

Moreover, economic security is just one building block of human security and, in future studies, a wider focus could be given to questions around food security, health security, and political security.

Hopefully, this thesis stimulates other scholars of borders to engage further along these lines of inquiry.

8.5 Policy Implications of the Study

Findings of this study have a number of policy implications which can be adopted by most African countries which are experiencing poor border control management. Public revenue collection is an important aspect of border control administration and consequently fiscal policy, but this is greatly compromised by corruption among public office holders. Thus, public sector reforms are essential in order to curb corruption, which may also encompass adequate remuneration for such officials.

As delays continue to bedevil the Beitbridge border post, considering the construction of one border post might be of value. As learnt from successes of the one border post between Zimbabwe and Zambia, the same strategy could be useful to mitigate unnecessary delays at the Zimbabwe-South Africa border. This would entail having one major border post where Zimbabwean and South Africa officials operate from the same platform clearing goods together and, once clearing is done, traders can just proceed with their trip with no need for a second stop, as is the case with the current system where clearance is done twice (on both sides). This would reduce times spent at border posts and greatly increase border efficiencies.

Government support is critical to help informal cross border traders realise their full potential and contribute greatly to the economy. Creating legislation to formalise the informal sector would be an incentive for informal traders to act in line with government regulations. The major problem has been that informal cross border traders are viewed as enemies of the state and their activities are often trivialised as of no account. The government should start considering this economically-active group as partners in economic development. It needs to implement policies which support activities of this group such as the introduction of the STR at all border posts, credit facilities to help them boost their activities and easy access to foreign currency facilities as they require foreign currency to buy wares in other countries.

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Appendix 1:Interview Guide for ICBTs

Information to Participants

Topic of research: The nexus between territorial border controls, cross border trading and economic security in Zimbabwe: The case of Beitbridge border post

Purpose: This thesis seeks to understand the relationship between territorial border controls, informal cross border trading and economic security in Zimbabwe with specific reference to cross border trading at the Beitbridge border post along the Zimbabwean-South African border.

This study is an academic research and your participation will be greatly appreciated. Your participation in this study is voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time of the research whenever you deem necessary.

Anonymity and confidentiality is guaranteed for this study, as this research follows a strict standard of ethics. Please indicate in one of the boxes below if you would like your name to be mentioned in when the findings of this research are being reported.

- ☐ You can mention my name in your findings.
- ☐ I don't want my name to be mentioned in your findings.

I request to make audio recordings while making notes to make sure all ideas are captured and transcribed as provided by participants. I will only record this interview if you are comfortable with being recorded. The recording will be used only for this research and will be used by the researcher only. Please tick the appropriate box below for the option you are comfortable with.

- ☐ You can record this interview.
- ☐ I don't want to be recorded during this interview.

Questions

1) How long have you worked as informal cross border trader?

2) Where do you buy your wares from?

3) How is this trade impacting your livelihood?

4) How do import your wares through the Beitbridge border post? Do you pay your taxes?

5) How do you finance your business, do you have any credit facilities?

6) What are runners? What role do the play and do you use them?

7) Are you satsisfied with the nature of service provided at Beitbridge border post? And does that have any effect on your business?

8) Is the government of Zimbabwe supportive to your activities?

Thank you so much for your time, your contribution is greatly appreciated. You can sign this consent form below:

Name: Date: Signature of Participant:

Appendix 2:Interview Guide for ICBTS during Covid 19

Information to Participants

Topic of research: The nexus between territorial border controls, cross border trading and economic security in Zimbabwe: The case of Beitbridge border post

Purpose: This thesis seeks to understand the relationship between territorial border controls, informal cross border trading and economic security in Zimbabwe with specific reference to cross border trading at the Beitbridge border post along the Zimbabwean-South African border.

This study is an academic research and your participation will be greatly appreciated. Your participation in this study is voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time of the research whenever you deem necessary.

Anonymity and confidentiality is guaranteed for this study, as this research follows a strict standard of ethics. Please indicate in one of the boxes below if you would like your name to be mentioned in when the findings of this research are being reported.

- ☐ You can mention my name in your findings.
- ☐ I don't want my name to be mentioned in your findings.

I request to make audio recordings while making notes to make sure all ideas are captured and transcribed as provided by participants. I will only record this interview if you are comfortable with being recorded. The recording will be used only for this research and will be used by the researcher only. Please tick the appropriate box below for the option you are comfortable with.

- ☐ You can record this interview.
- ☐ I don't want to be recorded during this interview.

1) How are you buying your wares during the Covid 19 pandemic lockdown?

2) How has this impacted on your livelihood as an informal cross border trader?

3) Do you export any wares to any other country including South Africa? If so how are you managing that during Covid 19?

4) Has covid 19 affected the cost of trading in anyway? If so how?

5) Do you think informal cross border activities have a significant impact in the spread of Covid 19 in Zimbabwe?

6) How has been your business operating under the lockdown? Have you experienced any form of change in your sales of commodities?

Thank you so much for your time, your contribution is greatly appreciated. You can sign this consent form below:

Name: Date: Signature of Participant:

Appendix 3:Interview Guide for Border Control Managers

Information to Participants

Topic of research: The nexus between territorial border controls, cross border trading and economic security in Zimbabwe: The case of Beitbridge border post

Purpose: This thesis seeks to understand the relationship between territorial border controls, informal cross border trading and economic security in Zimbabwe with specific reference to cross border trading at the Beitbridge border post along the Zimbabwean-South African border.

This study is an academic research and your participation will be greatly appreciated. Your participation in this study is voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time of the research whenever you deem necessary.

Anonymity and confidentiality is guaranteed for this study, as this research follows a strict standard of ethics. Please indicate in one of the boxes below if you would like your name to be mentioned in when the findings of this research are being reported.

- ☐ You can mention my name in your findings.
- ☐ I don't want my name to be mentioned in your findings.

I request to make audio recordings while making notes to make sure all ideas are captured and transcribed as provided by participants. I will only record this interview if you are comfortable with being recorded. The recording will be used only for this research and will be used by the researcher only. Please tick the appropriate box below for the option you are comfortable with.

- ☐ You can record this interview.
- ☐ I don't want to be recorded during this interview.

Questions

1) What is your opinion on border control management procedure in Zimbabwe?

2) To what extent do border control management in Zimbabwe with a special focus on the Beitbridge border post adhere to internationally approved standards on border control and trade facilitation?

3) Basing on your practical experience in border control management how effective are border control systems at the Beitbridge border post?

4) Are border control agents knowledgeable of the Simplified Trade Regime? What opinion on this mechanism.

5) Does the current system of border control management take into account interest of small scale traders particularly informal cross border Traders (ICBT)?

6) Do you think there is a relationship between border control management and economic security of Informal cross border traders?

7) Are the allegations of corruption levelled against border control official true?

8) What is the perspective of government on informal cross border trade?

9) What are the main challenges in border control management in Zimbabwe?

10) What is the contribution of borderland communities to ICBT and bordering?

Thank you so much for your time, your contribution is greatly appreciated. You can sign this consent form below:

Name: Date: Signature of Participant:

Appendix 4:Interview Guide for Experts

Information to Participants

Topic of research: The nexus between territorial border controls, cross border trading and economic security in Zimbabwe: The case of Beitbridge border post

Purpose: This thesis seeks to understand the relationship between territorial border controls, informal cross border trading and economic security in Zimbabwe with specific reference to cross border trading at the Beitbridge border post along the Zimbabwean-South African border.

This study is an academic research and your participation will be greatly appreciated. Your participation in this study is voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time of the research whenever you deem necessary.

Anonymity and confidentiality is guaranteed for this study, as this research follows a strict standard of ethics. Please indicate in one of the boxes below if you would like your name to be mentioned in when the findings of this research are being reported.

- ☐ You can mention my name in your findings.
- ☐ I don't want my name to be mentioned in your findings.

I request to make audio recordings while making notes to make sure all ideas are captured and transcribed as provided by participants. I will only record this interview if you are comfortable with being recorded. The recording will be used only for this research and will be used by the researcher only. Please tick the appropriate box below for the option you are comfortable with.

- ☐ You can record this interview.
- ☐ I don't want to be recorded during this interview.

Questions

1) What is your opinion on border control management in Zimbabwe?
2) Does the current system of border control management take into account interest of small scale traders particularly informal cross border Traders (ICBT)?
3) Do you think there is a relationship between border control management and economic security of Informal cross border traders?
4) What has been the impact of informal cross border trade on Zimbabwe as a nation?

5) What role does ICBT play on reindustrialisation of Zimbabwe?
6) Is corruption a set back in securing Zimbabwean borders and revenue collection?
7) What are the main challenges in border control management in Zimbabwe?
8) What is the perspective of government on informal cross border trade?

Appendix 5:Informed Consent Form

TITLE OF RESEARCH STUDY: The nexus between territorial border controls, cross border trading and economic security in Zimbabwe: The case of Beitbridge border post

NAME OF THE RESEARCHER: Hilary Nare

DEPARTMENT: Department of Sociology, Rhodes University

CONSENT BY PARTICIPANT

THE UNDERSIGNED……. (Full name and surname or Mark (X) of the participant)

Hereby confirm as follows:

1. I was invited to participate in the above-mentioned research study which is being undertaken by Hilary Nare, from the Department of Sociology in the faculty of Humanities at Rhodes University in Grahamstown.

2. The following aspects have been explained to me: 2.1. Aim: The main objective of the thesis is to analyse the relationship between territorial border controls, cross border trading and economic security in Zimbabwe, with specific reference to Beitbridge border post.

2.2. Purpose: I am aware that this study is for academic purposes.

2.3. Possible Risks: I am aware that the researcher is asking me to share with him some very personal and confidential information, and that I may feel uncomfortable talking about some of the topics. I do not have to answer any question or take part in the interview if I do not wish to do so, and I do not have a problem with that. I also do not have to give any reason for refusing to take part or answer any question in the interview.

2.4. Possible Benefits: As a result of my participation in this research study, there will be no direct benefit to me, but my participation is likely to help in improving border controls thus making our borders more secure while promoting economic security of Zimbabweans and potentially other African countries.

2.5. Confidentiality: My identity will not be revealed in any discussion, description or scientific publications by the investigators.

2.6. Anonymity: I understand that anonymity will be ensured in the write-up by disguising my identity.

2.7. Voluntary Participation: My participation is voluntary. My decision whether to participate or not will in no way affect the current help and support I receive, from Hilary Nare and/or Rhodes University.

3. I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time, without giving any explanation.
4. I give consent that my interview can be tape-recorded

I HEREBY CONSENT VOLUNTARILY TO PARTICIPATE IN THE ABOVE-MENTIONED RESEARCH STUDY

Name of Participants Date Signature

Name of Researcher Date Signature

Appendix 6:Rhodes University Ethical Clearance

RUESC Chair hereby grants extension to Mr Hilary Nare (18N9340) under the supervision of Prof Kirk Helliker to continue the research project titled The nexus between territorial border controls, cross border trading and economic security in Zimbabwe: The case of Beitbridge border post which has been granted ethical clearance approval under the tracking number 2019-0678-769, for 1 Jan 2021 - 31 December 2021. This extension implies that there have been no significant changes to the conditions/term of the original application.

Regards

Chair: RUESC