MA Course-Work mini-dissertation

Trade Beyond the Margins

Cross-Border Traders Between Zambia and South Africa

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Introduction

In the week leading up to Christmas day, the border between South Africa and Zimbabwe is a very busy place. The road up to the border post, at the Beitbridge bridge over the Limpopo river, is a kilometres long snaking queue of cars, buses and trucks, waiting for hours before they go through the routine customs checks and stamps. Most passengers, who are quite naturally eager to stretch their limbs and escape the heat, abandon their vehicle and driver and walk ahead for the remaining distance to the front of the queue for shade and refreshments. But strangely, this is not a flood of Africans coming into South Africa in search of work or mischief over South Africa's holiday season. Instead, it is the exodus of people heavy with groceries, fashionable accessories and various hardware going in the direction of their home countries. In the queue are mostly Zimbabweans, Zambians, Malawians and some nationals from the Democratic Republic of Congo, on the return leg of a brief shopping trip to South Africa, the land of shops and malls.

The frequency of visits by people from the region and the average expenditures, dominated by shopping for resale, indicate that this not a trade of people experiencing poverty but an exercise of wealth. In recent years, there has been a substantial increase in the social economic ties between South Africa, and other countries in Southern Africa in terms of the number of individuals travelling and their expenditure. From 2004 to 2008, foreign direct spending increased by 55% to R83.4 billion, more than a quarter of which was by African shoppers, with more than 40% doing business shopping for retail in their home country (Tourism 2008). While there has undoubtedly been a large influx of migrants coming into South Africa to seek better opportunities, there has also been a dramatic increase in circular migration and cross-border trade with the region. However, popular sentiment, immigration policy and literature on migration in the region are unaware or silent on the scale and diversity of cross-border trade. This is a study that tries to address this. It takes a close look at five cross border traders, and recognises relevance of wealth rather than poverty, to describe a transnational landscape between Zambia and South Africa.

To illustrate, on a bus departing from Johannesburg for a neighbouring or nearby country, there may be street hawkers returning home to resupply themselves with the goods of their trade, like woodcarvings or dry fish, while taking with them electronic appliances they can resell for a margin. The bus is also likely to have women carrying a large number of fashionable clothes or accessories for predetermined customers at home to supplement their households income. Some of the lorries maybe carrying a large load of alcohol for an entrepreneur resident in South Africa in a position to pay others to transport his goods to avoid personally sitting through all the delays. Although all traders are carrying goods across the border, their activity ranges from small scale subsistence trading to ambitious and large scale transport of manufactured goods. The perspective of a large number of South African's is incongruent with this picture. For some (irrespective of race), the Africans from north of the Limpopo river are flooding into South Africa and unfairly taking away jobs and houses, and of course "Hillbrow is overrun with Nigerians". Such perspectives were persuasive enough to contribute to the May 2008 xenophobic pogroms that sprung all around the country and the times such perspectives were expressed publicly and forcefully (Wales-Smith 2008). Furthermore, there has been a history and a continuation of xenophobic violence when locals have

felt competition from foreigners in areas such as street trade, corner shop retail and casual labour. In both in the run up to and since the May 2008 attacks, corner shops run by immigrants from Somalia have been targeted in violent attacks in the cities and around the country in response to the competition they bring to the trade. In recent months, labourers mostly of Zimbabwean origin in the Western Cape farming area of De Doorns have been accused of stealing jobs, threatened and attacked.

South African migration policy also subscribes to the neo-Malthusian view that South Africa has a fixed carrying capacity for foreign nationals (Maharaj 2004, p 20, Crush and Dodson 2007). At the advent of democracy in 1994, official government policy towards immigrants was embodied in the Aliens Control Act of 1991. This was an apartheid era legislation that was premised on "principles of control, exclusion and expulsion" (Crush 1999, p 2) with harsh penalties for those who employed immigrants without appropriate documentation. In 2002, the Immigration Act replaced the Alien Controls Act to address to issues of human rights and constitutionality. However, while the Aliens Control Act tried to keep the barbarians behind the gates, the Immigration Bill was an attempt to root them out from within (Maharaj 2004, p 21). It suggested harsh measures to find foreign nationals without the correct legal status and set up an impractical quota system for work permits (ibid). Although there have been some recent improvements in the South African governments attitude towards immigrants, South African migration policy remains conservative towards immigrants and views them as a burden to the countries jobs and resources. This legal framework takes little cognisance of the high mobility of a large group of people of the southern African region or their practice, as most traders enter South Africa on short term visitors permits only, even though the customs officials at the borders are well aware of the visitors actual business.

Literature on migration in Southern Africa, though not abundant (Agadjanian 2008), in contrast argues for the developmental potential of immigrants to South Africa and criticizes government immigration policy for its conservative and exclusionary tendencies. After the decline of large scale employment in the mines of South Africa, there has been the development of a "new immigrant regime" (Peberdy and Rogerson 2002, p 22)), not characterised by immigration for employment, but instead by new trade networks, by small to medium size business ventures and by informality, with many of these entrepreneurs in the country on visitors permits (ibid, p 22 – 26). The bulk of the literature on migration is centred around the South African aspect of regional migration such as labour, skills, housing, HIV infection rates, refugees, domestic work and other local phenomena. In this valuable literature, quantitative methods of research is pervasive. While large surveys allow us to make inferences such as who and what is involved in migration, the method makes it difficult to make small scale qualitative insights that are particular to individuals in terms of their home, history and motives. It is unfortunate that there isn't more qualitative and narrative based studies it give rich insights into the nature of cross-border trade and migration in Southern Africa.

In my study, I have had detailed and recorded conversations with six Zambians who one way or another, transport goods to Zambia from South Africa or the other way around. Being of Zambian nationality myself, I was in a good position to gain their confidence. On a bus between Johannesburg and Lusaka, I talked to 'shoppers' carrying goods for resale and they were happy to be interviewed about the nature of their business. Also, through the Zambians I know personally in Johannesburg, I was introduced to a manager in a bus company, a woman selling Zambian style dry fish in inner city Johannesburg, a 'shopper' living in Johannesburg and a young man who transports his goods to and

from Zambia with hired trucks. In these sometimes meandering discussions, their personal stories inevitably transpired and explained to some degree how their particular lives lead them to travel to and from South Africa with goods for trade.

The picture I have put together about traders from Zambia from these conversations is not quite, as I had originally suspected, that of resourceful people forced into travelling for trade from a lack of money, jobs or opportunities at home (see (Muzvidziwa 2001),about cross-border traders in a small Zimbabwean town). These are not the actions of a collection of people down on their luck or at their wits end. While many people in Zambia may be such a situation, it is not what is driving the activities of most my subjects. Instead, the travelling and the trading is the actions are often of persons who have money to spend, have or had professional wage employment and who have lifestyle opportunities available to them. It is not the threat of poverty but the pursuit and exercise of wealth that animate that trade.

Following this introduction I draw on literature on migration in Southern Africa and focus on foreign traders and entrepreneurs and argue that this literature represents traders as marginal and only just begins to appreciate the diverse transnational spaces that link South Africa to the region. Each trader is introduced as a character within their story about how and why they got into trading across borders and the degree to which they are a cross-border trader or a migrant is discussed. Finally, I use these narratives to argue that African foreign nationals whose individual commercial activities transcend national borders are not trading in the margins of trade but are at the people at the heart of the burgeoning international trade between South Africa and the region

Literature: transactions across borders

Migration as accumulating wealth

At a global perspective, there are some conversations on migration and development that are helpful and relevant for my subject with some guiding principles to help me along. In the first and most useful, De Haas (2005, pp 1271) argues that migration is not necessarily the result of poverty and misery. While some literature, such as that by Maharaj (2004) and Dodson, Tevera, et al. (2008), has shown that many migrants leave their home country to escape povety, other literature mikes the vital point that it is rarely the poorest that migrate (Skeldon 1997) and the ability to travel to another country or place is often a strategic luxury of the relatively affluent (De Haas 2005, p 1271, Skeldon 1997, 2002). Second, and closely related to the first principle, development – reconceptualised for a mobile world to include freedom of movement and the option of a better standard of living - need not result in reduced mobility and limited migration (Bakewell 2009). The argument goes that it is out of date and paternalistic to insist on models development based on the nation-state and fixed territorial bounds that do not recognise the agency of migrants from poor countries. This is, it seems, unfortunately the paradigm of the World Bank and numerous NGOs and nation states (north and south), argues Bakewell. Instead, development should be reconceptualised for today's mobile world where mobility is a signature of (relative) affluence. They argue, therefore, that there is ample room then, if northern countries penchant for restriction is to be ignored, to have both migration and progressive development. Literature that supports or opposes this idea it is referred to by Alan Gamlen (2008) as misleading and reflects a "modern geopolitical imagination" (Agnew 2001, 2003)

Both De Haas and Bakewell focus on north-south international migration, constructing their arguments largely on the significance of remittances and the development they bring to southern countries (in a cartographically up-side-down way South Africa here plays the role of the 'northern' country and the regional countries in the north the 'southern' countries). De Haas argues that contrary to popular perception remittances can and often do foster development by underwriting local investment, study and economic activity. Bakewell understands remittances as a household strategy that traverses territorial boundaries of the nation state and that are sustainable given the recent development in communication technologies. In contrast, Rebecca Davies (2007) doubts the development potential of remittances alone. She argues that diasporas strengthen the links between the skilled expatriate and the home country and it is in these links that there is the development potential . Davies advocates for diaspora over remittances with the caveat that the concept needs to be updated because the very diaspora themselves have been significantly affected by the free movement of capital, technology, labour, and commodities. In sum, the thickening of links through communication, commodities and other means between migrants in the sending and host countries amount to a form of transnationalism (Portes, Guarnizo and Landholt 1999). The example of the migrants in my study, who use cross-border trade rather than remittances to move money between countries, builds on this idea except in the context of a regular circulatory migration.

Portes, Guarzino and Landolt (1999) have recognized that international migration has had a particular transformation in the late 20th century which has been signified by transnationalism which

they recognise as a growing number of fluid and diverse ties linking people across countries. Transnationalism and its actors - the transnational migrants - introduces a new analytical matrix . Crush and McDonald (2000, p 8 - 11) have summarized the characteristics of transnationalism that must be identified before it can be studied with analytical rigour. First, there must be evidence of a high intensity of exchanges between the host and home country with the immigrants embedded in both. Second, the transnational activities mentioned are tied to the expansion and internationalization of capitalist production. Third, transnationalism is used as a new way of understanding migrant identities as a hybrid or multiplicity rather than in terms of assimilated and relinquished identities. Fourth, transnationalism as a study should encompass the entire migratory nexus with a focus on its networks and linkages. Finally, they argue that these newly accrued resources of transnational migrants, such as technologies of communication, or communities stretch across boundaries, resisting exploitation and challenging asymmetries of power in the global market place. This shall be used as a framework to analyse the activities of cross-border traders from my study.)

The cross-border traders and entrepreneurs I interviewed are not making a one way trip to escape poverty and neither are they simply working (or hoping to work) in South Africa to send home remittances. Instead these traders are a relatively new conduit for the movement of commodities and capital between South Africa and Zambia. My study makes use of this framework but it does not exhaust it. The narratives and insights presented in this study are a step towards substantiating characteristics one, two and four above. However, this is not a study of hybrid identities and nor is it's empirical component suitable to argue that there is a challenge to the asymmetries of power in the global market.

Households and remittances in the new immigration regime

Literature on migration in Southern Africa is biased towards migration to South Africa (Agadjanian 2008). Furthermore, it is biased towards migration phenomena that exists within the bounds of South Africa. This is partly a justified reflection of the colonial history of Southern Africa, where short to medium term migrant labour flowed to the neighbouring regions to South African mines in a coercive regulated system that continued throughout the apartheid period (Crush 1991, 1995) and remains today to a much lesser degree (Crush and Dodson 2007). But with the decline of both apartheid and large scale employment in the mines of South Africa, a "new immigrant regime" has arrived in southern Africa (Peberdy and Rogerson 2002). Literature on this new regime is well populated by publications produced by, or in association with, the Southern African Migration Project (SAMP) which largely describes new migrant flows through South Africa including and beyond the employment in the mines and formal wage employment for foreign nationals from the region. This new regime, this literature suggests, is not characterised solely by migration or immigration (altogether shall we call it (im)migration) for employment, but also by new trade networks, by small to medium size business ventures, by asylum and refuge and by a combination of all these with the backdrop of South Africa's restrictive and muddled immigration policy (Crush and Dodson 2007, Maharaj 2004) and an inflammable xenophobic attitude from many of South African nationals (see for example "foreigners are stealing *our* women" (Sanger 2009)).

This literature focuses primarily on immigration to South Africa with less focus on the countries these (im)migrants call home. Take for a example a study of foreign migrants working informally in the agricultural sector (Crush, Lincoln, et al. 2000) a study of foreign street traders in the city of Durban (Hunter and Skinner 2003), a study of homelessness and immigration (McDonald 1998) or a study of domestic work and mobility in the context of the South Africa's high HIV infection rates (Peberdy and Dinat 2005). Illuminating studies based on contemporary surveys, this literature sheds light on the new immigration regime in South Africa. With SAMP as a chief proponent, much of this work has also been an attempt to influence and comment on government policy and its amendments on (im)migration, frequently and appropriately lamenting lost opportunities for progressive change in immigration law.

However, for this study, and for a more holistic understanding of (im)migration in South Africa, it is insufficient to focus only on foreign national's experiences in South Africa. As Douglas Massey found with the United States' statistics on Mexican migration in the 1980s, there is a limitation on the kind of analysis that can be done with information gathered at only one end of the migration trajectory (Massey 1990, 1987). Furthermore, Massey argues that it is insufficient to analyze (im)migrants as isolated individuals when theorizing migration decision making and behaviour. The appropriate unit of analysis should instead be the household or the family (D. S. Massey 1990, Root and De Jong 1991, Stark and Bloom 1985) as for example in the remittances study by Gubhaju and De Jong (2009). Furthermore, the networks of individuals, which necessarily includes households, of transnational migrants have been singled out by Portes, Guarnizo and Landholt (1999, p 220). Crush and McDonald (2000, p 10) are of the opinion that Southern African migration literature fails to capture the entire migratory nexus. In the Southern African context, ethnographic and historical work on Southern Africa forefronts the household as the intermediary unit of analysis (Spiegal 1995, Murray 1987, Crush and McDonald 2000). Furthermore, SAMP has broadened the scope of data collection on migration by conducting large public opinion surveys, extensive questionnaire-based interviews[1] (Peberdy 2000, Peberdy and Crush 1998) as well as migration and remittances surveys in 2004/5 in Lesotho, Swaziland, Mozambique and Zimbabwe with the latter including a substantial household focus (Pendelton, et al. 2006). The Human Social Sciences Research council (HSRC) also conducted a large questionnaire based survey targeting households in 2001-2002 (Gubhaju and De Jong 2009).

With these alternative methods there is a finer grasp of the new migration regime that is better placed to describe how it is gendered. For instance, Belinda Dodson (1998) observes, from analysis of the SAMP public opinion survey, that female migrants tend to be older, better educated and involved in informal activities such as 'shopping' and migrate for social and conjugal reasons as compared to their male counterparts who migrate predominantly for formal employment. But then from the more recent remittances and migration surveys (Dodson, Tevera, et al. 2008), it seems as if since 1998 younger women are migrating for economic reasons, again mostly informal, and suggests that women's cross-border migration is on the increase. This is a trend that is congruent with my experience given the number and frequency with which I have seen Zambian women travelling by bus to buy consignments of goods in Johannesburg for sale in Zambia.

[1] Based primarily on semi-structured interviews with non-South African and South African traders of handicrafts and curios in Johannesburg and Cape Town but in supported by open ended interviews with home affairs and government officials in Zimbabwe, Mozambique and South Africa.

However, some of the inferences by Dodson et al (2008) of the migration and remittances survey, contrast with my observations of Zambia women's very visible participation of cross-border trade. For instance, Dodson et al find that in the households surveyed, the majority of them depend (and depend quite substantially for income) on a male member of the household for remittances from abroad, and these remittances are usually far in excess of that sent by female members of households. That is to say, women seem to make up a rather limited part of this picture. Secondly, Dodson et al, conclude that these remittances are a poverty alleviation mechanism because they are spent mostly on food, fuel, clothing and education. This goes against the grain of the principle from De Haas (2005) and my observations here that mobility and migration are a signature of relative affluence rather than poverty. Although the 1998 survey revealed that one of the substantial reasons for travelling to South Africa among women was shopping, this occupation is not followed up in the 2008 survey.

It could be that restricting the data to remittances in effect specifies a group of (in)migrants with a limited form of mobility and thus less of a capacity for spending on luxurious items or investment in productive initiatives (although, as De Haas (2005) points out, spending on education is a significant investment in itself). Apart from the fact that these surveys excluded Zambian households (and therefore my subject's specific context), restricting the observations to remittances might very well exclude the many women who travel to South Africa on short trips as 'shoppers'[2], - traders who buy goods for resale in their home country - as well as other entrepreneurs who's ventures stretch across borders. For instance, officials at the South African High Commission in Harare and Embassy in Mozambique in 1997 claimed that most of the applicants for visitors permits are traders and that 90-95% of women applicants for visas in Harare were going to trade or buy goods in South Africa (Peberdy and Crush 1998, p 30). Furthermore, a study of small to medium size enterprises of immigrants in Johannesburg's inner city found that only 26% of them remit money home (Rogerson 1997, p 17) and a study of migrants in the Johannesburg inner city (Reitzes, Tamela and Thulare 1997) that cross-border traders rather send goods home instead. Household surveys and remittances are only part of this complex picture which need methods beyond straight forward household and remittance surveys to be grasped more completely.

While household and remittance studies are a good first step to capturing the entirety of the migration nexus, it is insufficient in itself to begin to appreciate the thickening of relations between migrant communities and their home countries. Cross-border trade, by its very nature, involves migrants regularly on the move in a circuitous migratory path that undermines the 'here' (sending migrants country) and 'there' (receiving migrants country) which is one of the initial assumptions of remittances. For some countries, it could be that where women do not register strongly in contributions to the household income by remittances, they might make up for in the contributions by cross-border trade[3].

[2] In the Zimbabwe case in particular they were referred to as *vakadzi vekuSouth* (women of the South) as described by Muzvidziwa (2001).

[3] For instance, some studies show that Zimbabwean women were more likely to visit South Africa for short periods of time (Peberdy 2000, p 205, Peberdy and Crush 1998, p 26) and that most of the visa applications in Harare and Maputo were women applicants going to trade or buy goods in South Africa (Peberdy and Crush 1998, p 30)

Enterprise, trade and shopping: an alternative way to study transnational migration

There is something to be gained by going beyond the household remittances studies to learn more about the migrant/trader experiences. In particular, studies of immigrant participation in particular occupations such as for instance small to medium size enterprises (SMME) in the inner city of Johannesburg (Rogerson 1997). Along with the new migration regime, the inner city of Johannesburg was transformed in the 1990s when it was taken over by the SMMEs of foreign immigrants[4]. These are businesses often run by a young male entrepreneurs with a handful of employees usually in services such as retailing ethnic clothes, motorcar repair and panel beating, hairdressing and internet cafes. From my observations I would also add private commuter bus companies with their bus stations in the inner city and owned by businessmen from the region. On the large end of the SMME spectrum, these companies take mostly traders and shoppers back and forth between Zimbabwe, Zambia, Malawi, Mozambique and South Africa.

While these entrepreneurs in the city all have problems with finance and access to credit, visa's and permits, harassment from police, other officials and crime, they have differences along regional origin (Rogerson 1997, p 3). Non-SADC members often depend on international networks (such as a family member who had formal employment in another country), focus on niche markets such as ethnic clothes of foods, have larger and better capitalized enterprises, better educated and more likely to employ South African nationals (Rogerson 1997, p 11). On the other hand, SADC immigrants often generate their operating capital from formal employment within South Africa (as did my an entrepreneur in my study, Dennis Banda[5], who I introduce later). As Muzvidziwa (2001) found with Zimbabwean cross-border traders, these initiatives start off with a reliance on family members and friends (hence fellow non-South Africans) for employment and business, but as their trade develops and they become better established, they become more independent and are more likely to employ or trade with South Africans.

At another angle, Sally Peberdy and Jonathan Crush did a large number of interviews in South Africa (and some in Harare) with immigrant street traders who deal in handicraft and curios (Peberdy and Crush 1998). Their article, no doubt contributing to the conversations initiated by the green paper on immigration to eventually replace the Aliens Control Act of 1991, is an explicit rebuttal of various myths about street traders and African immigrants in South Africa. These traders are not poverty stricken, or uneducated, or in the country illegally (though strictly speaking, the visitors permit they are allowed into the country with does not licence them to trade goods) or a drain on the economy. Less than half the respondents expressed a desire to enter formal employment and up to 56% of them (it goes up to 78% for SADC traders) take goods with them when they travel back to their home countries in addition to the handicraft and curios they bring in to South Africa to sell. The goods taken back to sell include electronic accessories, appliances, clothes, food stuffs, shoes and household goods which are not strictly for their own households in the home countries but for commercial exchange (Peberdy 2000, p 209). However, in restricting the study to handicraft and

[4] following the rise of the black-dominated informal economy, a decline in the in inner-city's formal manufacturing base, decentralization of corporate head offices to suburban locations, a slow growth in the finance and business services and the mounting level of office vacancies (Rogerson 1997, p4, citing various sources).

[5] The names of the participants in this study are fictitious.

curios trading, the research focuses on individuals that who have committed themselves wholly to the curio trade and who engage in the trade for economical sustenance. For instance, 42% of the respondents said they had started trading for 'survival' or the need for income and this group cited a lack of employment opportunities both in their home country and in South Africa, to support family or simply the need to earn a living (Peberdy 2000, p 207). It is becomes more interesting to study foreign nationals from the region who are in South Africa either as frequent visitors or as migrants and look at their trading activities.

Muzvidziwa's study of Zimbabwean cross-border traders does not focus on street traders but traders from a particular town in Zimbabwe, who buy goods in South Africa for resale in their home town, but are nevertheless is set in the context of limited opportunities and urban poverty. Aiming for both female headed households and migrants involved in cross-border trade, Muzvidziwa interviewed 50 female headed households in the small town of Masvingo in southern Zimbabwe. Just over a quarter of these household heads were engaged in cross-border trade and a further 46% of them were making income by selling craft to traders (quite possibly some of the traders mentioned above in Peberdy and Crush 1998). In the context of deteriorating social-economic breakdown and the aftermath of the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) in Zimbabwe, cross-border traders, mostly household heads, managed to cope and escape poverty in a town where the majority of women struggle to subsist. Though obviously intrepid and strategic[6], the women who practice cross-border trade to subsist their household activities. Like Peberdy and Crush's study (1998), this is a study of (im)migrants who practice trade out of outright necessity rather than as an addition to other important activities engage in as migrants.

Many of the traders mentioned in this literature purchase their goods for re-sale from wholesalers in the inner city of Johannesburg (Peberdy 2000, p 370), which include large wholesale complexes[7], with China city among them, which are run almost entirely by recent Chinese immigrants. This is the most recent and most populous iteration of immigrations to South Africa from mainland China since the early 20th century (Wilhelm 2006). This arrival of these migrants coincides with the finalising of diplomatic relations between The Peoples Republic of China and South Africa in 1998, and is composed of people with few skills but is comprised of people who worked their way up from street hawkers, to wholesale suppliers and finally to importers (ibid). Customers of these wholesalers also include shopkeepers, retailers and hawkers and these customers come from all over South Africa and beyond and so include many cross-border traders (ibid).

In this paper, I consider cross-border traders who are 'shoppers' – migrants who travel for a short period of time to buy goods for resale in their home country – who are sometimes entrepreneurs with registered companies in their country of origin, Zambia, and so challenging the category 'informal trader'. Some of the 'shoppers' do not seem to trade out of economic necessity (though they may claim to) but rather to supplement their household income which is often spent on luxury goods such as subscription television or clothes in vogue. I have interviewed cross- border traders whose activities echo the comments of De Haas (2005)and Bakewell (2009) that mobility is a signature of affluence and migration does not necessarily imply under development.

[6] Muzvidziwa describes how they use multiple identities to negotiate obstinate customs officials, reluctant customers, expedient politicians who blame the countries woes on their trade and a media that demonizes them as witches and economic saboteurs.

[7] See the article 'From China With Love' *Mail & Guardian,* 9th January 2006.

In the following section, I draw extensively on quantitative literature collected by Statistics South Africa and cited in SA Tourism and some reports from the Small Business Project, to give the large scale context of cross-border trade in the region. The studies referred to make it clear that African shopping for retail in the home countries is on the increase and a significant part of foreign direct spending and the South African economy.

Big spending African shoppers: What draws many Zambians to SA

The amounts spent by African foreigners in South Africa is significant. According to South African tourism (Tourism SA, 2006), the number of tourists (which includes cross-border traders) visiting South Africa has increased by over 100% between 1994 and 2005. This increase has been driven mainly by visitors from African land markets nearby, such as Lesotho, Zimbabwe, Mozambique and other countries from the SADC region. The total direct spending from the visitors has also been on the increase (up 55% to R83.4 billion from 2004 to 2008) (Tourism SA, 2008). From at least 2004, more than half of this spending has been from African visitors. Also, from 2006 to 2008 (and possibly before), well over half of the value of this direct spending has been on shopping, and of this, more than 40% is on 'shopping – goods for resale'. In 2008, over a third of the visitors from Africa and the Middle East travelled for the purpose of shopping, with more than half of them for business shopping in particular. Also, the number of repeat visitors to South Africa is on the increase while the number of first, second and third time visitors was on the decrease between 2006 and 2008. These statistics are evidence of the significance of the trade on the large scale and that cross-border trade has resilience over time and is not exceptional. Interviews with the cross-border traders who make a tiny contribution to these figures give substance to some of the categories used in the reports such as 'business-shopper'.

Zambian visitors have a significant representation in these reports. After South Africa's immediate neighbours in Africa, the country is the largest source market, with an increase in the number of visitors up by just under 5% between 2007 and 2008 . Although visiting friends, relatives as well as business travel (reasons which co-exist comfortably with short visits for trade) were the most popular reasons stated by Zambians in the tourism reports of 2006 and 2008. Furthermore, of the ones that travelled for shopping (just under 10%), all of them claimed to be visiting for business shopping only (Tourism SA, 2008, p 26). Thus these statistics do give a context to my specific Zambian subjects.

The information from these reports, makes it clear that Africans are travelling to South Africa, mostly by land, in increasing numbers and spending increasing amounts[8]. In addition, much of this is a circular migration (increasing repeat visits) and a significant portion of it involves shopping for goods for resale in the home country. My observations of travellers heavy with goods at the border with Zimbabwe, bus stations and wholesalers in the inner city confirms these statistics, except I will add that is seems more overwhelming to the eye.

Cross-border trade appear in these SA Tourism reports under shopping for resale[9] in the home country. This is separate from other reasons for visiting such as 'religion', 'visiting friends and

[8] The tourism reports go as far as to show how much visitors are spending per day

[9] The Annual Tourism reports refer to the practice of foreign nationals who come into the country to buy goods for resale as 'Business – Shopping' (Tourism SA 2008, Tourism SA 2007) or amalgamated into 'Shopping' and call them 'shuttle traders' (Tourism SA, 2005). NGO's such as the Small Business Project (SBP) and

relatives' and 'holiday'. These categories need not be distinct in practice, and qualitative small scale research is the kind of study that can tease out the overriding motives for short migrations to South Africa. For instance one of the traders interviewed does frequently lodge with a relative in Johannesburg, and yet the purpose of her visit to South Africa was to purchase the hardware for resale in Lusaka in her aunt's shop.

It is necessary to recognise cross-border trade as a circular migration that is distinct from other migration (the 2005 Annual Tourism report shows that African visitors are the least seasonal while the 2008 report shows that most visitors have been to the country over 10 times before) and an interesting form in itself. Thus it is a sustained, high intensity activity that is practiced throughout the year. It is different from immigration, in that its practitioners are not in the country for long periods of time to settle for employment, refuge, education or political activity, but instead come for only a few days and return to their home country. However, the interaction of this fluid trade has with the households in the sending countries and the small to medium size enterprises (SMMEs) in South Africa is of interest.

Cross-border trade is not covered by other forms of study of migration that typically cover issues such as labour, housing, disease, refuge or foreign owned SMMEs. Cross-border trader by its nature extends beyond South Africa's borders. Consider that of all the visitors to South Africa in 2008, other regions had a negligible portion who travelled for shopping while over 27% of Africans[10] visited for it. The study of cross-border trade involves considering the full trajectory of its migrations and networks as the goods involved percolate throughout this nexus. This particular trade has been narrowed down to Zambian cross-border traders who operate between Lusaka and Johannesburg.

Commark have referred to 'cross-border shopping' or '-shoppers' while literature some literature has referred to 'street traders', 'cross-border entrepreneurs' or 'cross-border traders' (Peberdy and Crush 1998, Peberdy 2000, Peberdy and Rogerson 2002), with the last two used interchangeably. In this study, people who cross-borders with goods for street trade, as part of shopping for resale or as part of an ambitious self run business are referred to as cross-border traders, and includes the traders mentioned in the literature presented here

[10] This statistic includes the Middle East, but this composes a negligible part of foreign visitors.

Research Method

The literature I have cited here on migration in Southern Africa that begins to understand the transnational circuits which is focused on households and remittances (Dodson 1998, Dodson, Tevera, et al. 2008, Gubhaju and De Jong 2009) or trade and enterprise (Peberdy and Crush 1998, Rogerson 1997, Muzvidziwa 2001) is drawn predominately from large quantitative surveys and questionnaires (though supported by interviews and other supplementary information such as newspapers) rather than those methods based on in-depth interviews with migrants and traders. It was my intention at the outset to use more qualitative observations to add to the quantitative data on migration. This would go some of the way to answer Jens Andersson's call for qualitative methods in literature on southern African migration rather than that which is focused on production relations and macro-economic forces and based primarily on survey methods (2006). The descriptive method that this study is based on attempts to explore the personal motivations of individuals and allows tries to build an understanding of the trade that is compatible with the view of the trader. Rather than only making deductions and statistical inferences from tables of numbers, the narrative story of the trader will hopefully explain how and why, in their background as context, they trade goods between Zambia and South Africa for profit, leisure or subsistence.

However, this initial intention to study cross-border trade from a more qualitative perspective did not furnish me with much of an idea about how to go about doing it. The personal desire to take a closer look into the practice came about from my personal experiences travelling between Johannesburg and Lusaka by bus. The first thing that got my attention from that experience was the inconvenience and discomfort since a large number of passengers on those trips carried enormous amounts of luggage with them. The luggage crowded the cabin of the bus and led to inordinate delays at the Zambia-Zimbabwe Chirundu Beit Bridge border, where Zambian custom officials (or rather just men who block the gate) meticulously search every bag and charge a custom fee on a whim. Once I had come to terms with the inconvenience of this, what had piqued my interest was the fact that most of the bus trips I had been on, there were far more passengers transporting purchases for resale in Zambia than there were people travelling solely to visit for family and friends or holiday.

So naturally, it was on one such bus route that I began my first field work exercise in December of 2008. As I describe under the section called *Portals to Zambia* below, I boarded a bus in Johannesburg bound for Zambia that was quite typically loaded with cross-border traders returning to Zambia with all their purchases. It was here that I met Mrs Njovu[11]and while we queued for stamps with customs officials I explained to her the intent of my study. Mrs Njovu was understandably not very forthright about her business at first, given that I was a stranger to her (Though she did open up a little once she had understood that my mother was Zambian and I had grown up in Zambia). Thankfully, the harrowing experiences of that bus ride gave the two of us, as well as everyone else on the bus, a shared experience that knit us together. The stupendously long queues at the South Africa – Zimbabwe Beit Bridge border, the innumerable Zimbabwean police roadblocks and bribes (which eventually led the whole bus to rise up, protest and boycott all bribes from that road block onwards) and the endless delays and queuing with the Zambian custom

[11] This a pseudonym chosen to respect her privacy, as it is with all subject's names mentioned in this document.

officials had made the trip one long trial that bound the passengers of the bus into one social unit. After that trip I was welcome at Mrs Njovu's home in Lusaka where she introduced me to two friends of hers who are also cross-border traders and we they freely talked about their experiences with me in a recorded interview (see the section called *Kuvutika* below).

To continue this study of cross-border trader I made a second field trip to Johannesburg in June of 2009. To be able to cover both ends of the cross-border migratory cycle, I intended to meet Zambians in Johannesburg on the business of purchasing goods and interviewing them. Unfortunately, I did not know how to go about meeting such migrants. Not only was I (and much more so then) ignorant of the physical and social geography of Johannesburg but I was also aware that, given the dangerous nature of Johannesburg, Zambian's would be more difficult to approach and interact with. There was no forty hour bus trip here with which to form the social bonds I would need to gain the trust of another group of Zambian cross-border traders. I was out of my depth and I didn't know what to do and so for that reason I turned to my friends.

Bwalya and I had briefly been at an A-level school together and we both come to South Africa for our tertiary education at about the same time, though Bwalya studied in Johannesburg and I went to study in Cape Town. He has been employed in Johannesburg since he finished his degree and lives with his wife, Mwape, and children in Johannesburg. When I travelled to Johannesburg that June in 2009, I explained to him that I wanted to interview Zambian traders but didn't know how to find them. Bwalya was quite understanding and helpful and introduced me to Dennis, who was quite involved in cross-border trade and, better than that, knew how to get in touch with other Zambians in Johannesburg involved in the trade. Thus Dennis was both a subject of mine and a guide to both the city and its cross-border traders. But because my old friend Bwalya had introduced me to Dennis, we related to each other primarily as friends (which we generally were), although I did formally interview him, before he went on to assist me with other interviews where he was most useful because he gave me a veneer of legitimacy where I would have otherwise been seen to be nothing but a meddling irritation. For this reason, Dennis had a disproportionate influence on my insights into cross-border trade and the associated Zambian migrants in Johannesburg.

Mwape, Bwalay's wife, to my surprise, had also transported goods to Zambia for resale. Because Mwape had a tertiary education and has had formal employment in Johannesburg, I didn't expect that she would have at times been a cross-border trader. This surprise was one of my insights into the cross-border trade of Zambian migrants that it need not be something done as a full time occupation or something done out of desperation. In any case, I was in need of subjects who had travelled between Zambia and South Africa in person to trade goods and I did not let the fact that I had known Mwape for years get in the way of the fact that she was of legitimate interest to my study.

However, there were some Zambian's involved in the cross-border trade with whom I was unable to have an interview with, no matter the charm from Dennis. The bus drivers of C.R. Holdings, one of the oldest and most established Zambian owned bus operators that commute between Zambia and Lusaka, would not give me a moment of their time and seemed quite suspicious of what I was up to.

For each of my interviews, I recorded and later transcribed the conversation. These interviews were conducted where ever seemed most convenient for the interviewee. Mrs Njovu and Mwape were interviewed in their homes, I interviewed Dennis in a car while driving around on his errands, and

both Marley and Gertrude were interviewed at their work places. The interview with Mrs Njovu was a focus group interview as her two friends, who are also cross-border traders, Chesna and Victoria, also participated. These interviews have been transcribed by me and I have chosen the excerpts that are relevant to my discussion.

How to Make Money in Johannesburg

Zambians are certainly not the dominant group of foreign nationals in South Africa by any means. However, a number of them have come into the country over the last two decades in pursuit of some success or other such as education, employment, business or family. These immigrants, unlike the short term circular migration cross-border traders, are interested in settling in the country and benefiting from its standard of living and services that make use of their skills and training in a way that is not possible in Zambia (such as Dennis Banda[12] who I introduce later). However, they have not lost their national identity and neither have they lost contact with their home country. The responsibility for siblings and under employed relatives soon become the responsibility of the Zambian in South Africa with regular income and thereby maintaining social ties with the wider Zambian community at home. And there is also the need to travel to Zambia frequently either to attend to business and investment ventures in Zambia such as for example building a house[13], or for family and friend's obligations, such as weddings, funerals and such.

Other Zambians are in South Africa on a less formally defined capacity. Rather than studying or seeking professional employment in South Africa based on accredited skills (such as chartered accounting say), they may be employed in a medium size enterprise, such as a bus company in the position of a manager or bus loader. Or they run a low end hotel catering for cross-border traders. These would be Zambians who although working and living in Johannesburg, have little awareness of the full cosmopolitan geography of the city beyond the confines of the inner city where they work and live.

There are also those Zambian's who pretty much live their entire lives in Zambia with little desire to migrate to another country for either the short or medium term but who never the less travel to South Africa a number of times a year for a handful of days at a time to purchase items that are known to be in high demand in Zambia and sold for a sum favourable enough to make the whole venture profitable. This need not replace or substitute for their primary employment or responsibility in Zambia since these travels maybe left for public holidays or times a few days can be taken off. Indeed these individuals may go as far as taking orders from various potential customers before embarking on their circular journey of a short duration.

I would be a little surprised if you called a Zambian from either group a cross-border trader without a little hesitation. Instead you would sooner recognise that each of them as migrants of some sort who have come to find travelling between the two countries to trade goods expedient. The five stories and narratives that are presented in the following sections will approach this classification issue of migrant and trader from different directions in terms of the subjects primary occupation. In all but one of them, cross-border trade is not be their primary occupation. The first two Zambians I introduce below for example, Mwape and Dennis, are migrants originally in South Africa as part of the fulfilment of their career and social ambitions but who never the less engage in cross-border

[12] Not their real names. All persons named in the narratives of this document have been given fictitious names to respect their right to anonymity and are aware that my questions and interections with them was for the purpose of a study of cross-border trade and migration among Zambians in South Aficans.

[13] Incidentally, the investment of funds into building a dream house – large and beyond budget to complete – is dominant enough in Lusaka that the incomplete structures that can be recognised from the air as a ring that wraps right around the city.

trade. But before I get to that, I first describe a little bit about the lifestyle of professional Zambians formally employed and living in South Africa.

Johannesburg

As do many people in the relatively new suburbs in the north of Johannesburg city, Bwalya lives in a gated complex of houses that is closed behind a ten foot wall. The gate into the complex is operated by a man in a kiosk who waves us through the instant he recognises the car. Inside a second perimeter wall is Bwalya's moderately sized house with a swimming pool and garage for two cars. The garage however is used as an office for a dozen employs stationed at phones and computers during week days. Bwalya and Mwape, his high school sweetheart, run a business from their home. It is a sort of workshop organizers firm (however they dislike this description), with which they coordinate training workshops for other companies and institutions on any skill, topic or subject, by sourcing the experts, the venue and the delegates. This Sunday afternoon however, the home-come-office is tranquil and more relaxed, with Bwalya in a t-shirt and shorts watching the F1 race on his large flat screen TV with a beer while nursing the fallout from the previous nights exploits.

Together they have first a young teen, second a feisty boy who emulates cartoon network at every chance, and finally an infant girl not yet a year old. And then there is Chansa, who had been snatched from college in Zambia to help out with the business during a brief shortfall in staff. I often find meeting the family potentially embarrassing because there is bound to be a family member (or domestic employee or visiting family) who's name I can't remember quick enough. To make the memory game more challenging, there is often a gardener, driver or someone selling something (like say an IT package on this occasion) quietly drinking Bwalya's beer in the corner of the living room and watching the sport on the flat screen TV as well.

Later that evening we all went to Natasha's (Bwalya's eldest sister) house for a braai. At Natasha's house, which is only a few gated complexes away, I met Natasha's husband and children, Bwalya's eldest brother, Bwalya's youngest sister and mother (both visiting from Zambia) and a large collection of cousins, friends and children. As you can imagine, I was quite behind on the names-to-faces-game by this stage even though I had met everyone in the room before. One thing that was interesting was that everyone there, save for one sister in law, was originally from Zambia and quite obviously so because I could hear nearly nothing but Bemba[14] being spoken with a smattering of English here and there. What was more interesting to me was how well they seemed to be doing financially from what I could see. There was limitless beer, hard liquor, a flat screen TV in the living room running Oprah (for the girls getting their hair done on the living room floor), a fair size house and expensive cars in the drive way.

At the braai I met Dennis, the man who had used his connections and sweet tongue to negotiate Bwalya and Chansa into the VIP of the night club the previous night. After I had explained that I had come to Johannesburg to study Zambian cross-border traders, Bwalya said that I had to meet Dennis Banda, who, Bwalya explained, not only transported large consignments of goods between Zambia and South Africa but also as someone who was in contact with quite a few people in the trade and who could introduce me to a wide variety of traders.

[14] A language spoken in most large towns and cities in Zambia and originating from the northern parts of the country.

Trading in the margin: trade in fashionable accessories to supplement income

Bwalya came to study in Johannesburg at around the same time I went to study for an undergraduate degree in Cape Town. Although Bwalya had a job in addition to his studies, he was supported financially by his parents in Lusaka and by his brother, Solomon, who was then working and married in the United States of America. After Bwalya's graduation, both Mwape and Bwalya had quite promising jobs in different companies in the business of organising training workshops for large institutions and companies. Bwalya and Mwape, once they were familiar with the trade, saw an opening and went into the business alone, registering their own company run from the home with a handful of employees. 18 months into their new business, their gamble has paid off with a staff of about 13 or so obtaining delegates by telemarketing and altogether generating enough income for Bwalya and Mwape to invest in property in Zambia, pay the tuition fees and upkeep of Bwalya's younger sisters in Lusaka and take an expensive holiday with the their family at least once a year. The income from their own business now far exceeds the salaries they saw from their previous income.

And still, with the relatively comfortable salary Mwape saw with her has last employment before starting a business with Bwalya, she still took the opportunity to turn a little profit whenever she travelled to Zambia, which was by bus at the time. Following the suggestion of a cousin who was employed at an insurance company in Zambia she travelled to Zambia periodically, she would buy what she considers fashionable clothes by the unit from Chinese whole sellers[15]and sell them in Zambia for a sizable margin. The customers in Zambia of these goods are sought out by Mwape and her cousin through informal networks as Mwape explained:

> JUMANI: ok. And who were you selling to? Cause what if you get to Lusaka and there is no one to sell to?
> MWAPE: You get to Lusaka, you know the things in your car. You go to all the major banks.
> JU: Major banks?
> MW: Banks.
> JU: With clothes?
> MW: Yes.
> JU: And bags and blankets?
> MW: Yes.
> JU: ok.
> MW: Then you open your boot. You tell one of the persons you know at that bank. You tell them "I'm coming at this time. You people come out and see what I have to sell."

Though these fashionable clothes are sold for a price that makes a handsome margin thanks to the bulk sale price from wholesalers like China City in Johannesburg, the profit is a little subtle to work out. At the car boot-sale at the bank, cash is not usually exchanged Mwape explained to me:

> MW: But you...you don't sell the things for cash, you sell them for monthly instalments.
> JU: Right
> M: So they pay you the 50%
> JU: Ah-ha

[15] Whole sellers of Chinese origin who sell clothes in bulk in Johannesburg, such as for example China City. This need not mean that clothes are from China, though they may very well be.

> MW: the first month end [is when you get the first instalment]. And then the other 50% the second month end. The guarantee that you get the second half of your money is never there. It's quite difficult to get the last 50% payment. You...you wait...you...you struggle and you fight with a lot of people about that.

Of course, she does not let the customers know what clothes cost in Johannesburg and perhaps the customers are reluctant to pay in full because they suspect that the cost has been recovered more than twice over at the first instalment. But still, Mwape is confident that she has covered the cost of the item on the first instalment.

Her last comment, quoted above, however, registers that there is some conflict involved between trader and customer. There is a little bit of a cat and mouse chase, when it comes to recovering the final instalment. This is a challenge that another cross-border trader (Mrs Njovu) had, when taking fashionable handbags to Lusaka to sell to her network of customers . In Mwape's case the conflict was between trader and trader i.e. between her and her cousin. The difficulty of obtaining the final instalment proved to be the undoing of the trading venture Mwape had begun with her cousin:

> MWAPE: ...and sadly enough, I had..I had urm entrusted that she would...she would take the 50% after we had collected the first half, and urmm....it was a joint business but it didn't work out too well because she..she had...she had her own costs, she told me she was paying for fuel, she was paying for what [sic]. Every time she collected the 50% it had to go somewhere, and I never saw the money.

The frequent "urm" and short silences in that quote reflect that this was a low point in her relationship with her cousin from Zambia. This experience in part echoes Muzvidziwa's observation that Zimbabwean cross-borders traders operating between a small town in Zimbabwe and South Africa and Botswana are initially dependent on kin but later forge new non-kin contacts for use of commerce and accommodation (Muzvidziwa 2001).

For Mwape, the business of taking goods on the bus was not a venture that involved total commitment. Mwape has her family in Lusaka and in a lot of ways still feels quite close to Zambia. The trips she made to Zambia were not exclusively for the purpose of turning a profit on her trade but also to visit her family home and enjoy spending time in Zambia, a country she undoubtedly misses when she is in Johannesburg most of the year. This trading goods on the bus was perhaps more accurately a venture to cushion the costs of travelling home to Zambia to visit family or maybe even turn such a visit into a profit while she had formal employment in Johannesburg.

It is clear that Mwape is not in South Africa primarily to trade in goods between South Africa and Zambia. She came to South Africa for her tertiary education and employment and is an immigrant for those reasons. And yet she does travel trade in goods across the border to Zambia not so much as a sustainable business but for reasons more of expedience as mentioned already. Dennis Banda, who I introduce now, is also a migrant to South Africa primarily for employment. But Dennis, in contrast to Mwape, has taken a much more profitable and sustained venture into cross-border trading as an alternative to his formal employment.

From small to medium trade

Dennis Banda, like Bwalya, is a Zambian in his early thirties who came to work in Johannesburg. He is built lean and dresses smart casual most days of the week in a collared shirt, dark pants and a shoes that shine with a good polish. He is a familiar feature around Bwalya's flat screen TV set on a weekend afternoon watching English Premier League football, drinking beer and taking regular recesses to the stoep over the commercials with Bwalya for a cigarette or two. He is a bit of a ladies' man with a sweet tongue who, during the week I spent in his company, told me dozens of stories about his experiences with girls, ex-girlfriends and the girl he met at the night club on his most recent night on the town. He is also what I think Zambian's refer to as 'a businessman'. What is meant by this is someone who does not operate from a fixed office but instead spends his day taking phone calls on his mobile phone while moving about town all day making appointments to negotiate important agreements. He is a man who often has a lucrative transaction within sight and yet he never the less cash strapped most of the time and in the need of a favour or two.

The favour Dennis needed from Bwalya the week I was in Johannesburg was the use of Bwalya's near clapped out Citroen to move about town and meet people to facilitate his business transactions. The favour I needed from Bwalya was the use of the Citroen as well to travel about town to meet Zambians in the business of transporting goods between Zambia and Johannesburg for profit. Bwalya, in his generosity decided to kill two birds with one stone by lending the car to both of us to go about our business together. So for the entire week I was in Johannesburg, we drove around together in the Citroen. He, with his glib, gave me insights into his cross-border trading and introduced me to the Zambian bus operators, while we visited his business contacts and tried to obtain some of the documentation he needed for his trade.

Dennis Banda came to South Africa a few years ago from Zambia with a degree in Purchasing and Supply. Zambia, in his view, was inauspicious in its economic outlook at the time he graduated from college in Zambia and so instead identified South Africa as fertile ground for his ambitions. He came to Johannesburg to find work, but initially travelled into the country on a visitors permit, to scout for work opportunities while he depended on more established friends in Johannesburg to help him settle down. But as Dennis explained to me;

> "It was not easy for me to break into the corporate environment here because I didn't even have a work permit. So I worked in a restaurant for about 6 months. I managed to raise money to get a work permit, which I did. And my first job was with Multichoice[16] here."
>
> ...I was in the call centre, taking the queries. I worked there for about a year and then moved to a company, a business information company called Lisho investments. [I] worked there for another year, moved to a competitor company called AMC[17], that is where I met Bwalya. Bwalya was my manager [there]."

[16] A commercial television network that has a monopoly in South Africa

[17] Dennis explained that the company is a "Business information company providing strategic solutions to both the public sector and the private sector...by way of creating forums...for stakeholders in various sectors to air their concerns, their views which contribute to the enrichment of their particular sector" through symposiums, conferences and workshops.

> ...I was [made]the sales executive [initially]. I did so well, when I joined AMC where Bwalya was working, within 3 months I was the assistant manager.

Dennis, then was able to get much better paid jobs that were much more 'corporate' and that were closer his ambitions signified by his qualification in Purchasing and Supply after he acquired a work permit for South Africa.

Dennis's job with AMC was his most well paid job to date in South Africa. According to him, he had a basic monthly salary of about R8000 to which there was a commission to be added to make it something like R14,000 on an average month and up to R20,000 on a good month. But while Dennis's income was steadily increasing as his job specs improved, so too were his expenses.

> "My rent was like R4,500, I had a car which I was paying for through the bank [for] another R3,000, that's R7,500 gone already. You know my groceries, my fuel...tax then, then I had a child that came along. So you see the R14,000 now was not enough money to sustain me, where as it used to when I ...didn't have a child.[18]"

Though Dennis says that his personal expenses became more demanding, this was not his only motivation for moving into cross-border trade from formal employment. At the time Dennis was working for AMC International, he met a man who was "taking goods from here [in South Africa] and selling them to Zambia" and making "good money" doing it. Dennis was impressed because as Dennis put it;

> "What inspires a young person like me to move into any other project is money"

In light of the example set by this man and Dennis's own avaricious ambitions, Dennis saw an opportunity.

> "I was looking for ways to make more money and that opportunity came my way. And I grabbed it with both hands. But it took me a while to resign and go into full time business. I was getting into area that was not familiar to me. And also what did not help was that my family was not supporting [me]. My mother [in particular], they didn't think it was the right thing for me to do. Well I thought it was, obviously because of the money."

Despite his families misgivings, his first cross-border trading was exporting alcohol.

> "I first started by taking alcohol to Zambia. The first consignment I took to Zambia was alcohol. Your Heineken's, your.... [other beers not easily found in Zambia]."

And he was not taking small amounts with him either;

> JUMANI: Presumably you don't just take a few cases of alcohol?
> DENNIS: No-no-no. I took err...48
> JU: 48 cases?
> DE: Ya. Assorted ya. There was beers, there was ciders...
> JU: Which are not...not so easily found?

[18] Dennis has a child out of wedlock with a South African. Dennis and the child's mother separated, the mother keeping the child with her while Dennis provides child support.

DE: No-no. Not so easily found in Zambia. They are imported. Whoever has them, they are imported [by them]
JU: So you were importing them also?
DE: Yes, I was taking them to Zambia and selling them to the retailers and I was making 150% profit.
JU: Wow.
DE: Delivered. And I would be paid in 14 days. You are paid half when you deliver and the next [half] you are paid within 14 days.

These retailers, in contrast to the customers Mwape and her cousin had at the banks in Lusaka, always paid in full within the 14 days. Perhaps Dennis's retailers, are more reliable than with their payments because Alcohol, unlike hand bags and Levi jeans, is a material good with a demand that more or less constant (inelastic). Also, retailers run a business with a more continuous cash flow and have a direct interest in paying their supplies which cannot be said of the bank employees buying fashionable accessories out of a car boot. However, Dennis only sent two consignments of alcohol to Zambia in all because it did not sit well with his Christian inclination (he never mentioned this particular venture to his mother, who it seemed is the beacon of piety in his life). Paradoxically, this inclination never seemed to upset his less than abstemious recreation activities of the weekend before that he told me about.

His next initiative was bold and strategic in comparison with the consignments of alcohol. The success of this initial venture raised useful capital and bolstered Dennis's confidence in cross-border trade . It persuaded him to resign from his job at AMC International and take up cross-border trade full time (hitherto limited by his insecurity in this new venture) and also to get a return from cross-border trade with more regular pay.

> " While the Zambian trading business was still on, what we identified ...was that when South Africa won the 2010 World Cup bid there was need for steel, there was a demand for steel here in South Africa. And we have a lot of scrap metal back home[19]. I got into that. I started bringing [it] in from Zambia."
>
> ... So what I would actually do was I would buy ten plasmas[20] here, take them to Zambia, get paid (by selling them in Zambia), that money that I would get paid I would buy the scrap metal in Zambia and bring it here."

In this new venture then, not only were goods going to Zambia on a bus (the plasma TVs) but they were coming into South Africa as scrap steel by the truck load. But of course the return on it was not only more lucrative but also more efficient because a profit was turned on both legs of the journey, to and from Zambia.

However, when the world economy went into a recession and commodity prices dropped, so too did the price of steel and the demand for steel slumped in South Africa and Dennis no longer found this

[19] Dennis is referring to the state subsidised industries that collapsed in the 1980s when the state rolled back and left factories such as Kafue textiles which were left to fall largely dormant and into disrepair.
[20]Large expensive flat screen TV's like the one in Bwalya's house.

particular plasma-steel trade worth his while. Dennis then, went ahead and found another commodity to transport to Zambia.

> DE: We research. We just go and say "What's hot, what's selling here?"
> JU: Yeah but who do you talk to, to find out what's hot?
> DE: Like um...err...the Nestle deal now, the Lactogen that we want to be taking to Zambia, the people who we were talking to were the wholesalers in Zambia who are Indians. The retailers.
> JU: Ah-ha. So you go like maybe [to] Chachacha[21] road and you ask them
> DE: Ya. I just park the car and walk shop by shop with my note book. "Hey how are you my brother. Ay...ok cool. Listen, I can get this from South Africa, or what is selling that you would want someone to bring from South Africa and what are your prices?"

In this way, Dennis determined that retailers in Zambia were willing to buy Lactogen (a substitute for breast milk) and Cerelac which is used to feed infants and new born babies. Nestle South Africa however told him that they only deal with 'agents' with whom they supply large quantities. For Nestle to open an account with him, he would need to register a company in Zambia and purchase large quantities from them. Dennis then registered a company in Zambia and when I spoke to him was in the process of acquiring a price range from Nestle with which to make his purchases. Dennis mentioned a crucial detail about a Nestle' product such as Lactogen:

> "The beauty of selling these particular products is that, it's sold all year round. Babies are born every day...whether there is a recession or not the baby wants milk"

Another beauty of these commodities was the profit margins. Although it does not promise to exceed the margins obtained from the steel trade when the price of steel was high

> "The profit margin here, the reason why the profit margin is too high is because these products are duty free. The reason why they are duty free is the Southern region is one of the regions hardest hits by HIV and AIDS...So the government has scrapped off tax and duty of import of those products...So that product when it comes in, because me, as an exporter to that country has not incurred the tax and duty".

Apart from what Dennis called 'The Nestle deal', Dennis was, in our week together, also working on another deal. Through Dennis's informal networks, he got to know of a pair of surprisingly young Congolese men who own around a dozen filling stations in Zimbabwe, inherited from their father[22], as well as a pair of petrol depots in Zimbabwe who are interested in purchasing petrol in South Africa to supply them. Dennis described the two Congolese men as playboys who are known to show a lot of cash on the Johannesburg night life and one of them is a musician who has made some of his own music videos. However, for all their swagger about the night life were somewhat naive about purchasing large quantities of petrol. Dennis on the other hand was on first name terms with a man who is an agent with Sasol i.e. a man who has the rights to buy large quantities of petrol and diesel from Sasol and retail it on the market. And yet the Sasol agent does not often do business with the likes of the Congolese playboys since they only purchase a few tonnes of fuel at a time. This is where

[21] A street in the centre of town in Lusaka renowned locally for its retailers who are typically Indian by descent.
[22] According to a story from Dennis, their father had control over an oil rig in Sani Abacha's Nigeria.

Dennis comes in as the middle man to bring the two together and make the transaction easier for both of them, at a fee of course.

Dennis said that he had signed an exclusive with the Sasol agent which binds the agent to pay Dennis a small percentage of the deal for all customers brought to the agent. This small percentage of large amounts of fuel bought can of course be lucrative for facilitating a handshake. In that week with Dennis, we made quite a few visits between the Sasol agent and the Congolese pair communicating prices and other details to facilitate the purchase which, before I left Johannesburg, was not yet concluded and seemed somewhat tenuous.

Dennis's story is, like Mwape's, one of an immigrant who has come to South Africa in pursuit of career opportunities and only later tried to make a profit out of a trip or two of trading goods to Zambia. The difference is of course that Dylan decided, out of the success of his initial attempt, to turn to the venture as a full time occupation. So while Mwape is an immigrant from Zambia who every now and then travels to Zambia laden with a small amount of goods, Dylan is an immigrant who became a full time trader engaged in the transport of goods bulky enough to warrant hiring separate forms to transport.

My next subject is someone who, like Dylan and Mwape, came to South Africa for employment but that employment involves facilitating the transport of cross-border traders between Zambia and South Africa. He is again an immigrant and not a cross-border trader but his very employment is made possible by the industry of cross-border trade.

Portals to Zambia: the bus companies and cross-border trade

Most times I have travelled to Zambia by bus, I have taken it from Park Station, the central transport terminal for road and rail at the centre of down town Johannesburg. From Park Station, dozens of buses depart for various locations within and beyond South Africa. In fact the very first time I noticed that some buses travelling between South Africa and Zambia were in the business of ferrying commercial cargo as much as they were ferrying passengers was on a City to City bus that departed from Park Station. That bus trip had all the hallmarks of a typical traders journey from Johannesburg to Lusaka from jostling and squabbling over seating and luggage space on an over loaded bus, to protracted delays at the Chirundu border on entering Zambia where the traders goods are inspected one suitcase at a time with a palaver over customs duty for each of them.

On my last trip to Zambia by bus however, I was forced to look beyond Park Station because there were no tickets available. The South African bus companies City to City, Intercape and Translux no longer travel to Zambia and the only two bus companies at Park Station that do, Ingwe and Pioneer which are both Zambian owned, were sold out on tickets for the next 5 days. I had to find an alternative bus to Lusaka that was departing within a few days. In my rather embarrassing distress, the domestic employee of my host at the time (not Bwalya at this times) who is from Bulawayo and regularly travels to Zimbabwe, took pity on me and explained to me that she knew of a bus rank in Braamfontein (which is only about 20 min walk from Park Station) where buses travel north out of South Africa. I did find the said bus station in Braamfontain, except all its buses, and there were quite a number of buses at that for that relatively small yard, were bound for various small towns in Zimbabwe. Like the buses bound for Zimbabwe in the Park Station, there were snaking queues of passengers tending to their large and bulky volumes of luggage that included a lot of groceries and blankets as well as domestic hardware items such as light bulbs. I approached a man who was

barking orders about queues and departing buses and explained to him that I was looking for a bus to Zambia. He directed me to Vaal Africa.

Vaal Africa, it turned out, was just a couple of blocks away. Vaal Africa however, only transports goods and not people; the large bails of various materials in the yard around its offices seemed to confirm this. But right across the road from Vaal Africa, was a bus company with the name 'Trans Africa Wholesale Transporters' printed large on the face of the building, on Juta street. Under this large sign, I walked into a large entrance into a huge, mostly empty room that was stocked with bundles of wire fencing among other numerous items wrapped up and ready for transport in one corner of the room. I walked up to three men on plastic chairs around a table that was messy with receipt books and other paraphernalia. They were a jovial bunch that spoke in Bemba among themselves and I knew instantly that they were all from Zambia. When I inquired about a bus ticket to Zambia, they explained to me that their tickets were sold out for their next bus and that I should instead inquire with Kondwani bus services next door. One of these men lead me out the room and around the corner of the block to the Kondwani bus company that was running its office behind the counter in Domino's Fast Foods, where kitchen staff and Kondwani employees brushed shoulders going about their different business. I was relieved then to have found not one but two bus companies with buses bound for Zambia but also glad to find that, from storage facilities and the kinds of goods stored, that this business was as much about transporting people as it was about transporting goods and the goods were more than simply clothes and groceries but included bulky hardware too. Indeed, Vaal Africa across the road has done away with the passengers altogether.

The scene I witnessed there on the down town streets of Braamfontein, on the corner of Juta street and Melle street, where Trans Africa and Kondwani have their storage, bus stop and offices is now a familiar one to me. At such a street you are likely to find young Zambian men loitering around on the pavement, sat on plastic chairs or leaning against a car or two, talking amicably among themselves while basking in the winter sun. These are either the loaders, who must move the goods from store room to bus or vice versa and check that they have been paid for or they are the bus drivers getting rest from a long drive or preparing for one. Off the street into one of adjacent buildings (this is quite a built up area with much shade from surrounding buildings) is a large room, a warehouse used to hold large consignments of usually hardware goods. In this large room, sometimes the buses park (as in the case of C.R. Holdings) and also this is often where cargo is weighed and charged accordingly before being loaded onto a truck or a bus. Inside is also where there is an office tended to by a man referred to as the 'manager'. The offices I have seen are not particularly well equipped, with rudimentary shelves and furniture and often used for storage as well[23]. There is inevitably a food outlet trading in Zambian cuisine on the block (where I had a pap and a fried Talapia(bream) fish with Dennis just outside Power Tools on Kerk street), an internet cafe not more than a block away and sometimes, as in the case of C.R. Holdings on Jeppe st, sex workers on the street corner.

This scenario can be quite inactive and desultory most times of the day until it is jolted into action by the arrival of a bus or the departure of one for Zambia. Before a bus departs, the loaders leap into action and shift goods into a truck or a bus, goods are weighed and priced and the passengers begin

[23] In the case of Kondwani, operating out of a fast food outlet, they claimed to be only temporarily in that location and in search of a suitable place for their operations and justified their situation on account of them being recently established. Kondwani was recently started by a veteran driver for the older more established bus company C.R. Holdings. This is perhaps a sign that the industry is growing.

a 40 hour ritual of queues and procedures. In all, there are streets in down town Johannesburg that are snapshots of city life in Zambia complete with social stratifications. There are the loaders hanging around on the street, and then there are the managers selling tickets and supervising, the bus drivers, the restaurants with Zambian cuisine and finally the cross-border traders ,who are by my observations mostly women when it comes to transporting goods by bus in person, and who seem to provide the primary revenue to fuel this society of the bus depot. On Kerk street, a hotel has recently opened called Kwacha hotel, owned and run by Zambians that expects to chief clientele to be the Zambian traveller ("Kwacha Dawns on South Africa's Kerk Street", Times of Zambia, by Jack Mwewa, 2009.)

When I got to Power Tools on Kerk street early on a Monday afternoon with Dennis, there were a collection of Zambian men standing on the sidewalk. Dennis greeted a number of them in his jocular and ebullient way, saying a joke here or there in Bemba, and introduced me to a cousin of his. Dennis explained my business to his cousin and I was fortunate to be given an interview with Marley, a manager for Power Tools. Marley is a softly spoken man in his late twenties who seemed almost shy in his quiet manner when I spoke to him in his office. I asked Marley what his responsibilities were.

> JUMANI: Ok. So then what are your responsibilities for Power Tools?
> MARLEY: It's just eh...running of things around here in Joburg
> JU: Like buying tickets, selling tickets?
> MA:...selling tickets. Ya just arranging, making sure that the guys are loading stuff from the bus, correctly not breaking, you see some stuff...ya.
> JU: Is that what some of these young men outside do?
> MA: Ya
> JU: They...they are actually the loaders?

Before Marley was at Power Tools, he worked for the older more established bus company in the Lusaka-Johannesburg route, C.R. Holdings, that has its depot/offices/bus stop just a few blocks from on Jeppe street. There, Marley's responsibilities were limited to supervising the loading of the buses only, and so his move to Power Tools seems to be some sort of a step up for him although he was basically among the managers there too. Marley lives in South Africa and has a work permit, though he went to school in Zambia and studied Information Technology[24]before coming to South Africa to work for C.R. Holdings. He does however spend most of his time in South Africa.

> JU: How often do you go back to...
> MA: To Zambia? Maybe twice a year
> JU: Alright
> MA: Then mos...Mostly my family comes to...to see me
> JU: Ok. You married?
> MA: No. But I have got a kid...
> JU: You have got a kid?
> MA: Ya. Though the mother she is still going to school.

[24] Marley explained to me that he studied at NIPA but quit his studies because he didn't have the funds to complete his studies.

Given that Power Tools rely almost exclusively on cross-border traders, it is not surprising that Marley is quite sure of what factors affect the volume of traders that come to Johannesburg. Marley is of the opinion that the number of cross-border traders is on the increase but is limited by the strengthening rand;

> MA: There are more [cross-border traders]. Despite the...the rand. Its gaining strength. So the exchange rate you see, if they buy US dollars from there [in Zambia], its high there. And when they come here, it's the same.
> JU: Ya
> MA: You see, they will...you know they will not buy more rands.
> JU: Ok. Their dollars are not getting them as many rands as they used to
> MA: Meaning they won't buy more....

This effect of a strengthening rand has on trade corroborates with some of the cross-border traders I have spoken to (such as Mrs Njovu) who cited the exchange rate as one of the biggest threats to their trade. Essentially the stronger the rand is in comparison to the dollar then the more difficult it is for traders in Zambia since the Zambian Kwacha is strongly linked to the dollar and so a stronger rand means that they can buy less goods in South Africa. But Marley explained to me that the trade has other risks.

> MA: ... And you know they are harassed, most of the time they are harassed by the police at the borders and stuff "Why are you carrying so much money..." You know its...
> JU: Who harasses them?
> MA: People. The police mainly I would say, maybe.
> JU: Zimbabwean police or South African police?
> MA: South African. Except...
> JU: South African police at the Mesina border?
> MA: Beitbridge.
> JU: Beitbriade border?
> MA: Ya that happens. Even here if you walk out, you have got maybe rands-dollars they [the police] will ask "What is this for?" You will say it's for my business. "Is it declared?" Ya you would say "Ya it is" but you know when they just see money they will not let that person go.

But this harassment is not limited to the borders and occurs to in Johannesburg. Marley and Power Tools are often responsible for Zambian's in Johannesburg who find themselves in a difficult situation, often due to theft or harassment. As Marley explains

> MA: We have cases whereby someone will just come and say I haven't bought things
> ...
> MA: Because the police like took. "You see, they saw me with five thousand they said "give us a thousand""
> JU: oh
> MA: "If we want...if you want to go back" and you know being in a foreign land, you don't know anyone you just give out what they want. Others even come to say "I don't even have my transport money. I will pay when I am in Zambia...they took it" or "I left my passport in the room...[and it was stolen]". You know, such things.

Power Tools, it appears to me is a relatively new comer to the business. Marley explained that there are 3 buses doing the Lusaka-Johannesburg route, making 2 trips a week in either direction. However, Power Tools has 23 buses in all, most of which operate within Zambia's borders and makes it seem that, in the case of B.E.M. Motors at least, the bus company has established itself on other local routes and whatever trade between towns that might include and only recently ventured out to profit from traders travelling between Johannesburg and Lusaka.

It seems then that the relative ease with which bulky goods can be transported between Zambia and South Africa, provided by the bus companies, is necessary for most of the cross-border trade between Zambia and South Africa. Conversely, the cross-border trade provides a major clientele to the bus companies and to some degree other businesses as well – restaurants, hotels, wholesalers of clothes (the 'Chinese shops'). It is also interesting to note that the bus companies sometimes are forced to operate like a de facto high commission for Zambia to the cross-border traders who have to be repatriated home when they are down on their luck (and the Johannesburg police are notorious for harassing foreigners).

I shall now turn to my interview with a person whose reason for travelling to and being in South Africa is first and foremost her cross-border trade business. Her living and working in South Africa is a function of her trade and of my subjects in this study, she is the one person whose practice most closely matches that of the curio traders in Peberdy and Crush's study of immigrant street traders (Peberdy and Crush 1998). Unlike the migrants I have introduced so far, Gertrude's main occupation is an informal in the sense that it does not require a work permit and she conducts her business in back yards of the inner city of Johannesburg without formal lease agreements. Unlike Dennis or Mwape, Gertrude's trading predominantly involves bringing dry fish into South Africa from Zambia and selling it to the immigrant communities in the inner city of Johannesburg.

Foreign Taste: selling ethnic food in the streets

One thing that fascinated me about Dennis's story is that his cross-border trade was not exclusive to exports to Zambia but included exports from Zambia to South Africa as well. Indeed, one very lucrative trade he engaged in was the export of steel to South Africa from Zambia. But from my experience of taking the bus from Johannesburg to Lusaka and back again, I know that the Lusaka bound buses and crowded with the bloated luggage from various goods while the Johannesburg bound buses have a lot less luggage. The buses are also delayed much longer (at least 4 hours) at the Chirundu border for Lusaka bound buses where luggage is inspected with a fine comb and import duties negotiated (according to Mrs Njovu who is introduced later, 'agents' maybe hired to negotiate the duty paid on your behalf). On the other hand, Johannesburg bound buses have minimal delays by comparison. You might suspect then that it is only the successful cross-border traders, who have the capital to transport large volumes of material by truck or plane, who transport goods both ways over the border. But this not so. As Mwape explained to me, some Zambians often transport goods to South Africa from Zambia for commercial gain and they need not be large sums of capital. Mwape herself, to compliment taking stylish clothes to Zambia, sometimes brought back as much as 400 packets of hair extensions (a brand called Sangita purchased from a market in Lusaka called Zambia-Zaire) to Johannesburg to sell. She sold the hair extensions to women in Hillbrow, many of whom Mwape says are sex workers. These extensions are available in South Africa of course (Like Dennis's Heinekens in Zambia – anyone who has the hair in South Africa imported them), however they are much cheaper in Zambia, where the market for them is huge. Though I did not interview any sex

workers in brothels in Hillbrow[25]Mwape claimed that most of the customers for the hair extensions were African immigrants.

A woman I did interview in Hillbrow however is Gertrude Phiri. Gertrude sells a wide range of dried fish (another item not favoured by indigenous South African's) in a yard behind a shop in Hillbrow in the inner city of Johannesburg. Some of the fish are split open down the middle and are opened flat to form an almost circular disc while others are curled and wrapped in a plastic to look like a big dark donut. All the fish is hard, brittle and of course dry making it durable and suitable for transport as dry fish is made to be when it was prepared alongside the rivers and fresh lakes in Zambia. These fish are piled into heaps on the floor or are displayed on rudimentary tables and shelves outside a large storeroom where the fish and other food is stored. Apart from the dry fish (the dominant item for sale) is impwa, occra leaves, lumanda, cooking oil (palm oil from Tanzania) and other vegetable or grocery items that are ubiquitous to any market in Zambia but are not usually found in South African super markets such as Shoprite or Pick'n Pay in South Africa. Gertrude is among at least half a dozen other women, all of them from Zambia, who rent the yard they occupy sell dry fish and other vegetables. When I was there on a Wednesday afternoon, some of these women were sat on the floor while they had their hair plaited with what could be some of the extensions Mwape spoke to me about earlier.

Together with Dennis Banda, who helped me with the conversation in Bemba, Nyanja and English, I asked Gertrude how she came to run a business selling dry fish in Johannesburg:

> GR: Ah-ah, chifukwa eye nsomba, Chamene ena zivila kuti ninga gulise nsomba kuno neze opelika ku London. *{No-no, the reason it is this fish, I came to realise that I could sell fish here when I was taking fish to London}*
> ...
> GR: Pamene tiliam Zambians, nezo pelika ku London. So when I came here I found these Nigerians. I thought "these people I think they can.. *{Taking it to Zambians, I was taking it to London. So When I came here I found these Nigerians. I thought "these people I think they can...}*
> DE: ...eat
> GR: "...they can eat"
> DE: Mmh-mmh *{Yes I understand}*
> GR: I just try it. Just a lumpo like this one, a plastic bag.
> JU: Aha
> GR: I came with it. I sold it. Just in few minutes.
> ...
> JU: The market was good?
> GR: The market was good. So now, it's when now they gave me orders. That's why I went back to Zambia and buy. So now I try to engage my..my fellow....my fellow Zambians.

Gertrude then did not only find out that she could easily sell dry fish to Nigerians in Johannesburg, but she also invited her fellow Zambians to come along and join her. In effect, she claimed that all

[25] Though Dennis and I did have a wonderful fried bream for lunch in a place in Hillbrow that is built from stone and brick to look like an English style pub that is well patronised by Zambians. It functions as a bar, restaurant and brothel with at least some of the sex workers' living quarters on site.

the other woman in the yard got into the trade by following her example. A claim that must have some truth since among the ladies selling fish is Gertrude's own second born.

Gertrude's trips to London to sell fish to Zambian's there (and perhaps she brought some goods back from London to sell in Zambia) came to an end in 1992 when Zambia's national airline closed down and she could not afford to fly by alternative airlines:

> JU: ... Manje, why did you stop? Una leka bwanji? *{Now, why did you stop? How did you stop?}*
> GR: Kaingi va ndeke yatu vana vala. Zambia Airways, we were travelling..." *{Because they closed our airline. Zambia Airways, we were travelling...}*
> ...
> GR: we were travelling on Zambia Airways so, they closed that. So...
> JU: Sembe mwa kwela British Airways? {Maybe you could have taken British Airways?}
> GR: Nilibe Ndarama! Zamene ni gulisa apa ninga gule, ninga kwele British Airways! *{I don't have money! With the things I sell, you think I can get on British Airways?}*

Gertrude said she had been travelling to London to sell fish as far back as 1988 and so had been in the trade for at least 20 years. She lives in a flat also in Hillbrow where she pays rent monthly. She explained to me that she has seven children, all of whom have been through secondary school until completion with the last born, she was proud to announce, enrolled at the University of Zambia. Gertrude paid for her children's expenses with her trade in dry fish as she continues to practice it. Of her seven children, two of them are in South Africa. I asked Gertrude about her two children in Johannesburg with her:

> JU: Are they depending on you?
> GR: Ya they are depending on me.
> JU: Ok. Are they selling fish as well or maybe...?
> GR: The...the...the lady is selling fish. But the boy, the boy is there in the house
> JU: He's in the house?
> GR: Ya.
> JU: Just sitting?
> GR: Ya. Hahahaha
> JU: Ali kwata job*u* or ...? *{He has not a job or ...}*
> GR: Ta kwete nchito. Find a job for...for him. *{He hasn't a job. Find a job for ...for him}*
> JU: ...for him?
> GR: Yes.
> JU: Sembe I...Sembe he's buying fish as well. Or selling fish. *{Maybe I...Maybe he's buying fish as well}*
> GR: No. She can't be a woman...Me, I'm a mother. I can't be selling fish and a boy like you selling fish for what?

And there you have it, a division of labour based on gender roles the way Gertrude sees it. Perhaps then it is no coincidence that there are no men selling fish among the ladies in the yard. Gertrude is of the opinion that a young man cannot be selling fish alongside her even though his alternative exploits yield little because he is simply "there in the house" according to Gertrude. "Selling fish for what" are her words spoken in jest with sardonic contempt when I suggested it.

And yet, though Gertrude would prefer that her son not join her daughter and her friends, selling dry fish in a yard in Hillbrow cannot be an easy task. Gertrude travels to Zambia herself every few months or so to purchase replenish her stocks of dry fish and vegetables and stay in Zambia for a week or so depending on how quickly she can get a hold of her goods and what her orders are from South Africa. To import fresh foods into South Africa, she must get a certificate from Pretoria (valid for a year only) which she will show at the border to let her into the country with the goods. But she must also have this certificate with her at all times in case the police make a surprise visit to show them that she brought her produce, which might seem exotic to the South African police, into the country legally. In addition to this, because Gertrude cannot afford a work permit the way Dennis can, she is in South Africa on a visitors permit which is issued at the border on entry and only lasts a few months most. For this reason, she must constantly travel outside the country and back in again to be in the country legally.

Police harassment is something Gertrude must live with while working outside on the street in Johannesburg. During the interview, Gertrude was a little jumpy about a visit from the police. In fact she was the second of the women Dennis and I approached for an interview in that yard because the first felt a little too uncomfortable talking to us. When Dennis and I tried to explain to Gertrude that I was Zambian despite my light complexion and accent the conversation went as follows:

> DE: Mu Zambia uyu *{He's from Zambia this one}*
> GR: Nichiziwa ni Zambian no chi ba landa eeh. *{I know he is Zambian from the way he is talking, yes}*
> JU: Na choka ku Lusaka, pa Chelston[26] . *{I am from Lusaka, in Chelston}*
> GR: Wa choka ku Lusaka pa Chelston ba kamba at ni waku Malawi sti kudya ati "na choka ku Lusaka ku Chelston". [Dennis laughing now]. Ahhhhh, boza, ufuna ukati mangise imwe. *{You have come from Lusaka in Chelston but they said you are from Malawi. We are not going to swallow that "I have come from Lusaka in Chelston". [Dennis laughing now]. Ahhhh, you're lying, you want to put me behind bars?}*
> GR: Eeh. Ku mangisa so. Ku peza muntu ali musimbi . *{Yes. Behind bars just so. You find a person behind bars}*
> DE: Ati you are going to get her arrested the way you are reporting.

Somehow, while Dennis and I had tried to introduce ourselves and ask which of the ladies wouldn't mind being interviewed, it came across to Gertrude quite incorrectly that I was from Malawi, which is what raised both Gertrude's suspicion and humour. She joked that I was conducting an investigation to put her behind into jail or in her words "Ku mangisa". Hilarious as the moment was, it is revealing that the issue came up and tells me that Gertrude is constantly on her toes to keep one step ahead of the police and their harassment. In addition to this harassment, Gertrude in her years of trade has suffered the wrath of various irate building owners who have thrown Gertrude and her ilk off their premises from one venue to the next;

> JU: Manje business, ufuna ati kunkala so chabe? Or do you want to...how do you see your business going? *{Now business, do you want it to stay like this? Or do you...}*
> GR: This business...
> JU: Iza enda bwanji? *{how will it go?}*

[26] The part of Lusaka where I grew up.

GR: ...sometimes we need something*i* there is someone who can help us to find a big shop ...
GR: Ehe. Not like this, we rent here. I told you I said we were in Mariston, from Wheatbed, Wheat*i*bed we are selling at Cardiff, they chased us. Now this is the place.

And yet, with this all pervasive fear of police harassment, Gertrude is never the less content with her current situation. I asked Gertrude in Chinyanja what it is that she finds most difficult about her business. Dennis, sensing that Gertrude had not understood the question, stepped in as he had done throughout most of this conversation, and paraphrased what I asked.

DE: Ni finshi ni ku shupa sana mu business koma kwino ku Joburg muno. Kuyi wafya mu kwata fye kuno *{What is it that troubles you the most here in Johannesburg. What are you afraid of here?}*
GR: Awe, ta tau kwata wafya mweh. Ta nau kwata ama papers ta tau kwata uwafye *{No, there is nothing we are afraid of really. Once we have our papers, there is nothing to be afraid of}*
DE: ta tau kwata. We have got all the documentation there is no problem. *{You have them [the papers]. We have got all the documentation there is no problem}*
GR: Eeh *{Yes}*
DE: Nobody hassles them.

And so if Gertrude has her papers in order, for both importing her goods and her visitors permit, then Gertrude feels she has nothing to fear, although she would rather not be selling her fish in the yard of another businesses premises and leaving her vulnerable to eviction yet again.

In all we have covered the three kinds of cross-border traders so far. There is Mwape who, although her and her husband run a business of their own, supplements her income with the use of contacts and networks in Lusaka to market and sell her goods. Dennis on the other hand, left his well paying job to get into trading full time, in pursuit of monetary success, and goes further than Mwape and makes his own networks to seek out lucrative transactions in addition to regular cross-border trade. And then there is Gertrude Phiri whose subsistence by street trade makes for a different and sometimes vulnerable practice. But all of these traders are or at some point (although Dennis often hires trucks on his own, he sometimes transports goods by bus such as for examples the plasma televisions) have been dependent on the Zambia buses to transport them and their goods between Johannesburg and Lusaka. These bus companies, with their different stops spread about the central business district of Johannesburg are a central hub to the movements of many Zambians who travel to South Africa. Their business is tailored to the needs of cross-border traders and no study of these traders that aims to include their migratory circuit is complete without it.

All the migrants and traders I have introduced up until this point effectively work and live in Johannesburg. By contrast the subject I introduce now, Mrs Njovu, lives in Zambia. It is a little strange that the subject I present here, Mrs Njovu, is the only one who lives in Zambia and travels to South Africa to buy goods to trade in Zambia because, as I have already mentioned, there are quite a number of Zambian traders who fill dozens of buses travelling between the two countries from one week to the next. Mrs Njovu is the manifestation of the 'shopper' who figures so prominently in the Tourism reports I mentioned in the literature section. But like Mwape, Mrs Njovu is not engaged full time in cross-border trade. Instead she runs her family's home while her husband is formally

employed and she only travels to South Africa to trade when funds are available, which is only a handful of times a year.

Lusaka: customers, networks and households

Kuvutika

I met Mrs Njovu in the queue to the Zimbabwe border post. We had just had our passports stamped at the South African border with relative ease and were about to suffer the gauntlet of getting the same done with the overwhelmed Zimbabwean customs officials.

> Mrs Njovu: Are you Zambian?
> Jumani: Yes I am.
> NJ: You are not South African?

By appearances and speech, I do not come across as a fellow national to most Zambians. My father is a white man from England and, though he last lived in Zambia for greater part of his life, still talks like an Englishman. This rubbed off on both my complexion and speech. Hence Mrs Njovu's scepticism.

> JU: No, I am from Zambia. I grew in Zambia. My mother is Zambian
> NJ: Oh. Okay. Where is she from?" was Mrs Njovu's next question. My mother's nationality seemed to have made an impression.
> JU: Well she is from Malawi really, because that is where her parents villages are. But she has spent her whole life in Zambia.
> NJ: So she is Tumbuka[27] then?" Mrs Njovu asked.
> JU: Yes she is.
> NJ: Do you speak Tumbuka?

I told her I didn't speak Tumbuka but I could speak some Chinyanja. Mrs Njovu then went on to test my basic Chinyanja.

> NJ: muli bwanji
> JU: nili bwino.

Hitherto I had gotten little conversation out of Mrs Njovu. However, after I had convinced Mrs Njovu of my Zambian traits, she was quite forthcoming about her business of buying clothes and bags in Johannesburg for resale in Lusaka. Mrs Njovu gave me her mobile details and she was happy to see me a few days later for an interview with her, Chesna (who was also on the bust with us) and a friend of theirs, Victoria, all of whom regularly travel within and beyond Zambia for the purpose of trade.

We sat down in Mrs Njovu's living room on her puffy lounge furniture and spoke mostly in Chinyanja, which was a bit of a challenge for both me and Victoria. Chinyanja is a challenge for Victoria because she is from the Copperbelt province where they speak mostly Bemba and I am out

[27] This is one of Zambia's identified ethnic groups with its associated language of the same name. Tumbuka people in Zambia are more or less from the eastern parts of the country near and in Malawi.

of the country most of the year so my Chinyanja is not so good. I asked them to have a conversation they otherwise would, but with me included as I asked some questions.

To kick it off I asked Mrs Njovu for how long she had been buying goods.

> Njovu :... Kapena nishi kapena na 18 years. *{Maybe it like maybe 18 years}*
> ...
> Jumani :so una yamba pa 1990? *{so you started in 1990?}*
> NJ :1990?
> Ju :18 years, kaingi, 2008 – 18 years – *{18 years, because, 2008 – 18 years - }*
> Chesna: 18 years
> NJ: eeh. Niyambani ni kudala *{Yes. I started a long time ago}*
> Ju: mmh
> NJ: eeh. Kudala pamene ni yamab nezo gulisa vitengi. Evi [showing me what she was wearing] {Yes. A long time ago was when I started buying Chitenge's[28]]
> Ju: ooh. Vitengi *{Oh I see, Chitenge's}*
> NJ: tezo enda kutenga ku congo. *{We would take them to the Congo}*
> ...
> NJ: DRC.
> Ju: ok.
> NJ: eeh. Kwamene tezo enda kugula. Paja kudala mwa Kaunda *{ Yes. That is where we would take them to sell. Right then long time ago in Kaunda's time}*
> ...
> NJ: eeh. Kudula eish. Twalaishisha na shinga na ma mwemwe chitenge *{I don't know much chitenge's were then}*
> Ch: Chitengo twalaisha about two kwacha? *{ They cost about two kwacha}*
> NJ: kachinan two kwach!? *{just two Kwacha!?}*
> Ju: {laughinh}
> NJ: eeh. Elu twaichita cheap ai? *{Yes. They cost cheap right?}*
> Vic: mmh {yes}
> NJ: Tezo gula na ma nkoloko, ma-ma moris-i, ma motima*...{We bought watches, of the type Morris and Motime}*
> ...
> NJ: ...ma kalipso, ma slippers *{...and Kalipsos, those slippers}*

And so it was clear to me that Chesna had been in the buying across borders business for a long time. They go back to the time of buying Chitenges, which were locally produced at Zambia's parastatal company, Kafue Textiles (however, the company collapsed early in the 1990s and it is from this very same collapsed industry that Dennis Banda, made large profits buying the scrap metal cheaply from the carcass of these factories by transporting them and selling them to South African metal dealers), and sold them in what was then Zaire where she bought watches and slippers to sell back in Zambia for a profit. This was the time of Kaunda[29] who was Zambia's first president since independence in 1964 until he was voted out of power in democratic elections in 1991, when the

[28] A Chitenge is a printed cloth with a variety of uses and typically worn as a wrap around skirt
[29] Zambia's first president who was in office from independence in 1964 until he was voted out of power in democratic elections in 1991.

country embraced an open economy and a free floating (subsequently sinking) currency[30]. Now after the little manufacturing there was in Zambia gone, trade continues with the import rather than export of manufactured garments. That Ms Njovu's trading predates even Zambia's third republic, suggests that this trade is a regional practice that predates South Africa opening its doors to the continent after the formal end to apartheid. I then asked Mrs Njovu why she began doing it in the first place.

> Ny: ku vutika. *{The problems}*
> Ju: ku vutika? *{The problems?}*
> NJ: eeh. Ndrama vamene vi fola ba muna wanga watu, si kwana. Uti uku kwanise ku lipilila mwana ku school-u, mudye one to thirty, ku chite depend pali salary ya mene eyo. Si kwana! *{Yes. The same money you are paid was not enough for our children. It had to be enough for school, from one to thirty [days of the month], all depending on such a salary. It didn't fit.}*
> Ju: mmh
> NJ: that is why ti gulisa uti ti tandizana. *{That is why we sell so as to help}*
> Ju - so the salary was enough?
> NJ: huh?
> Ju: before. Ku ma... *{before. Back then...}*
> NJ: kudala? *{A long time ago?}*
> Ju: kudala. *{A long time ago}*
> NJ: kudala vaja mwa Kaunda at least yezeko bwino eeh. Ndrarama olo tezo fola ma two kwacha olo ma zingati... *{A long time ago in the time of Kaunda at least things were nice, yes. The money we were paid, even two Kwacha or whatever amount}*
> Ch: {speaking concurrently with Mrs Njovu in agreement} ma schools it was free. Free education *{The Schools it was free. Free education}*
> Vic: {speaking concurrently with Chesna and Mrs Njovu} ..Nineteen ninety shani, it was one thousand this time.
> NJ: ku dala kweze free education, kuna libe ku lipila ba mene ti lipila manje. *{A long time ago there was free education, there was no paying like we pay now}*
> Ch - ...hospital...
> NJ: ...hospital kuna libe vi manja kylie kuli ma scheme-u. *{...the hospital didn't have payments because we had schemes..}*
> Ju: mmh.
> NJ: kambili u ka enda ku hospital waku pasa chabe prescription-i, no mkwala. Eeh *{Often, you go to the hospital and you are given a prescription and no medicine}*
> Ju: mmh.
> ...
> Vic: enali kung kalako. Manje eyo ntau,ti chita so ti kamba pano ifo ba kalibo tenga ma salaries. Ma kalibo fola bantu. Eeh ti kalibe o fola ma salaries ya December. *{Those days we could live. In these times now, as we are talking now they have not paid the salaries. They have not paid people. Yes, they have not paid the salaries for December.}*

[30] Towards the end of Kaunda's time as president, the government could no longer prop up the parastatal companies or the currency.

Although Mrs Njovu cites all the fissures that erupted at the end of Kaunda's time and at the beginning of the third republic - such as dwindling and inconsistent salaries in real terms, crumbling and privatising public services and inflation - as the reason for entering *ku gulisa* as a necessity, her life has many of the trappings of middle class life. She lives with her husband and four children in a free standing house with the a good range of furniture and appliances, from a cushy lounge suite to a television tuned to South African subscription channels. Without delving into her families personal finances (I made no such attempt) and given that she travels at about four times a year (as Mrs Njovu did in the year 2009), it is transparent that it is Mrs Njovu's husband who is the main bread winner of the house. The husband works for the Zambia Air Force and is senior enough in his position to be supplied both a house and a car. However, Mrs Njovu is quite clear that her earnings augment her husband's salary which is often late and does not cover all the household expenses, which include luxury items.

But it is interesting to note another advantage of her travels to South Africa. Not only does she buy cheap clothes to sell for a profit, as she pointed out to me, but of course finds clothes for herself and her family while she is there. This begs the question as to what the real advantage is of her *ku gulisa* practice? Does it make her a profit, which she then spent on family expenses and or use as capital for future *ku gulisa* trips as she contends? Or is it simply a way of reducing the cost of going all the way to South Africa for fancy items with money that is provided for by her husband's income? Given the many women I have met on the bus pursuing this activity as does Mrs Njovu, I am would say it is the former, a part time occupation but that supplements income of the home.

The example of Chesna and Victoria underscores the point that it is relative wealth that stimulates cross border trade. Chesna was only able to begin her ventures abroad with Mrs Njovu with the payout from her departed husbands benefits (though she invested the money in other ways too) while Victoria, with no payout at all from her departed husbands benefits, was restricted to trading second hand clothes within Zambia's borders. On the other hand Mrs Njovu, with her husband still employed, is in a position to travel frequently and for the longest of times.

Comparing cross-border traders

Dennis and Gertrude are the only traders that I have presented that can be regarded as full time cross-border traders. However, it is interesting to compare the very nature of their cross-border trade in order to help us have an insight into cross-border trade among the community of Zambian migrants in South Africa.

Marketing is naturally an important part of any trade and on this basis we can mark out some differences. For Mwape and Mrs Njovu, the accessories brought into Zambia are not sold in shop windows or at a market. Instead their marketing, distribution and retail depend on friends, relatives and customers approached directly. Their customers are located individually and so the nature of their business involves extensive social networking and the limits of it dictate the limits of profit and return as we saw with Mwape and her cousin's difficulty in recovering secondary instalments. This is in contrast to Gertrude Phiri who, with a guaranteed market of foreign nationals in the city of Johannesburg with a taste for her fish, can simply sell her goods in the same public place from one day to the next.

Dennis's networks, in contrast to Mwape and Mrs Njovu's social networking, go beyond friends and families. The 'deals' Dennis must facilitate involve parties from various countries and backgrounds that go way beyond his coterie of predominantly Zambian friends and relatives (which are well established in Johannesburg). Dennis actively puts himself in front of influential people and talks himself up. This of course comes naturally to Dennis's gregarious character and sits well with his desire to patronize some of the most exclusive night clubs in Johannesburg (Indeed, as Mwape's husband put it to me - if you want to get into VIP at a club, just ask Dennis). How else is he to meet a playboy Congolese musician who needs to buy tons of petrol from Sasol and transport it to Zimbabwe? His skill then, is his ability to make informal networks across quite formal structures.

Unlike Mwape and Mrs Njovu, who are content to simply make a short business shopping venture every so often, Dennis is constantly looking for ways to make his trading more profitable and sustainable, as for example Dennis's efforts to be registered as an agent for Nestle South Africa. Every time Dennis has earned some sort of security, he has sought for a better position, before and after his transition to cross-border trade. This differentiates him from the supplementary traders such as Mwape and Mrs Njovu, or subsistence traders such as Gertrude Phiri, who although they are full time traders such as Dennis, do not use their income to transform the nature of their trade.

Marley's experiences gives us an insight into the transport hub of the cross-border trade. We can see how the two business have a mutually dependent relationship and the problems of traders, such as police harassment, become a problem for the bus company. It also allows us to see how cross-border traders and entrepreneurs are engaging and configuring the inner city of Johannesburg that was described by Rogerson (1997). For instance, the company B.E.M motors, that was first successful operating routes within Zambia only, now that operates their own bus station on Kerk street in the Johannesburg. This brings with it a Zambian employees such as drivers, managers, conductors and loaders, many of whom, like Marley, settle in South Africa on the long term. This is interesting because although cross-border trade is a migration of constant movement and

circulation where traders need not ultimately leave home, it does result in an immigration to South Africa on a smaller scale, as Zambian entrepreneurs move into Johannesburg to provide services for these traders. This is evidence of the thickening of migrant relations between South Africa and Zambia.

In the following sections I compare my inferences from the narratives with what is known from the relevant migration literature. These narratives give a rich substance to some of the observations in a number of quantitative studies. I also explore where my descriptions of street trade and medium size bus companies fit with Peberdy's work on street traders (2000, 1998) and Rogerson's work on SMMEs (Rogerson 1997, Peberdy and Rogerson 2002). In addition I emphasise on the inferences from the narratives that enrich the migration literature.

Street trade in the inner city of Johannesburg

Gertrude Phiri's experiences trading dry fish in Hillbrow is fairly well reflected in the literature on migration in Southern Africa. Like the curio street traders that Peberdy and Crush (1998) surveyed, Gertrude frequently returns to her home country (Zambia in her case) to replace her stocks of dry fish and maybe buy and take goods with her for resale such as mobile phones or blankets. However, again like the curio traders, this is trade on return journeys is not the mainstay of the business but instead a way to cushion the costs of travelling home. Without interviewing Gertrude at, from the exclusive 'shoppers' without looking beyond the goods and people cross at the border for trade.

Gertrude's fear of police harassment is well founded if is compared with what is documented in the migration literature. Migrants in Johannesburg face three main unlawful threats from police officers: extortion and solicitation of bribes, destruction of travel documents, and general exclusion from legal assistance, protection and basic services (Lefko-Everet 2007, p 46, Peberdy and Crush 1998, p 216, Simone 2004, p 423). Gertrude, and her colleagues more so, was anxious about talking to a stranger such as me for the fear of unwittingly inviting police harassment. This harassment targeted at African foreign nationals (Masuku 2006, Crush and Dodson 2007) extends to other cities, for example Cape Town, and once in custody migrants are known to be ill treated (Peberdy and Crush 1998, p 36). As much as 23% of cross-border 'shoppers' and street traders put harassment by the police as one the top three worst problems encountered in their business in South Africa, in a survey conducted in the central business district of Johannesburg and it surrounds (SBP 2006, p 5). Of course, street traders are more vulnerable to this police harassment because unlike the 'shoppers', they are on the streets for most of the year and exposed to the police most times of the day. Employee's of the bus companies, such as Marley from C.R Holdings, are often the ones who pick up the pieces of cross-border traders left destitute by police harassment.

From the very beginning of her street trading in Johannesburg, Gertrude has always had African migrants as her customers. This post 1994 inner city of Johannesburg is described as one where the formal manufacturing base has declined, corporate head offices have migrated and decentralised to the suburbs and surrendered this part of the city to the black-dominated informal economy (Rogerson 1997, p 4). This informal economy is dominated by small to medium size enterprises that employ African foreign nationals - and nationals as well - (Rogerson 1997). Certainly, the bus companies, of which there are over half a dozen from Zambia and running routes to there, are some of the SMMEs that tend to cluster around nationality as stated by Rogerson (1997) although many of them were not in existance to be idtentified by him then. For example consider the Zambian owned

hotel that recently opened on Kerk street, close to the bus company Power Tools (Mwewa 2006). That Zambia cross-border traders exclusively use Zambian bus coaches established in the city compares to the description of Senegalese nationals in the inner city that are respected for their ability to work together across commercial sectors (Simone 2004, p 416).

In fact, it is possible at this stage to describe a whole transnational space from these narratives of trade and the literature. The cross-border traders, the bus companies and their employees, the street traders and the wholesalers form an interrelated slice of Rogerson's SMME sector in the inner city of Johannesburg. Although this description is by no means comprehensive, the narratives in this study give substance to a tableau that aims to take "materiality seriously" (Crush and McDonald 2002, p 13) by taking a close look at the trajectory of goods from the wholesalers in Johannesburg to customers networked in Zambia, as well as all the actors involved. In this way, the logic of the cross-border trading build a bottom up understanding of the city that begins to map an SMME semi-formal economy in Johannesburg. This is a way of looking at the mobility of goods, money, people and images in a concrete way (Vertovec 1999, p 456). For instance, we can trace a circulatory flow when we look at Mwape's cousin travels to Johannesburg with information on desired products which returns to Zambia specific fashionable accessories that again return money (sometimes) to South Africa for further expenditure[31].

It is worth noting how much cross-border traders who come into South Africa for a short while to buy goods (the "shoppers") and fuel the SMME economy of the inner city. In monetary terms alone, the scale of the cross-border shopping is significant. In 2008, African land and air visitors to South Africa spent on average over R11 thousand (down 9%) and just under R32 thousand (up 35%), on 'shopping – goods for resale' respectively. A survey commissioned by the NGO Commark (Fanaroff and Inc 2006) on cross-border traders accommodation, found that over half the cross-border traders who come into South Africa for shopping use family and friends for accommodation, as did Josephine, while around a quarter of them stay in low-end of the market hotels in the inner city of Johannesburg, as did Mrs Njovu. Popular hotels among the shoppers admit that a sizable portion of their clientele is composed of cross-border traders, with for example 30% for the Springbok Hotel and as much as 90% at the Park Station hotel (ibid). This inner city hotel accommodation sector is to an extent informal as many of the hotels are not listed in the telephone directory and the report could not find a coherent list of all the establishments (at least not with the relevant departments in the City of Johannesburg).

Finally, to complete the description of this transnational space in Johannesburg, there are the wholesalers in the inner city, such as China City, where Mwape bought her clothes for resale. Other wholesalers are Asia City, Hong Kong City, Crowne Square, Gold Reef Emporia, Dragon City and the African Trade Centre[32]. A great number of the cross-border migrants buy their goods at these

[31] Simone has a comparable description of the inner city of Johannesburg that is structured and delineated by its people, bodies and networks (Mbembe and Nuttal 2004, p 368, Simone 2004) with a focus on the Nigerian community and the trade in illicit drugs.

[32] 'From China with Love', Mail & Guardian, 9th January 2009 (http://www.mg.co.za/article/2009-10-11-traders-of-fortune)

wholesalers for the range of goods, the low prices and the good quality[33], but are not restricted to them (for example Mrs Njovu's custom made curtains by order).

We have seen then how the circulatory flows of this cross-border trade interact with migrants and the economy of these migrants in the inner city of Johannesburg. The narratives give substance to what we now about the new inner city of Johannesburg, since the transformations in the early 1990s (Rogerson 1997) and how this new form of the city acts as a node into which circulatory migratory flows from the region connected by individuals. The next section should be a corrective of the literature so as to place cross-border trade at the centre of this connection between the city and the region by migration.

Supplementary and entrepreneur traders: within and beyond the margins

Peberdy contends that the activities of cross-border traders between Mozambique and South Africa are not marginal, even though they are in the 'informal sector', given the volume and the value of the goods traded (Peberdy 2000, p 375). Elsewhere, Peberdy and Crush have studied handicraft traders and argued that they are ambitious but small entrepreneurs, relatively well educated, not desperately poor and the majority of them are not seeking formal employment (Peberdy and Crush 1998).

However, the current literature on cross-border traders in southern Africa nevertheless portrays them as marginal given that they tend to be studied only from the South African end of their short migrations and of secondary interest to the study (Lefko-Everet 2007, Crush and McDonald 2002, Peberdy and Rogerson 2002) or simply referred to collectively as petty traders in an inner city that largely represents a collective process of escape (Simone 2004, p 415 and p 423)[34] while other studies focus on the handicraft/curio sector or street hawking (Peberdy and Crush 1998, Hunter and Skinner 2003, Parsely 1998). Muzvidziwa's study (2001) of cross-border traders does concentrate on the home and household aspect of the trader's trajectory, but in the context of escaping poverty (successfully for some). Cross-border traders are marginal in the extant literature on migration in Southern Africa.

Cross-border trader's experiences, however, have features that resonate with both the formal sector and the informal sector. While Peberdy and Crush's study (1998) has a significant proportion (just under 50%) who have no desire for formal employment, Mwape and her cousin were both formally employed when they embarked on their cross-border trading and transporting their goods by bus. The trade then was not for steady income (far from it as it turned out) but rather as an alternative income to wage employment. It follows that traders such as these should not be classified as 'entrepreneurs' as the cross-border traders are in (Peberdy and Rogerson 2002, p 29) and (Peberdy 2000, p 1). Furthermore, that Mwape and her cousin utilize their networks of friends and relatives about the offices of the major banks in Zambia and the credit system for payments that is aligned to salaries is a striking mash of formal and informal.

The formal features of cross-border trade makes it worth considering what is meant by the informal sector. The definition mooted by Peberdy and Rogerson (2002, p 40) is from the ILO "activities in the

[33] 'Traders of Fortune' *Mail & Guardian*, 11th October 2009 (http://www.mg.co.za/article/2009-10-11-traders-of-fortune)

[34] Though, on page 422, he describes foreign African's trade in the city as "petty - to medium - scale".

lower-end of small-scale enterprises, with self-employment and very limited initial capital" and associated with other characteristics such as being outside the regulatory framework, having low productivity and incomes, demonstrating instability, employing family members or few workers, and depending on the activity as a route to economic survival ((ILO) 1988, Castels and Portes 1989, Hirshowitz 1991). When we look at Mwape's practice from her narrative, although it is unstable and falls outside a regulatory framework, it does not amount to self employment or dependency for economic survival. So there is a sense in which Mwape's cross-border trading is not quite informal and not quite marginal either.

Furthermore, on the characteristics of the informal sector, Cross-border trading for 'shoppers', that cover the large distances between Zambia and South Africa, is not an exercise for traders of very limited capital. Although the fissures that erupted at the dawn of the free market economy[35] might may have encouraged many people to become cross-border traders, many cross-borders are now supporting a middle class lifestyle; with all its material trappings that are mostly supplied by South Africa. For some, cross-border trade is not a route to economic survival but necessary to augment the household's income where another member is providing substantial support from formal employment. Furthermore, some cross-border traders, as we have seen, raise capital for full time cross-border trade from relatively well paid formal employment. By contrast, Mrs Njovu's companions, Chesna and Victoria, who are both traders as well but, have no wage employment and have lost their wage-employed husbands. Chesna had the capital, from the benefits of her departed husband, to invest in trade across borders alongside Mrs Njovu. But Victoria's trading, without any benefits payout from her husband's untimely death, was limited to the trade of second hand clothes within the borders of Zambia[36]. Thus it does not seem as if long distance migration for trade is not an action of the poor (Haas 2005, p 1271)[37].

Dennis's trade is on the other hand a full time entrepreneurial occupation is even less of an informal sector activity than Mwape and Mrs Njovu's. For a start, they have more contact with regulatory frameworks; Dennis's truck load imports and exports, like the steel, require full documentation and clearance at the borders while both Josephine and Dennis have registered companies in Lusaka to facilitate the formalities of their business. In addition, Dennis's large scale ventures enable him to do without the clumsy passenger coaches and do business with more reliable customers, for example the liquor stores that always pay after 14 days but unlike the credit system of Mwape's customers.

Simone (2004)contends that, to South Africa altogether, the networks that African entrepreneurs in inner city Johannesburg bring to South Africa are underutilized(p 417). However, informal networks of friends, family and fellow travelling traders are used extensively by the traders themselves, in and beyond South Africa, underscoring Simon's concept of 'people as infrastructure' (ibid). Crucially,

[35] Such as dwindling and inconsistent salaries in real terms, crumbling and privatising public services and inflation.

[36] When I returned to Zambia just under a year after the interview, both Mrs Njovu explained to me that both Chesna and Victoria had moved to the small town of Kabwe to escape the cost of living in Lusaka.

[37] That is not to say that all the cross-border traders found in South Africa are wealthy. On the contrary, the expenditure of the whole group has a wide range, with the majority of cross-border traders come from South Africa's neighbouring countries for very short periods (one night or two) and buy mostly groceries (Muzvidziwa 2001, Peberdy 2000). However the shorter distances make for smaller costs on transport and accommodation.

Portes et al (1999, p 220) and takes the "individual and his/her support network as the proper unit of analysis". Mrs Njovu and Mwape use their informal networks of friends and family to distribute, advertise and sell their goods in Zambia; while Mwape goes around banks and peoples work places with her cousin advertising the clothes and accessories from South Africa, Mrs Njovu does the rounds with people she knows around Chilenje where she lives. Orders are sometimes taken, as Mrs Njovu did with curtains, for specific goods before embarking on a trip abroad. But these networks also facilitate entry into cross-border trade where friends are introduced to suppliers and accommodation in foreign countries; Mwape was led into it by her cousin and Mrs Njovu was guided into Dar es Salaam by an experienced cross-border trading neighbour. Many Malawians, even though the circulatory migration of mine labour into South Africa has disintegrated in recent decades, have continued to use established networks that connect people in the rural areas to the established individuals in Johannesburg for both accommodation and job opportunities (Andersson 2006). Cross-border trading Zambians by contrast use their networks to distribute and sell their goods rather than find employment in South Africa. However, like the Malawians, cross-border traders will use their networks for accommodation in South Africa, as does Josephine and the traders of Muzvidziwa's study (2001).

On the other hand, once the cross-border trader moves into larger scale trade, as we saw with Dennis, there is the need to supply larger and more reliable customers such as fixed retailers with a shop. The networking then shifts to negotiating medium to long term consistent transactions with suppliers or facilitating the networking for other suppliers and retailers for a lucrative fee. It seems then, that once the cross-border trader moves into larger scale of the trade, the network too changes form to become more strategic and focused.

In all, these narratives make it clear that there is a diverse range of cross-border traders with different strategies and objectives. In terms of strategy, the way traders mobilize their social networks to facilitate transactions is different for entrepreneurs and for supplementary traders. And as far as objective goes, supplementary traders in this study use their income to support their household income whereas entrepreneurs commit fully to the trade. In addition, there are street trading cross-border traders whose income is primarily subsistence. The literature on cross-border traders in the region does not provide these distinctions and portrays migrants as altogether marginal. These narratives are an attempt at a refocusing or an updating to the significant and large scale contribution cross-border trade makes to total foreign direct spending by foreign visitors (Tourism 2005, 2007, 2008) and grounding it in the experiences of the everyday lives of individual traders.

Necessary conditions for cross-border trade

Finally, it is worth considering what it is about Zambia and South Africa that has allowed this flowering of cross-border trade activity. Portes et al (1999, p223) are of the view that the transnational migration that emerged at the end of the 20th century was necessarily the result of readily available and cheap methods of communication and travel ('space-and-time-compressing technology) to accelerate the processes of transnationalism among migrant communities. However, apart from the development of widely accessible mobile phones, nowhere do I find much that suggests that the technological revolution in communication technologies play a new and crucial role in compressing time and space between Zambia and South Africa. Although Andersson (2006) found that the mobile phone revolution enabled Malawians in the rural areas to utilize a network of

family established in Johannesburg to facilitate work and accommodation in South Africa it seemed to me that the opening of the South African border to its northern neighbours and transport businesses that flowered with that has done more to bring South Africa and Zambia closer together in time and space in terms of cross-border trade. Of course, this also because the physical distance between Lusaka and Johannesburg is relatively small on a regional scale.

Furthermore, in light of the explosion of cross-border trade, consider the recent political transitions of the region. Zambia (along with other countries in the region) implemented structural adjustment programs in the late 1980s (remember Mrs Njovu's reverie about the good old subsidised times) and embraced an open market and private enterprise which came with private bus operators and a free floating currency (which was incidentally the one thing that Mrs Njovu, Josephine and Marley said most determines the frequency of cross-border trips – the kwacha-dollar-rand exchange rate). Of course, on the South African side, the transition to democracy and the opening of its borders has opened South Africa to an enormous number of visitors from the continent (Tourism 2006, p 12). Finally, there is also the improved diplomatic relations between South Africa and The Peoples Republic of China that has brought a new wave of immigrants as well as cheap manufactured goods to South Africa's wholesalers (Wilhelm 2006).

CONCLUSION

The trajectories of cross-border traders from Zambia to South Africa also sheds some light on how the circular migration associated with the trade configures a section of the social economy of the inner city of Johannesburg. They have highlighted the intimate link between informal trade and migration. The descriptions in this study give a grounded study of trading beyond the margins which is some of the substance of the thickening of linkages between transnational communities.

A number of the interviewees described here have been shown to be more of a migrant or a periodic shopper than a cross-border trader. While other research has shown that cross-border trade has been a way to escape poverty or cope with difficult social and economic situations, the traders looked at in this study have, with the exception of one of them, only engaged in the trade when their situation suited them. Their engagement in cross-border trade has been animated by their management of wealth as opposed to a primary occupation and thus gives us an additional way to understand the nature of cross-border trade in Southern Africa.

In terms of how the interviewees are identified, the balance from this study seems to tilt towards migrant or shopper over trader. Of the four who are settled in South Africa from Zambia, only one of them came to South Africa for the purposes of trading across borders and the interviewee resident in Zambia travels to South Africa less than half a dozen times a year. Although these individuals are not representative of the population of Zambians that conduct cross-border trade with South Africa, it would be interesting to know if cross-border trading features more prominently in other African migrant communities when compared to the Zambian migrant community in South Africa.

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