



# **Hustle Revolution: Participation of young graduates in the informal economy of Bulawayo, Zimbabwe**

by

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## **Dedication**

I dedicate this study to my mother, Clara Matenga, and my sister, Mitchell Chipangura, who inspire me to do my best.

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## **Abstract**

The main purpose of the study was to investigate the experiences of young graduates who participate in the informal economy of Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. This study aimed to answer the question of whether formal education gives young graduates competing in the informal economy a competitive advantage or disadvantage. This was done through in-depth interviews, hanging out (observations) and casual conversations with young graduates who participate in the informal economy in Bulawayo and organisations that work with youth in the city. Twelve participants were selected using snowball and purposive sampling techniques. The study was grounded in the concept of 'waithood' and Bourdieu's theory of practice, with a specific focus on the component of cultural capital.

The study's findings demonstrate that to address the challenge of unemployment after graduation, young graduates participate in the informal economy. Results indicated that young graduates participate in the informal economy to enhance their livelihoods, pursue their passion, gain employment, cope with waithood and delayed adulthood and for multiple streams of income. Benefits such as financial independence, the ability to support families and getting employment were also noted in this study. This study found that formal education gives young graduates a competitive advantage that manifests itself as better business strategies as they operate in the informal economy of Bulawayo. However, young graduates highlighted challenges such as less hustle mentality, competition, and capital, just to mention a few.

Prospects of future work by almost all the young graduates highlighted that they preferred to participate in both the formal and informal economy. The experiences of young graduates in the informal economy were positive and negative. This study recommends a policy that prioritises young graduates, structural changes in tertiary education and the economy, and support for small businesses in the informal economy. It also raises awareness of the mismatch between tertiary education and the changing needs of the labour market in Zimbabwe.

**Keywords:** Young graduates, informal economy, waithood, hustling, cultural capital

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# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Introduction

Approximately 1,2 billion people (16% of the world's population) are young. As the number continues to increase, so does the unemployment rate among people in this age category (United Nations, 2022). This is a driving force for young people to engage in alternative forms of employment as they take on jobs and opportunities to start businesses in the informal economy. Approximately 96,8% of all young workers in developing countries work in the informal economy (World Youth Report, 2020). Most young people in Africa live in cities (Pieterse, 2011). The continent has been described as the youngest continent in the world, with a mean average age of 20 years and 60% of its population under 25 years of age (El Quassif, 2021; Nkula et al., 2022). As the youth population expands, so does the urban youth population, as young people continue to move to cities in search of better living conditions, jobs, and opportunities to earn a living.

The growing youth population in cities in the context of high youth unemployment is a critical urban challenge that needs urgent solutions because high youth unemployment is often associated with social ills such as delinquency and prostitution (Finn et al., 2015). As will be demonstrated later, a study of existing literature on youth unemployment shows that more attention has been paid to less educated youth at the expense of skilled tertiary education graduates (Gukurume, 2018; Honwana et al., 2015). Therefore, this study sought to explore this gap by investigating the experiences of Zimbabwean young graduates participating in the informal economy after not securing formal jobs. Although this study focused on a Zimbabwean city, it should be noted that youth unemployment is a growing challenge in most cities in the Global South. The cities of the Global South are those that have been referred to as developing.

This study sought to examine the participation of young graduates in the informal economy in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. It specifically situates the experiences of young graduates and investigates how they use formal (tertiary) education and skills to navigate the challenges and opportunities they face in the informal economy in the city. The purpose of this study was to engage in debates on the challenges that affect young graduates in the cities of the Global South. This study sought to unpack precarity, political dynamics of the informal economy and how youth graduates circumvent them.

The study is based on the experiences of young unemployed graduates in Bulawayo, how they cope with joblessness, and how they participate in the growing informal economy of the city. It aimed to assess whether the commonly held belief that education is the key to success is true, given the failure of the Zimbabwean economy to create employment opportunities.

## **1.2 Background**

### ***1.2.1 Premature Deindustrialisation and Failure of the Zimbabwean Economy***

Zimbabwe has implemented several economic policies since independence in 1980. These policies were largely informed by two major economic ideologies, namely socialist (interventionist/protectionist) and free-market policies. In the 1980s, the new government adopted interventionist and protectionist before shifting to a more liberal free-market economy in the 1990s, which witnessed the implementation of the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) (Brett et al., 2003; African Development Bank, 2011). Protectionist measures that included import substitution led to a shortage of investment and a lack of foreign currency, and the government opted for the ESAP (Brett et al., 2003). ESAP, which was rolled out by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, recommended developing countries to implement numerous neoliberal economic policy changes such as the removal of state subsidies and incentives as pre-conditions to access loans (Mago et al., 2013; Bomani et al., 2015).

Under ESAP, state-funded subsidies for social services were cut and the free market led to cheap imports flooding the Zimbabwean market. ESAP eroded government control on market prices and the minimum wage that had been enforced after 1980 (Mlambo, 1997). The removal of protectionist measures led to the decline of the manufacturing sector. The textile industry, for example, began to compete with cheaper imports, leading to its demise (Mlambo, 2017). This happened in other sectors as the economy succumbed to premature deindustrialisation. Although ESAP was meant to improve the economy and foreign currency and to stimulate industries, it failed to realise this objective. Consequently, this led to an economic crisis as local industry started to collapse soon after implementation (Saunders, 1996). This had catastrophic results, such as deindustrialisation, widespread job losses, unemployment, and an increase in urban poverty and inequality (Brett et al., 2003). The collapse of the economy over the years has trickled down to worsen other challenges such as access to employment, affordable education, and affordable services which are closely related to the ESAP restrictions on social spending on health, education, and social protection.

Populist politics by the government worsened and added to the economic crisis in the late 1990s. This included the unbudgeted monetary compensation given to Liberation War veterans in 1997 when approximately 60,000 Liberation War veterans received Z\$50,000 (US\$3000), which resulted in a currency decline of about 74% (Dewa et al., 2013). Zimbabwe's participation in the Democratic Republic of Congo civil war, again unbudgeted, also had a toll on the local economy and industry (Mlambo, 2017). The crisis was worsened by the fast-track land reform which started in 2000 to speed up land re-distribution. The fast-track land reform involved invasions and expropriation of farms owned by white farmers. Most of the beneficiaries of these farms did not have farming experience and therefore did not fully use them, resulting in the collapse of the agricultural sector (Magidi, 2022). Together with the effects of droughts that the country has repeatedly experienced, Zimbabwe was reduced from the breadbasket of Africa to a net importer of food (Ndlela and Robinson, 2015). Zimbabwe's gross domestic product (GDP) and income per capita fell by 50% between 2000 and 2008 and continues to deteriorate. The poverty levels in 2008 were estimated at around 70%, unemployment at 80% and inflation was at its peak in 2007 at five hundred billion per cent (African Development Bank, 2011).

Deindustrialisation caused economic and political crises that led to the collapse of most industries, while others relocated to other countries with favourable economic policies and support, leaving widespread unemployment (Nyathi, 2018). Industrial failure and subsequent economic crises all occurred within the same decade, leaving people with no other option to recover their lost livelihoods other than participating in the informal economy, which also maximised the opportunity and expanded exponentially. However, the informal economy went under attack during Operation Murambatsvina (Operation Restore Order), where informal activities were evicted away from their workplaces as informal housing structures were destroyed (Tibajuka, 2005). This affected the growth of small businesses.

Post 2012, Zimbabwe's economy remains volatile and struggling. The collapse of the coalition government in 2013 which had seen some significant economic recovery, the political instability following the 2017 military coup, and the disputed general elections of 2018 compounded the situation. The economy also suffered another setback due to the outbreak of COVID-19 between 2020 and 2022. More companies collapsed or downsized. This further left young graduates vulnerable to the problem of unemployment, making their livelihoods and survival in cities extremely constrained. Studies like Gondo et al. (2014) and Handel (2017) have alluded to graduate unemployability due to possessing skills that are not in demand. There

is less room for growth or promotion for young people just entering this space as they would be competing with older colleagues who have more work experience. This describes the economic environment which young people are graduating into unemployment after completing their higher education studies and therefore pushing most of them into the informal economy.

### **1.3 Definitions**

This section provides meanings for the following terms according to how they are used in the context of this study, in Zimbabwe and Southern urbanism.

#### ***1.3.1 Tertiary Education***

Zimbabwe's higher education includes enrolment in agricultural colleges, teachers' colleges, polytechnics, and universities. There are 20 universities in Zimbabwe and there has been a significant increase in university enrolment from 1999 to 2022. In 1999, only 28,028 were enrolled in universities, with the figure increasing to 53, 547 in 2010 and 116,324 in 2020 (ZimStat, 2021).

#### ***1.3.2 Youth Unemployment***

According to the ILO (2019), unemployment refers to working-age people without jobs who are actively seeking jobs for four weeks and are qualified and ready if employment opportunities are provided. Therefore, youth unemployment refers to the number of people between the age groups of 15 to 24 years without formal jobs (UN, 2018). However, this study adopts Zimbabwe's official definition of youth extends up to 35 years and thus focuses on graduates of this age and below. Youth are three times more likely to be unemployed, underemployed, or to engage in low-paying, risky and informal work than adults (UN, 2022). According to Pieterse (2015), only 17% of young people working in low-income countries have full-time permanent wage employment. That is why young people are critical to sustainable development goal (SDG) 8 which emphasises the importance of decent work and economic growth, because they are the future and can be a catalyst for growth, especially in cities in the Global South where they are the majority.

#### ***1.3.3 Graduates***

The term refers to those with tertiary education qualifications, including a diploma or degree, from polytechnics, colleges, or universities.

### ***1.3.4 Youth Population***

According to the Constitution of Zimbabwe (2013) guided by the Youth Charter which Zimbabwe is a signatory, youth in Zimbabwe are people between the ages of 15 and 35. Zimbabwean youths make up more than 60% of the entire population, which in 2022 was 15,178,979 (ZimStat, 2022).

### ***1.3.5 Informal economy***

The informal economy refers to economic activities that operate outside the regulatory framework of the state (ILO, 2015;). Although formal and informal economies have a definitional boundary, there is no distinct boundary between the two, but they are rather closely linked (Meagher, 2013). The links between the two economies are found in the interactions and overlap of the operations of informal activities with formal spaces and markets (Magidi, 2019). Informal employment refers to workers and economic units – including enterprises, entrepreneurs, and households – in the informal economy, in particular:

*a) those in the informal economy who own and operate economic units, including (i) own-account workers; (ii) employers; and (iii) members of cooperatives and of social and solidarity economy units.*

*b) contributing family workers, irrespective of whether they work in economic units in the formal or informal economy.*

*c) employees holding informal jobs in or for formal enterprises, or in or for economic units in the informal economy, or as paid domestic workers employed by households; and*

*d) Workers in unrecognised or unregulated employment relationships (ILO, 2013)*

The main informal activities that young Zimbabweans carry out in the informal economy include street traders, digital entrepreneurs, light manufacturing, and transport drivers/hawkers (Magidi, 2019).

### ***1.3.6 Participation***

In this study, the participation of young graduates in the informal economy refers to participating in the informal economy as a side hustle, as an employer, employee, and sole trader, just to mention a few.

### ***1.3.7 Money changer***

This is a Zimbabwean-invented colloquial term that refers to an individual who participates in forex trading in the informal economy. Money changers buy and sell different currencies; American dollars (USD), Zimbabwean dollar (ZWD), South African Rand, Botswana Pula, and mobile money at the street forex rate for a profit.

### ***1.3.8 Agency***

Agency is goal-directed, or, as Sen (1999) says, it is purposive. Purposive agency is an action in which people actively engage in decisions that have an impact on their lives. Purposive agency is action directed towards the attainment of goals and aspirations (Narayan, 2005).

### ***1.3.9 Operation Murambatsvina***

This was an operation that sought to eliminate any informal activity in Zimbabwean cities. It was the rejection of informal businesses, vendors, and informal housing in cities that resulted in the evictions of many informal settlers and vendors (Tibaijuka, 2005).

## **1.4 Statement of the Problem**

Bulawayo, like the rest of Zimbabwean cities, is experiencing high youth unemployment due to a failing economy, deindustrialisation, and skills mismatch. The high youth unemployment is unfolding at a time when the country is producing a lot of graduates from its higher education institutions and the unemployment is also high even among educated youth. Around 30,000 youths graduate from tertiary institutions each year (Zimstat, 2021).

Although the government insists that unemployment in Zimbabwe is just around 11%, independent experts argue that it is more than 94% (Gukurume, 2018), painting even a gloomier picture for young graduates trying to enter a job market where jobs are already scarce. Unemployment in Zimbabwean cities has seen the emergence of a variety of strategies, such as the informal economy, as they seek to survive (Gukurume, 2018). One such strategy is hustling, which has become one of the predominant means of earning income and survival among many. Hustling symbolises the informal activities in which most unemployed youth engage to sustain a livelihood (Rogerson, 2016).

This study explores how young graduates participate in the informal economy in Bulawayo. Young people and their families invest money and time in formal education with the hope that education is the key to better living standards and a way out of poverty. However, this is not the case in Zimbabwe, where most young people graduate and find themselves unemployed after graduating. Education has less return than expected due to the economic challenges that

plague the country. The higher education curriculum does not match the economic or employment opportunities available in Zimbabwe. This mismatch is problematic because it descends to unemployment, which further translates into many other urban challenges such as poverty, food insecurity, and unsustainable livelihoods. Understanding how young graduates navigate such an economy and job market is important in a country like Zimbabwe, where youth make up 60% of the entire population and where at least 30,000 young graduates graduate from tertiary institutions each year (Zimstat, 2021).

Young graduates are an entry point for understanding and potentially addressing urban challenges such as unemployment, among others, as urbanisation intensifies in southern cities. However, the available literature on youth and the informal economy tends to neglect the experiences of young graduates in the informal economy. Most literature on youth has looked at youth in general, unemployment, and protest movements (Honwana, 2013) but not much has been done to understand the circumstances of graduate youth working in the informal economy, especially in the Zimbabwean context. Youth unemployment strategies have looked at the informal economy as a place where less educated youth gain skills, but the dynamics surrounding young graduates participating in the informal economy remain understudied. Therefore, this study sought to explore this gap and understand the experiences of young graduates who participated in Zimbabwe's informal economy using Bulawayo as a case study.

## **1.5 Research objectives and questions.**

### ***1.5.1 Objectives***

The study is guided by the following objectives and research questions:

1. To examine the experiences and motivations of young graduates to participate in the informal economy.
2. To analyse the usefulness of formal (tertiary) education in an informal economy
3. To investigate the importance of the informal economy for young graduates
4. To explore the viability of the informal economy as a viable long-term career option for young graduates.

### **1.5.2 Research questions**

#### *Main question*

- What are the experiences of young graduates in the informal economy of Bulawayo, Zimbabwe? How does formal tertiary education give young graduates who participate in the informal economy a competitive advantage or disadvantage?

#### *Sub-research questions:*

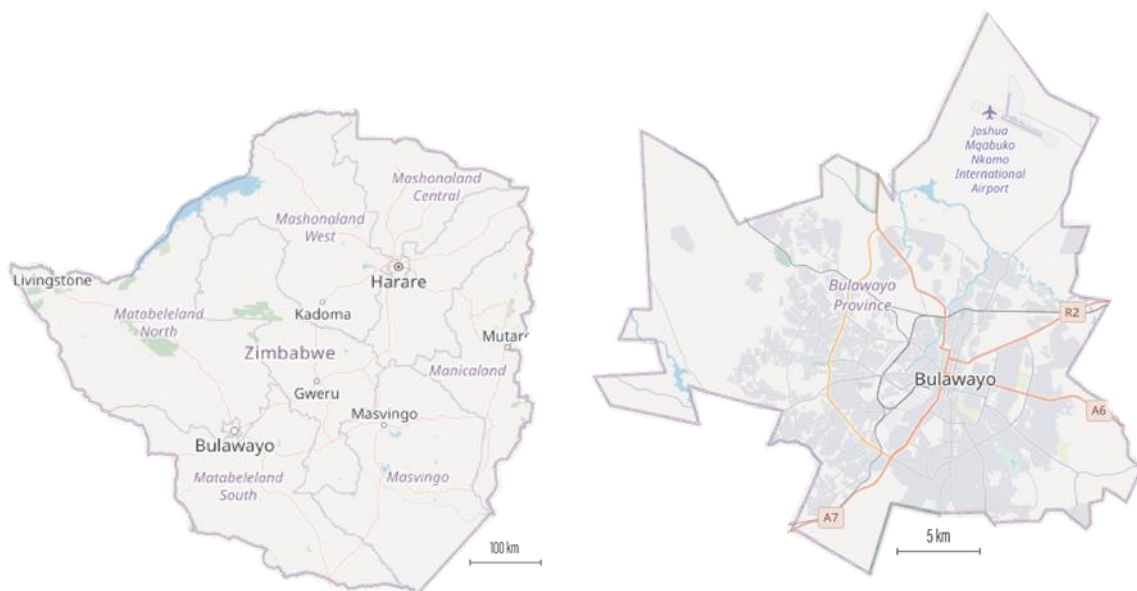
- i. What activities do young graduates participate in the informal economy in the inner-city of Bulawayo?
- ii. How do young graduates apply skills and knowledge from their formal education in the informal sector in Bulawayo? Are these skills relevant in the informal sector?
- iii. How do these young graduates use their tertiary education skills to navigate the challenges they face in the informal economy in Bulawayo? How do the skills and knowledge acquired from higher education enable young graduates to make positive changes in the informal economy in Bulawayo?
- iv. What are the opportunities and challenges for young graduates who participate in the informal economy in Bulawayo?
- v. What are other coping strategies used by young graduates to navigate the challenges that affect them in the informal economy in Bulawayo?
- vi. How do young graduates perceive the importance of the informal economy in terms of the future work trajectory in Bulawayo?

### **1.6 Study Setting: Bulawayo, Zimbabwe**

This research was undertaken in the second capital city of Zimbabwe, Bulawayo (see Figure 1). Historically, Bulawayo is known as '*Kontuthu Ziyathunqa*', a name attributed to the smoke that arises due to its large industrial base and the presence of large cooling towers in its coal-powered power generation plant (Ndlovu, 201). *Kontuthu Ziyathunqa* (the city that billows smoke) represents Bulawayo as a city that was once booming with factory work. Bulawayo used to be Zimbabwe's industrial capital, where people flocked from rural areas and other cities in search of employment. Bulawayo is an interesting case because of the juxtaposition of the place as a hub for formal employment before the 1990s, but a place of massive unemployment in the aftermath of the industrial collapse that ensued afterwards. Industrial activity in Bulawayo supported many livelihoods, as the city hosted the major industries of the country. These include, the National Railways of Zimbabwe, Cold Storage Commission, Treger Group,

National Blankets, Zimbabwe Engineering Company (ZECO), Merlin, G & D Shoes, Hunyani Holdings, Radar Metals and Dunlop, among others (Thebe, 2019).

However, the city experienced deindustrialisation in the early 2000s, leaving most of its industries incapacitated and resulting in high unemployment for many of its residents. Besides the industrial history of Bulawayo, the city hosts graduates from a variety of tertiary institutions in the city and nearby. These include, the National University of Science and Technology, Bulawayo Polytechnic, and the nearby universities Lupane, Gwanda, Solusi. It is crucial to interrogate how young graduates who experience unemployment and the thought that employment itself is attached to temporality navigate the informal economy. The study also sought to understand the opportunities and challenges young graduates face when participating in the informal economy. Figure 1 shows the location of the study site, Bulawayo.



*Figure 1: Location of Bulawayo*

### **1.7 Significance**

Zimbabwe produces more than 30,000 young graduates each year. Most of the graduates who do not get formal jobs end up pursuing further studies at universities or participating in the informal economy. However, there is limited literature on young graduates in the informal economy. The dominant argument in the informal economy literature is that urban informality is a livelihood strategy for the urban poor, the unemployed and the marginalised (Njaya, 2014; Matenga; 2018; Gukurume, 2018). These scholars focus on street traders who survive on the

margins of neoliberal capitalism and make the argument that although they sustain livelihoods, their enterprises are susceptible to state repression and exclusion in the mainstream economy (Matenga, 2018). Other studies on graduate employment have focused only on graduate employability or on the link between degree programmes and the labour market (Gondo et al., 2014; Jongbloed, 2001).

The literature on young people's challenges has focused on less educated unemployed youth, but this study will specifically focus on young highly skilled graduates. Although these studies are informative, they did not specifically focus on youth graduates' participation in the informal economy. They also did not specifically focus on how these youth graduates use formal (tertiary) education skills to take advantage of opportunities and navigate the challenges they face in the informal economy. Not only are young people an opportunity to market sustainability ideas, but they are also technologically sound and innovative enough to create significant positive progress in terms of livelihoods and other urban challenges, and therefore this study will make them visible. According to Honwana (2015), the 'waiting generation' has a 'transformative potential' and addressing youth unemployment will bring about transformative change in cities of the Global South. Unemployment not only is attached to jobs, but also impedes social life and community participation, as it traps young people in waitthood (Honwana, 2015; Jeffery, 2008). This study is linked to various SDGs, such as SDG 1 (reduction of poverty), SDG 4 (improving the quality of education), SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth), SDG 10 (reduced inequalities), and SDG 11 (sustainable cities and communities). The results of this study have the potential to shed more light on how to progress toward achieving some of these goals. This study will contribute to the youth literature in southern cities, the literature on youth in the informal economy on the future of work, especially in African cities.

This study will contribute to a better understanding of the value of formal education for the informal economy by scholars, the education sector, and policy makers. This study will also provide insight into the kind of educational system relevant that will be useful in a hybrid economy or that will improve the informal economy leading to economic growth, better living standards and sustainable livelihoods. It could inform future curricula for tertiary institutions and inform those considering tertiary education in Zimbabwe. It will make youth participation visible and could lead to more opportunities to equip young entrepreneurs with tools to succeed and escape waiting if that is their goal. It will make visible the potential opportunities and

challenges of young graduates so that they get the support needed. This study will open space for youth to think critically about and/or redefine the concept of work.

It is also crucial to raise awareness of the mismatch between tertiary education curriculum and changing economy/market needs so that education can be improved to be well-rounded so that graduates become employable in the formal and informal economy.

## **1.8 Thesis Structure**

This thesis is structured as follows:

### ***Chapter 1***

The first chapter introduces the study and looks at the background and context of the study. Due to the word count limit, I briefly touch on the economic background of Zimbabwe and explain the statement of the problem, the significance of the study and the research questions and objectives.

### ***Chapter 2***

The second chapter reviews the literature on young graduates in the informal economy of Zimbabwe. Conversation with and between different scholars on youth, agency, waithood, and the informal economy is done in this chapter.

### ***Chapter 3***

The third chapter explores the conceptual grounding of the study. Waithood and Cultural Capital are interrogated.

### ***Chapter 4***

The fourth chapter looks at the methodology and methods used in the study and explains why those methods were used and chosen for this study. The data collection tools used, the sampling techniques and the challenges faced are explained.

### ***Chapter 5***

The fifth chapter presents the findings from the data collection, analyses and discusses these findings to answer the research question and to fulfil the research objectives.

### ***Chapter 6***

The last chapter concludes the study and presents recommendations to solve the challenge of youth and graduate unemployment.

## **CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents literature on youth unemployment, the changing nature of work, the informal economy, and tertiary education in Zimbabwe. It also highlights Zimbabwean policies that have been implemented and lessons learnt from other Southern cities and countries to address the problem of youth unemployment.

### **2.2 Africa's growing youth population: a 'Youthquake'**

It is estimated that a third or more of young people in the world will live in Africa by 2050 (United Nations, 2022). Zimbabwe, like other countries in the developing world, has experienced a youth population bulge. The concept of youth bulge refers to demographics characterised by a large youth population living in an area (Gukurume, 2018). With this youth bulge, many youths find themselves unemployed and such youth have been perceived as victims of structural injustice or a 'ticking time bomb' waiting to explode that poses risks to urban order (Finn et al., 2015). With this explosion and the rapid urbanisation for which the country is not prepared, the challenges that already existed in the volatile economy of Zimbabwe, such as unemployment, have been amplified. The study of the everyday of youth has made them more perceived than young people waiting to be adults but as agents of change in their own lives (Pain, 2019).

The rise of young people, whether in political risings or in taking charge of their lives through their agency has been referred to as 'youthquake'. For example, youth uprisings have manifested through political action and what Yarker (2021: 264) says is a 'youthquake of political action'. Youthquake can be associated with hope for and brought by the youth in addressing socio-economic challenges that affect both the Global South and North. This 'youthquake' is evidence of how crucial the study of young people is, especially in the developing world, which hosts most young people in the world. In Zimbabwe, this agency manifests itself in youth participating in the informal economy as a coping strategy for unemployment and underemployment. Among these important youth are young graduates who have the potential to positively change economies (Honwana, 2012). Thus, this study looks at the experiences of young graduates as they participate in the informal economy of Bulawayo, Zimbabwe.

## **2.3 Youth Unemployment: An Urban Condition**

### ***2.3.1 Exclusion and marginality of young graduates***

Although they are the largest population in Zimbabwe, young people are in a position of marginality. In Zimbabwe, youth initiatives are constantly being pushed into policy. This marginality and exclusion come from being ‘forgotten’, ‘unseen’ almost invisible after they graduate. This is due to the shortage of government initiatives specifically targeting young graduates (Honwana et al., 2005). In a study of urban informal traders in Harare (the capital city of Zimbabwe), it was noted that most of the participants were graduates who had never had the opportunity to apply their knowledge and skills to use in the informal economy (Mahiya et al., 2020). Some companies provide short-term employment to new graduates; however, this only caters for a few people and only on short-term. Graduate unemployment is a growing concern in urban environments. Graduate employability is the unemployment of people with academic tertiary qualifications (Lindberg, 2007; Mariwo, 2008).

### ***2.3.2 Massification of higher and higher education***

With this youthquake and the need to sustain livelihoods, more young people in Zimbabwe are enrolling in higher education institutions. This has increased the number of graduates per year that the formal sector cannot or is unwilling to accommodate. This is problematic considering that there is already a backlog of unemployed graduates (Mogomotsi et al., 2017). Massification is the oversupply of graduates, more than that which the market can accommodate. The rate of graduates who are churned out in Zimbabwe has not been in parallel to the growth of the economy and the demand for labour in the formal economy. This mismatch between supply and demand for labour has contributed to the rapid increase in unemployment (Mogomotsi et al., 2017). It is also seen as a systematic problem.

### ***2.3.3 Mismatch of skills in the labour market***

Skills mismatch is the misalignment between the available skills, the labour market and skills that are in demand in the labour market. According to ILO (2013), skills mismatch takes various forms, including under-education, over-education, skills gap, skills surplus, and skills shortage. According to the OECD (2013), skills mismatch is inevitable even in developed economies and in countries with well-performing labour markets due to the constant change of skills needed for tasks on the job, technological, and organisational change. In Europe, as education became more accessible, business growth became constrained due to the available skills. According to Kupets (2015), 30% of firms in 2008 considered education and skills to be a

major constraint to the growth of their businesses; this dissatisfaction was especially noted in Belarus, Kazakhstan, Russia, Ukraine, Moldova, Lithuania, and Romania. The reason why young graduates were not associated with growth is because of the mismatch between education and the skills desired in the labour market.

Nziramanga (1999) wrote on the skills mismatch in Zimbabwe, while the Southern Africa Labour and Development Research Unit (SALDRU) and Doyle (2014) discussed the link between the skills mismatch and the informal economy in South Africa. Skills are important as they are tied to employability and income that improves livelihoods (Martin et al., 2020). Therefore, skill development has been prioritised through formal education. Education and training are crucial for development, as suggested in the Nziramanga report on Zimbabwe, which argues for constant improvement in the curriculum of tertiary education to avoid a skills mismatch (Nziramanga, 1999).

Handel (2017) asserts that massive informality in low- and middle-income countries depicts a skills mismatch and found that over-education is not just a phenomenon in high-income countries, but also in low-middle-income countries. Kupets (2017) highlighted the existence of a qualification mismatch where there is a higher percentage of qualified youth employed in the informal economy. Kupets' (2015) study on overeducation of workers in Armenia, Georgia, Macedonia, and Ukraine found that a high and persistent education and job mismatch existed due to the failure of the labour market to keep up with the rapidly growing supply of graduates.

Adams (2013) stipulates that if highly educated people fail to find jobs in the formal sector, they are compelled to work in the informal sector. After graduation, most young graduates in developing countries face unemployment. This has been partly attributed to the mismatch between the skills these young graduates possess and the needs of the labour market. Meyer (2021) noted that young graduates face many challenges in the labour market that trap them in underemployment in formal employment. Most young graduates end up employed in work for which they are not trained, work for which they are overqualified, and work that takes most of their time. According to the ILO (2020), young people are faced with precarious employment and unemployment and underemployment affects more than 95% of employed youth.

According to Penar (2021), approximately 10 to 12 million people in African countries enter the labour market, yet only 3 million young people get formal jobs while pushing other young people to find work and engage in the informal economy. However, most of the jobs available

in addition to entrepreneurship in the informal economy are low-paying and do not have social security benefits.

Mok and Jiang (2018) argue that the massification of higher education has resulted in young graduates with general academic degrees and a shortage of graduates with vocational and technical skills needed in the labour market. However, in the Zimbabwean context, both graduates with academic degrees and vocational skills find themselves in the informal economy and not formally employed. A study by Mafumbate et al. (2014) found that there was a mismatch between degree programmes and the labour market at the Zimbabwean Open University. Most of the participants reported that they did not get employment in their area of specialisation or for jobs they were qualified for and ended up taking any jobs they could find. This is due to the shortage of jobs even for those with technical skills and the dissatisfaction with low pay in the formal sector.

#### ***2.3.4 Underemployment, gig work, and casualisation of work***

Temporary work and gig work are a growing phenomenon in the formal economy. Gig work involves the self-employed being able to work for companies as independent contractors or workers and is usually temporary or casual (Collins et al., 2019). This has been a challenge that has plagued young graduates and forced them to participate in the informal economy because the available formal work is unstable. Temporary work does not provide young graduates with social security protection and job security (Sakunthala, 2018). Temporary work and gig work do not provide sustainable livelihoods to young graduates due to the unstable nature of work due to their temporary nature. Young graduates interviewed in this study mentioned that they preferred the instability in the informal economy because they have control of their income and time. Such casual temporary work does not require employers to invest in further training in other skills, as would be the case for more permanent employees (Sakunthala, 2018). A study by Mwenje (2021) in Mutare (Zimbabwe's fourth largest city) found that some graduates were unemployed due to job shortages in their areas of expertise. For example, one participant in Mwenje's study highlighted that her transport and logistics degree did not serve her well because not many companies employ logistics officers.

#### ***2.3.5 Industrial attachment programme / work-related learning***

Industrial attachment is related to experiential learning and practical experience in the job market as part of higher education (Dondofema et al., 2020). Such learning has been perceived as effective, as the industrial attachment enhances the theory learnt in class and creates links

between students and employers. This experience is supposed to help students with tangible skills and in a study by Matamande (2013), University of Zimbabwe students reported that industrial attachment was positive and improved their learning. However, instead of giving students work experience so that they can be employable, it has facilitated organisations and companies to exploit and become dependent on this labour (Dondofema et al., 2020). In the end, they hire fewer graduates who expect a high salary and benefits, thus contributing to graduate unemployment.

In Zimbabwe tertiary education, to fulfil degree or diploma requirements, it is a pre-requisite for a student to do workplace-related learning also known as an industrial attachment for a year during their degree, then go back to school for the final year to finish their qualifications. Due to the large number of students who look for attachment places yearly and competition, students usually settle to work for free or for a low salary (Wilson, 2016). It is a challenge for tertiary students as some fail to secure attachment places and end up not graduating or postpone finishing their degrees or diplomas, and some end up in organisations or roles not beneficial to their learning (Matamande et al., 2012). This has contributed to the collapse of the Zimbabwean economy, as young graduates are unable to fully use their skills in a way that positively contributes to the economy. According to Edziwa et al. (2015), most organisations attach students for an allowance and perceive them as cheap labour. With the availability of this cheap labour companies and organisations usually hire this replaceable labour instead of young graduates who expect better salaries and work benefits.

### ***2.3.6 Migration***

South Africa has the second largest economy in Africa, which attracts many migrants. However, there is under-utilisation of skills because getting jobs related to their skill set is a challenge. A study in South Africa found that immigrants with tertiary education usually get jobs in the informal sector, especially those from less advanced economies (Doyle et al., 2014). The informal economy is characterised by labour-intensive work, such as domestic work and agricultural labour which require minimum education (Wills, 2009). It is difficult for immigrants to secure jobs because of the restrictions of assimilation into the labour market, labour law restrictions, and discrimination that under-utilise immigrant labour. When educated immigrants secure jobs outside of their skillset this is called 'brain waste' (Doyle et al., 2014).

Young graduates who have grown up in Zimbabwe's unstable economy and unemployment aspire to migrate to neighbouring and Western countries to have better incomes and better lives.

In developing countries such as Ghana, graduates were eager to migrate for a better life (Dako-Gyeke, 2016). This has led to many skilled graduates migrating from developing countries to the developed world. Some young people go through dangerous processes of illegal migration in search of employment opportunities. Some young graduates escape waitthood by migrating and finding jobs abroad where they can send remittances back home and support themselves. Young graduates migrate for better education and employment opportunities (Dako-Gyeke, 2016). In 2008, the Zimbabwean economy was shattered, which led even the formally employed to leave their jobs and go to the neighbouring country in South Africa for informal work. According to Nzima (2017) in a study of migration from Zimbabwe to South Africa, immigrants were able to earn income that supported their livelihood and were able to send remittances home.

#### **2.4 Changing nature of work**

The preference for fulfilling work has changed over the years. Most young graduates expect employment prospects that enable them to fulfil social obligations and gain recognition and respect from the community. In the informal economy, young graduates can financially support their families and become less dependent on their families (Gukurume, 2018). However, the quantity and quality of jobs in the informal economy may not satisfy young graduates. According to Mok et al. (2018), young graduates desire their expected employment destination and satisfaction after graduation; however, this is not the case, which puts them in waitthood for employment that is in line with their expectations. In urban Ethiopia, most young men were unemployed because available artisan work was associated with shame and embarrassment to the entire family (Mains, 2007).

Graduate unemployment has been perpetuated by the mismatch between the vision of employment that young graduates have, the available employment and the employment solutions that the government has proposed, such as agriculture. This is like how urban unemployed graduates in Zimbabwe are encouraged to engage in agriculture when they would rather work in the formal sector (Mhazo et al., 2021). Mhazo et al. (2021) argues that the preference for livelihood strategies is those that sustain their status in society. The preservation of social status was important for young men in Ethiopia to maintain the dignity that made them choose to wait for a job that they wanted. Mains (2007) agrees, as evidenced by his findings of youth in Ethiopia who would rather be unemployed than take up jobs that make them lose their dignity and attach shame to their families. Young graduates remain unemployed due to the limited choices they have that can maintain their status in society. In Zimbabwe,

both formal and informal work have become unpredictable in terms of income stability and work itself due to the economic crisis in the country. (Maunganidze et al., 2021) explain how the economic crisis has had a negative impact on respectable professionals such as chartered accounts.

The expected employment destination for young graduates used to be the formal sector; however, due to different factors such as unemployment and skills mismatch, the employment destination of skilled young graduates has shifted to the informal economy. Although young graduates face unemployment in Zimbabwe, they find the informal economy as a coping strategy. However, the findings of a study in Tanzania (Wakee et al., 2018) found that young graduates in Tanzania were less motivated to pursue entrepreneurial activities despite the challenge of unemployment. This was due to challenges such as access to start-up capital, inability to access loans, and lack of skills and connections. This made me curious as to why Zimbabwean young graduates were interested in and able to pursue entrepreneurial activities in the informal economy.

It should be noted that unemployment and underemployment are not the only reasons young graduates decide to participate in the informal economy. Unemployment has plagued Zimbabwe since the late 1990s, and current young graduates have the trauma of unemployment from when people were retrenched, and social security support was removed. Participating in the informal economy has been the norm in the Zimbabwean society, but not for graduates because they are considered skilled and knowledgeable and are for the formal sector.

## **2.5 The Informal Economy**

According to Di Nunzio (2012), the informal economy is not only a place for the poor to earn a living, but a place where ‘new powerful actors emerge’ for example, protesters and protest movements. In the case of this study, young graduates gain power over their livelihood by finding coping strategies for unemployment. Informal workers are also powerful actors who are encroaching in cities to the point of having relationships with formal businesses, for example, vendors on the pavements of formal shops. The informal economy is a place where political activism can take place. Obeng-Odoom (2014) highlights a new informal economy in Ghana that is growing and includes highly skilled and educated people. The informal economy in Ghana used to be dominated by less educated people who did not qualify for the formal sector and did not get jobs in the formal sector. However, the current informal economy is saturated with more and more educated and highly skilled young people who have not been

able to find formal employment. There is a population of educated and skilled youth waiting to get a job in Ghana (Obeng-Odoom, 2014).

Young graduates facing unemployment and underemployment take refuge in the informal economy. When youth demonstrated in 2005 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, government officials, development practitioners, and opposition activists believed that unemployment was the cause of these protests. This pushed the actors in power to prioritise dealing with unemployment. According to Di Nunzio (2012:434), “the rise in education has corresponded to an increase in social expectations”, such as in the case of Ethiopian graduates. Those who were poor aspired for public service jobs, while those who were better off expected a better job to fulfil these expectations. There is marginality and exclusion when it comes to unemployment because it is more than just the absence of work. In his study in, Addis Ababa on the streets of Arada, Di Nunzio realised that government interventions aimed at addressing unemployment did not target educated youth waiting for public services job.

However, despite the increase in young people entering the informal economy, the sector still experiences some challenges. The informal economy is so complex, and different economic activities exist such as roaming, settling, attaching, and inserting which are accepted and recognised differently such as street vending and informal businesses (Amoako et al., 2023). Thus, the informal economy has its own challenges, but even those differ depending on the informal activity pursued.

Although considered informal and attached to notions of illegality, the informal economy in countries like Zimbabwe has become the dominant economy in which most people work. After the collapse of the formal economy in Zimbabwe, which left many unemployed, the informal economy has become a coping strategy. However, this coping strategy has left many livelihoods still stuck in precarity (Gunhidzirai, 2024).

### ***2.5.1 Entrepreneurship***

In many countries, especially African countries, entrepreneurship has been proposed as the solution to solving youth unemployment. However, entrepreneurship is glorified as the solution to youth unemployment, whereas it is still difficult for young people to start their formal entrepreneurial activities. This is mainly due to the rigorous processes and requirements that one must go through to register an enterprise and the capital needed to process the registration and other paperwork. It is already difficult enough to start businesses because of the lack of capital that young graduates face. In a study on young graduates in Mutare, Zimbabwe, a

graduate complained of high fines, tariffs, and taxes and preferred to operate illegally so that he could make a profit (Mwenje, 2021).

According to Sechele (2016), in Botswana, it is also difficult for unemployed youth to enter entrepreneurship or self-employment due to regulations. For example, for a business to start, it must have a licence of operation, registration, proper work premises and equipment needed. In Zimbabwe, it is equally difficult to run formal entrepreneurship ventures due to the expensive process of getting a licence, registration, equipment and a conducive workplace. The lack of support from private and public institutions makes things worse (NANGO, 2012).

## **2.6 Implications of Unemployment for Young Graduates**

### **2.6.1 Being a 'Rovha'/'Ulova'**

In Zimbabwe, if someone is unemployed and doing nothing, they are called or termed *rovha* in Shona and *ulova* in Ndebele. According to Gukurume (2018), this name-calling can be derogatory and, in his study, stopped after young people got jobs, no matter how menial or not prestigious. This is not only unique to Zimbabwe but globally. The boomerang or yo-yo generation in the United States of America, the *parasaito shinguru* (parasite singles) in Japan, and the *bamboccioni* (big dummy boys) in Italy refer to unemployed graduates still living at home and dependent on their parents (Honwana, 2014; Miyamoto, 2004; Kosugi, 2006). Being a *rovha/ulova* is a situation that keeps young graduates from being perceived as adults. In this case, waitthood becomes a time of waiting, but within that young people or young graduates must navigate name calling and disappointment, especially for graduates who are expected to have better employment prospects. Being a *rovha/ulova* is attached to laziness and a shameful state, especially for young graduates who are skilled. Even for young graduates who have worked hard to attain skills and qualifications, once they become a *rovha/ulova* due to unemployment prospects, they fall in the category of lazy unproductive youth in society. This identity and name calling is not aligned with the social perception and expectation of a graduate.

Waitthood then becomes more than just waiting for employment and livelihood options, but it also becomes a waiting and pressure to get a new identity in society, a positive one which is attached to being employed and doing something being productive (Jeffery, 2008). Participating in the informal economy helps young graduates navigate this shameful state of *wuRhovha/ubulova*. This is because participating in the informal economy provides alternatives for employment and doing something. When young graduates participate in the informal economy, they are perceived as productive. According to Honwana (2014) young

people are in waiting because due to unemployment they cannot gain independence, start families, buy assets, and hence gain social recognition as adults. The informal economy provides benefits such as income which enables young graduates to have a livelihood, to support family members, to buy a car or get married, just to mention a few. These benefits enable young graduates to move from waithood to adulthood even if they are not yet formally employed and help some young graduates to cope with waithood without the *rovha/ulova* identity. Employment and income from the informal economy help young graduates to be independent and to gain social recognition as adults which they do not have if they are *maRovha/amalova*. The informal economy enables young graduates to reimagine their futures in the uncertainty of formal employment or without unemployment.

### ***2.6.2 Delayed cultural markers of adulthood.***

Young people's livelihoods are precarious due to their prolonged experience of uncertainty, so finding a job is difficult and it becomes even more difficult to achieve 'cultural markers of adulthood' (Honwana, 2012; Jeffrey, 2010; Thieme, 2013). Without a stable income, it is difficult to achieve some cultural markers of adulthood, such as being independent, getting married and buying a house or a car. Despite being faced with this precarity, young graduates have skills and knowledge and in between this precarity and potential, their only option becomes the informal economy. The informal economy satisfies their need for work and their need to put their skills and knowledge to use. However, the informal economy does not fully satisfy as it is tied to uncertainty as well, for example, uncertain income, so young graduates remain vulnerable.

### ***2.6.3 Economy***

Unemployment and underemployment of young graduates are damaging to the economy because they find other avenues to cope, such as migration. The migration of skilled labour that is useful for economic growth leads to brain drain. Failure to leverage skilled human capital can have negative consequences on the economy (Doyle et al., 2014). As mentioned before, this failure to use skilled labour effectively has been referred to by Doyle et al. (2014) as 'brain waste', meaning a waste of skills or knowledge. Brain waste not only is damaging economically but is damaging psychologically to the unemployed or underemployed graduates who would have migrated (Oyelere, 2007).

## **2.7 Zimbabwean Government Response to Unemployment and the informal economy**

Zimbabwe's government has responded to youth unemployment by implementing various policies and programmes. Over the years, the government of Zimbabwe has implemented policies to promote and support small and medium enterprises. Some of the policies include 'indigenisation, empowerment of youth, agrarian reform, micro-financing and small-scale mining' (Mwenje, 2021: 35; ZIMASSET, 2013). However, no policy specifically targets young graduates.

Zimbabwe's position on informal entrepreneurship has not always been favourable to informal workers or those in the informal economy. This is evidenced by Operation Murambatsvina or Operation Restore Order implemented in 2005 in urban centres. The Shona term 'Murambatsvina' means to remove dirt. The operation was designed to reject informal businesses, vendors, and informal housing in cities. According to UN-Habitat, this operation affected approximately 2,1 million people (Tibaijuka, 2005). It is estimated that approximately 700,000 people in cities across Zimbabwe lost either their homes, their source of livelihood or both (Tibaijuka, 2005). Demolitions of informal activity, such as vendor stalls, left many in precarious situations.

As a way of responding to the socio-economic needs of Zimbabweans, the government of Zimbabwe employed a variety of strategies and economic policies. These included the Millennium Economic Recovery Programme (MERP) of 2001, the Zimbabwe Economic and Social Programme (ZIMPREST) of 2006, the Indigenous policy, the Short-Term Economic Recovery Policy (STERP 1 and 2) of 2009 and ZIMASSET of 2013 which were intended to boost the economy and improve the well-being of the people (ZDI, 2014; Gunhidzirai, 2024).

The Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment Act was implemented in 2009. The Act encouraged the growth of entrepreneurialism to overcome poverty challenges and grow the economy. Under this policy, youth were encouraged to participate in entrepreneurial activities and were provided loans and technical support through the Ministry of Youth, Indigenisation, and Economic Empowerment (Government of Zimbabwe, 2010). This Act stipulated that Zimbabweans must have majority shares in companies; it stated that 51% of any business ownership should be from locals with 49% or less for foreign investors (Mazundu, 2016; Pindiri, 2020).

This was an unpopular policy, as the corporate world highlighted that this would chase away investors and potential investors. Some scholars argue that people benefited because they were

able to set up their entrepreneurial activities. Others highlight that it only benefited rural people and that the urban population, which are usually supporters of the opposing political party, did not benefit. Others are of the view that this policy only benefitted politicians who have access to shares in foreign companies (Mazundu, 2016, Kabonga, 2020; Maramura et al., 2021). To address socio-economic hardships and empower citizens, the government of Zimbabwe in 2014 implemented the Zimbabwe Agenda for Social-Economic Transformation (ZIMASSET) (Government of Zimbabwe, 2014). However, although this policy was good on paper, it practically failed due to weak institutions and operational systems, bad governance, corruption, and lack of accountability (Gunhidzirai, 2024). ZIMASSET was also unable to rid the people of Zimbabwe of poverty and other socioeconomic challenges because of the weak local currency, eroded savings, and irregular income (Gunhidzirai et al., 2017).

Zimbabwe has implemented several policies; however, they have not been successful to a greater extent. This has been attributed to the government implementing policies without taking a bottom-up approach or consulting the masses (Gunhidzirai, 2024). It is crucial to learn from other countries in terms of addressing unemployment and youth unemployment, such as Mozambique and Malawi, which have supported and legalised informal entrepreneurship to alleviate poverty and empower their citizens (Crush et al., 2015; Harraf et al., 2021).

## **2.8 Chapter Summary**

Young graduates due to unemployment, underemployment and casual work that is not satisfactory opt for informal entrepreneurship or informal work in the informal economy. This chapter explains the factors which lead to youth unemployment, as well as the changing perceptions of work by young people and the challenges of the informal economy. This literature will be revisited in empirical chapters on research findings related to the real-life experiences of young graduates in the informal economy of Bulawayo, interviewed as part of this study.

## **CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter discusses the conceptual grounding that informs this study. It uses the concept of waitthood (Honwana, 2012) to explore delayed adulthood of young graduates in the face of unemployment and precarity. It also discusses the concept of agency among young graduates who choose to participate in the informal economy. The chapter also uses Bourdieu's (1972) theory of cultural capital to understand this agency and how young graduates use their cultural capital (their knowledge and skills from higher education) when participating in the informal economy.

### **3.2 Waitthood**

According to Honwana, young people struggle to transition to adulthood in what she calls 'waitthood'. Waitthood is a "period of suspension between childhood and adulthood" (Honwana, 2015: 29). Waiting has been explored differently, but mainly as a negative process that traps people in a state of 'limbo', but also a process that encourages innovation, agency, and action (Honwana, 2015; Olson, 2015; Oldfield, 2015; Jeffery, 2008). Economic challenges such as unemployment and associated poverty in the face of neoliberal policies and capitalism have prevented youth from accessing services and sustainable livelihood opportunities (Honwana, 2015, Oldfield, 2015). When youth get tired of waiting, they often use their agency to protest these policies and the state through riots and marches (Olson, 2015; Honwana, 2014). To cope with this state of waiting, youth also participate in other survival strategies such as participating in the informal economy. Although they wait, they are not stagnant in waiting, but they are always looking for ways to access what they are waiting for.

According to Stasik (2020), young people not only wait for economic opportunities but also for adulthood as they struggle with fulfilling expectations that make them seen as adults. Failure to meet these expectations leaves youth stressed, frustrated, and in despair, as is the case with young men in Freetown, Sierra Leone (Finn et al., 2015). Young men in Freetown carried the burden for themselves and their families from the societal expectation that a man is the breadwinner, but these young men were unemployed. Finn et al. (2015) attributes the endurance and persistence of young people to their marginalisation. Finn et al (2015) describe waiting or waitthood by young men in Freetown, Sierra Leone as 'nuanced and dynamic' because of the ease and flexibility of entering different economic activities to earn a living. Young men in Freetown, Sierra Leone were able to go beyond temporary hustle. Scholars like Jeffery (2010) and Thieme (2021) have explored the experience of youth through the concept

of waitthood. In the face of uncertainty or waitthood, Thieme (2021) noted a struggle by the youth in Mathare, Nairobi to cope or escape this uncertainty in their everyday through hustling (by participating in waste management). In Italy for example, due to the uncertainty attached to waitthood, it was difficult for youth to plan their life and they procrastinated taking on adult roles (Cuzzocrea, 2018).

Moyo (2023) uses waitthood in a study looking at youth unemployment and protest movements in Harare, Zimbabwe. To fully explore the waiting of the educated youth, he couples waitthood with hustling in what he calls '*waitthustlinghood*'. Moyo (2023) mentions that waitthood is a good entry point to understanding youth unemployment in Zimbabwe, but as a standalone is not adequate because it does not fully explain how this waiting by unemployed youth plays out. Similarly, in this study waitthood is crucial in understating the waiting of young graduates in the context of the informal economy.

Authors such as Cuzzocrea (2018) and Thieme (2021) have used waitthood in conjunction with other theories or concepts to make it stronger and more useful in their studies, such as waitthood with moratorium and waitthood with hustle. In this study, I blend waitthood with Bourdieu's cultural capital and Thieme's hustle.

### **3.3 Young people and Waitthood**

Young people wait - they wait for employment, financial freedom, marriage, assets, and opportunities. Waitthood is a state of being in 'waiting' to transition from a young person to an adult and to be independent (Honwana, 2012). This is perfect for this study because it allows for the exploration of the 'waitthood' that young graduates undergo in unemployment and insecure livelihoods, especially in Bulawayo, where there is an unemployment crisis. Young people in waiting, because of their agency, engage in different strategies such as protests, riots, and alternative employment and livelihood strategies. Honwana (2012) suggests that youths in waiting do not wait passively but use their creativity to cope with waiting through activities in the informal economy. According to Finn et al. (2015), waitthood is more than just free time, but an opportunity to explore other livelihood and business strategies, build networks, and imagine different futures. Kracauer (1995) concurs and labels chronic waiting less as a state of helplessness, but as a foundation for coming up with ideas, planning, preparation, politics, and action. Young graduates participate in the informal economy to enhance their livelihoods and as an escape route from waitthood and eventually mature into adults.

In most African countries, youth end up experiencing prolonged 'waithood' (Jeffery, 2008). While South Africans are waiting for housing, they build temporary shacks which have become almost permanent due to prolonged waiting. Oldfield (2015) explores waiting by looking at the lack of access to housing in South Africa. Magidi and Gwekwerere (2024) highlighted how urban male youths in Zimbabwe are engaged in soccer betting as a form of hustling as part of their waithood. Due to this reality, even those who do not wait for a formal job participate in the informal economy as part of a 'side hustle' (Maunganidze, 2016). Waiting takes different forms for young people.

### **3.4 Forms of waithood**

Young graduates refer to youths with higher tertiary education qualifications. The term youth refer to people in transition to adulthood and those in the 18-35 age group for this study. Young graduates have been faced with unemployment in a continuously worsening social, political and economic crisis. As a way of coping with unemployment, Jeffery (2010) highlighted how young men in waiting in India engage in 'time pass' activities. In Zimbabwe, young people engage in informal work, which Jones (2010) calls '*kukiya-kiya*' economy (hustling) as they wait for formal employment opportunities. Some graduates opt to postpone their adulthood by advancing their studies, not by design, but because academia becomes a space of waiting. For some, the informal economy is their waiting space as they 'hustle' to earn a living.

Waiting varies in different places, and this is evidenced by the different spaces and strategies employed by those waiting. In the context of the informal economy, it is key to find out if it is a space to pass time or a space of different possibilities from the perspective of young graduates participating in that space. Are young graduates waiting as other young people who are not graduates? This is because it is expected that after graduating you will get a formal job, but the less educated wait in uncertainty. What is the mindset of young graduates waiting to participate in the informal economy? Are they even waiting, or is the informal economy a permanent livelihood strategy?

However, because frustrations turn protests into a form of waithood, some young graduates often engage in political protests against the government in a bid to fight for economic and political transformation that will provide better livelihood opportunities (Mlambo, 2013; Zeilig, 2008). In response to this challenge, the Zimbabwean government initiated the Ministry of Youth, Sports, Arts, and Recreation, which mainly focused on equipping the less educated youth with vocational skills (Mhike, 2017; Oosterom, 2018; Oosterom et al., 2019). It is important to note that in Zimbabwe urban youth who are graduates have been marginalised by

youth development programmes that mainly focus on rural youth or uneducated youth. Young graduates then turn to their cultural capital as a resource to strategically survive this waiting.

### **3.5 Politicisation of waithood and resilience in Zimbabwe**

The notions of waithood and entrepreneurship have been politicised in Zimbabwe. Waiting has been the norm in Zimbabwe. Jeffery (2008) in his article refers to Zimbabwe as one of the countries experiencing chronic waiting, which is waiting for long periods of time. After Zimbabwe's economic structural adjustment policy and other policy reforms, the country's economy deteriorated. The fast-track land reform left the country in a political crisis. Ever since the early 2000s, Zimbabweans have been waiting for better lives, jobs, or socio-economic opportunities. Since the early 2000s, coupled with this waiting, was the adoption of the politicised mantra *rambai makashinga* (continue enduring) to encourage resilience. The *rambai makashinga* (continue enduring) jingles were repeated on the local radio and television encouraging endurance despite the socio-economic crisis worsening (Phimister, 2005). This has been drilled into Zimbabweans and inherited by young graduates who despite waiting have an enduring attitude and find ways to cope with joblessness.

Recently there has also been the *nyika inovakwa nevene vayo* philosophy, meaning that the responsibility for building and developing a country rest with the owners and those who belong to that country. The politics of belonging is used to place the responsibility for developing and fixing the Zimbabwean economy on the people of Zimbabwe (Mavengano, 2023). This ideology is intended to encourage Zimbabwe to be resilient and patient with their grievances in the volatile political and economic environment. Politics of belonging are crucial in promoting a political discourse, and ZANU PF has done the same through this philosophy because it suggests that ordinary Zimbabweans, because they belong to the country, have the burden of fixing the socioeconomic crisis (Yuval-Davies, 2006; Mavengano, 2023). With these mantras and philosophies pushed on the Zimbabwean people, they wait with hope and patience for a better life. In the case of young graduates, they wait for opportunities to obtain formal employment.

According to Chabal (2009), Africans always find ways to endure or cope with suffering. Young graduates in Zimbabwe have also been conditioned to such political suffering and have coped with joblessness by participating in the informal economy. Chabal (2009) highlights that amidst suffering, partaking in the informal or migration is more than just the last resort, but an act that shows inventiveness.

### **3.6 Bourdieu's Theory of Practice**

This research uses Pierre Bourdieu's (1972) theory of practice with a specific focus on its components of cultural capital. The capital theoretical framework comprises four capitals, namely economic, social, symbolic, and cultural capital, which promote social mobility in a stratified society (Bourdieu, 1972). These capitals can be used strategically in society. For example, social capital involves the different networks people have that can be used as resources, while symbolic capital refers to an individual's social position attached to their reputation and prestige. This theory is the impetus for this study because it emphasises that these forms of capital can be used as resources that could be useful to sustain or maintain livelihoods (Pinxten and Lievens, 2014). It should be noted that the resources needed to sustain a livelihood and relevant strategies emerge from the interplay between social, economic, and cultural capital. Cultural capital is important in this study because it includes accumulated cultural knowledge that confers social status and the power to deal with different predicaments that affect individuals and society (Barker, 2004). Cultural capital enables young people to engage in the informal in a context where formal jobs are scarce.

Cultural capital is useful in understanding how young graduates use educational knowledge to sustain their livelihoods in the informal sector. Cultural capital comprises the social assets of individuals, for example education, intellect, and style of speech that promote social mobility in a stratified and marginalised society (Barker, 2004). Bourdieu's (1972) cultural capital is centred on prestige. Knowledge skills and qualifications give graduates prestige in society because they are the pathway to respectable formal employment and sustainable livelihoods. However, this study looked at how these 'prestigious' qualifications and skills are used in the informal economy of Zimbabwe, an area that has not been fully explored before. It sought to explore whether this form of capital (knowledge and skills) that young graduates possess gives them an advantage or disadvantage as they participate in the informal economy.

A study by Wakee et al. (2018) in Tanzania used the social capital and capability approach to understand why, despite the abilities graduates have, they do not exert agency to participate in entrepreneurial activities to cope with unemployment. However, in this study, it was not clear whether the entrepreneurship referred to was formal or informal. This study uses cultural capital in a similar way and looks at how young graduates use their knowledge and skills to their advantage while participating in the informal economy. The agency of Zimbabwean young graduates to obtain livelihoods and escape unemployment through the informal

economy. They assert their agency through self-employment in an informal economy that carries countless challenges such as police and illegality.

### **3.7 Waithood and Cultural capital**

Waithood resonates with Bourdieu's (1972) cultural capital because in waithood young graduates use different spaces to wait, but within those use the different capitals (cultural capital) available to them, such as knowledge to earn a living. In this study, the capital young graduates possess is institutional capital, which is knowledge from tertiary institutions that inform the different forms of waithood from uneducated youth. Young graduates in Zimbabwe can wait through participation in further education or the informal economy, while uneducated youth do not have the capital to wait through higher education in tertiary institutions. However, although they invest money and time in this capital, it might be less useful if after their investment they cannot get returns from the formal work they trained for, but rather engage in the informal sector, which is tied to notions of vulnerability and frowned upon. Waiting can look different for different people. According to Honwana (2015), when young people do not find space in the formal economy, they create new spaces and survival strategies in the informal economy. Hence this study specifically looks at those who have found the informal economy as an alternative. This study combines the concepts of waithood and cultural capital to explore whether young graduates are waiting or not as they participate in the informal economy. It sought to investigate whether formal education, which forms part of their cultural capital, is useful in strengthening their agency and the ability to design different strategies to participate successfully in the informal economy.

### **3.8 Hustling: An Urban Condition**

As formal entrepreneurship is difficult due to the rigorous and expensive registration processes, young people and young graduates have turned to hustling in the informal economy. According to Vigh (2006: 529) in Thieme (2021), "hustling is a way to navigate precarious urban environments beyond the (rule governed) 'paid job' and advance their own (sometimes individual, sometimes shared) interests against the odds". Hustling goes beyond just making ends meet or making a living. The notion of hustle used by Thieme (2021) is related to 'struggle, opportunity, and placemaking.' Thieme (2021) identifies the different spaces for hustle. In Mathare, for example, when the day hustle ended, the night hustle started. Hustling is attached to continuous struggle and endurance in surviving socio-economic challenges and exposes practical strategies used by those who do not have access to mainstream opportunities (Thieme, 2021; Hart, 2009).

Hustling shows socio-economic requirements that are needed by the people and is a response to economic precarity (Ferguson, 2006). To cope with precarity and unemployment young graduates challenge “dominant structures of opportunity (or lack thereof) and create new ones that can be off the charts of what constitutes ‘value’, ‘a good job’ or a specific ‘class’ but open up a range of questions related to urban life marked by incremental adaptation and improvisation in the face of uncertainty” (Thieme, 2017:543). Therefore, this study aimed to ask how young graduates who participate in the informal economy of Bulawayo use their skills and knowledge to survive the uncertainty and precarity described above.

According to Bhan (2019), terms like repair are used in Southern Urbanism to denote not only theory, but practice and what is available practically in Southern cities. Hustles like repair and squatting are a local term in Zimbabwe that is a part of life for most Zimbabweans. It is a term related to survival and earning a living in the face of unemployment and underemployment. In Kenya hustle is a term that is in “response to economic precarity and urban marginality in the face of protracted uneven development under neoliberalism” (Thieme, 2021:5). According to Thieme, hustling is more than just making do, but is a term that is attached to work, identity and an urban condition that “hustling can be read as an urban condition (the hustle), a practice (to hustle) and an identity marker (to be a hustler) that evoke multiple forms of prosaic, industrious, and political labour: combining everyday survivalism and waiting, strategic diversification of income streams to mitigate risk, punctual contestation of, but also alliances with, authority to access key services and resource” (Thieme, 2021:540).

### ***3.8.1 Evolving Hustle Culture***

Thieme (2021) in a study in Mathare, Nairobi, Kenya, investigated the evolution of hustling as a narrative and urban practice. She found that this evolution was divided between the ‘old youth’ and the ‘new youth’. After seeing older youth doing well in Mathare’s informal waste collection businesses, the new youth called for a redrawing of the map of garbage collection hierarchies (Thieme, 2021). Hustling used to be attached to notions of work that was illegal, not because it was outside the confines of formal work but because it was work that could never be formalised. One such example is street money changing. Over the years, hustling has taken different forms, which is beneficial to people (Balkeran, 2020).

Hustling used to be an urban practice that was practised by unlearned or less educated youth. However, with the increase in young people graduating per year and the increasing unemployment rate in Zimbabwe, hustling has become a space for unemployed young

graduates. These young graduates due to their skill and education approach the hustle differently; a hustle revolution has occurred due to this new breed of youth in the informal economy. This revolution manifests itself in the activities they choose to hustle, in the connections they make with formal structures, and how they use their skills whilst hustling (Sessions et al., 2021). Therefore, in this study, I explored the nature of hustle and the experiences of young graduates in the informal economy of Bulawayo, Zimbabwe.

### **3.9 Chapter Summary**

This chapter explored the concept of waithood and Bourdieu's (1972) cultural capital as the conceptual grounding of this study. It interrogated waithood and cultural capital by relating it to hustling incorporating other studies that have applied the same theoretical concepts in different contexts in Africa and beyond. This chapter delved deeper into forms of waithood, different spaces of waiting, and the use of cultural capital to enable agency as young graduates navigate waithood. The following chapter discusses the methodological aspects of this study.

## **CHAPTER 4-METHODOLOGY AND METHODS**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter outlines and discusses the methodology employed to understand the experiences of young graduates in the informal sector in Bulawayo. It is important to try and understand whether the questions asked were relevant and to determine the questions to ask. More than getting answers, this research also focused on understanding the reality of young graduates in Zimbabwe beyond what the literature in Chapter 2 has presented. This chapter outlines the methods and methodology used to collect data. It justifies the sampling techniques and data collection instruments used. This chapter also explains the strategies used to access the study population, interview recording, and ethical considerations such as interviewer bias.

### **4.2 Research design**

A research design refers to the plan or strategy that the researcher uses to answer the research questions and achieve the objectives (Thakur, 2021). It constitutes a step-by-step plan to collect and analyse data in a way that is relevant to the research question. Qualitative research is a way to investigate people's experiences using different research methods, such as focus groups, interviews, life histories, observations, and visual methods (Hennick et al., 2020). Qualitative research allows the researcher to understand the meanings and interpretations of experiences from the participant's point of view (Hennick et al., 2020). This study used a qualitative research design and, more specifically, ethnography that included observations and in-depth interviews to understand the lived realities and experiences of young graduates in the informal economy of Bulawayo.

### **4.3 Ethnography**

To provide a rich, authentic, and detailed account of the experiences of young graduates participating in the informal economy in Bulawayo, this study employed ethnography, a qualitative research method used mainly in the social sciences. Ethnography is a systematic description of contemporary culture, customs, beliefs, and behavior based on information collected through fieldwork (Suryani, 2013). The goal of ethnography is to provide a comprehensive and in-depth description of everyday life and practice in the studied society. In this study, ethnography also provided data on the perspectives, activities, and behaviors of young graduates in the informal economy of Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. Ethnography is usually used for qualitative research because it is not a standalone method, but uses different data collection techniques, such as interviews and observations, to get detailed and comprehensive accounts of different social phenomena (Reeves et al., 2013). Ethnography was suitable

because it helped me to understand the everyday of young graduates as they deal with the challenges of unemployment and delayed adulthood and how they then participate in the informal economy to overcome these challenges.

Therefore, this study used an ethnographic approach because it allowed me to generate qualitative data through fieldwork and produced a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the experiences of youth graduates in the informal economy in Bulawayo. The ethnographic approach was important in this study because it allowed a closer look at different data from observations, artefacts, interviews, and documents as Yin (2003) highlighted in Gukurume (2018). It is also flexible, typically evolving in response to the specific contexts and lived realities of participants (Yin, 2003; cited in Gukurume, 2018). For this study, a flexible approach was necessary because the nature of work in the informal economy is unpredictable, young graduates are busy, and flexibility allowed me as a researcher to adapt to these different circumstances in the field. The interviews, observations, and casual conversations used were part of my ethnographic investigations.

Through ethnography, I was able to familiarise myself with in-depth and authentic dynamics, experiences, and nuances that are part of the lived experiences and the everyday of young graduates in the informal economy in Zimbabwe.

#### **4.4 Population and sampling**

Sampling is the process of selecting respondents from the study population (Kamangar, 2013). A sample of 12 research participants was selected using the snowball technique and a purposive sample of young graduates from Bulawayo. The snowball sampling technique refers to the selection of participants originating from the referrals of other participants. Snowball sampling allows participants to refer the researcher to other potential participants who fit the requirement of what the researcher is looking for (Macheka, 2018). The snowball technique was useful for this study because it was an efficient way to access research participants. Purposive sampling was used for civil society organisations, youth organisations, and the Ministry of Youth to get more data on the perceptions of these organisations and their experiences in working with young people, specifically young graduates. Purposive sampling was also used to select young graduates who do different jobs in the informal economy of Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. Getting the perspectives of graduates doing different types of work was necessary to find out their varied experiences while doing different types of work in the informal sector. These different perspectives were useful to answer one of my objectives of determining the different activities in which young graduates participate in the informal economy of Bulawayo. The interviews

delved into the experiences of young graduates participating in the informal economy. I interviewed young graduates between the ages of 18 and 35 because this group represents many of the unemployed urbanites and youth in Zimbabwe. This is also the age group that defines youth in Zimbabwe.

In terms of fieldwork, my first step was to sample and set up interview meeting times with the different participants. After the first round of interviews, I returned to ask more follow-up questions and observe my respondents in their natural settings as they work in the informal economy. Subsequently, more interviews, hangouts, and casual conversations took place simultaneously.

#### **4.5 Access to participants**

Although young graduates are familiar with research, some were unwilling to participate. The strategy to gain access to the participants included contacting peers with whom I recently graduated and are employed in the informal sector in Bulawayo. Of them, I was able to get access to different young graduates from different tertiary institutions doing various activities in the informal economy. This worked as another young graduate remarked to me that if I had not been recommended by her peer, she would have not been willing to participate. I intentionally tried to make sure that the gender dynamic was considered, as well as other factors. For key informants like the two organisations interviewed, I asked for permission to interview them by providing an application letter and ethics approval from the University of Cape Town which made them more receptive.

#### **4.6 Data Collection Instruments**

##### ***4.6.1 Semi-structured in-depth interviews***

This study used semi-structured in-depth interviews to solicit data. Semi-structured in-depth interviews are a more flexible version of the structured interview because they allow a quality of depth to be achieved through careful question formulation that is inductive and intuitive as the interview is taking place (Rubin and Rubin, 2005). Semi-structured interviews enabled me to keep the interview focused on answering the research question whilst having the flexibility to probe more into other questions that arose during the interview.

In-depth interviews gave me room to explore the lived experiences of young graduates in the informal economy, as it allowed for the surfacing of details or insights that may otherwise be ignored or neglected, such as the feelings of young graduates who are in waithood. According to Patton (1999: 5), in-depth interviews enable the researcher to “capture the complexity of

individual feelings, thoughts, and perceptions” that build on how they interact with different spaces, such as young graduates in the informal economy. Moreover, interviews also allow research participants to tell their stories, uninterrupted, in a detailed and coherent manner.

Over five months, I interviewed 10 young graduates who participate in the informal economy in Bulawayo to generate a holistic understanding of their experiences in sustaining their livelihoods. These were not once off interviews, I interviewed these graduates about two or three times, which enabled the collection of detailed data. I also interviewed two stakeholder organisations namely the Unemployed Graduates and Youth and, the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Corporation (SMEDCO). These are organisations that work with youth in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. They were specifically chosen because of their involvement with young graduates. Each interview took approximately 45 minutes to an hour to complete. I used an interview guide, a method used to collect primary data and questions that could be clearly repeated for the participant to understand them, thus improving the accuracy and reliability of the data collected. The interviews were conducted primarily in English, but the interviewees also communicated in Ndebele or Shona to express themselves better, which the researcher could understand.

#### ***4.6.2 Hanging out.***

This study also used observations as another research technique to validate the data. Casual conversations and hanging around with participants in their daily lives enabled me, as a researcher, to form stronger relationships, immerse myself in and observe the daily life of participants in the city of Bulawayo (Siziba, 2013). Thus, I deployed myself into the field to gain access to the everyday practices of youth graduates operating their enterprises in the inner-city of Bulawayo (Siziba, 2013). Observations were important in this study because they helped me obtain data that can only be collected by observing interactions and different relationships in the setting. They also helped me to learn what is important to young graduates and to guide future questions to ask that could help answer my research questions or reveal other issues (Kawulich, 2012). The issues that I could have overlooked were the relationships that different young graduates operating in the informal economy have with each other. This was evidenced by how one participant recommended other businesses owned by young graduates to her customers. An example was when she recommended her friend who sells wigs to her client. Casual conversations occurred everywhere, in *umtshova* (taxis), in shops and in the gym in Bulawayo. I intentionally started conversations with young people I met, and some turned out

not to be young graduates, but they still provided me with information and questions for future research.



*Figure 2: Hanging next to the street where Graduate 9 (money changer) works.*

### ***Process of Hanging Out***

I hung out with two young graduates. Graduate 2, a makeup artist and Graduate 9, a money changer, to find out about the everyday of young graduates participating in the informal economy of Bulawayo. I first approached young graduates who had an operating space in Bulawayo. This was a challenge because most young graduates do not have a physical space in which they operate online. Some young graduates were not keen to be observed, and some like Graduate 9 moved around when working, so it was difficult to observe them, but I managed to observe their interactions and their environment of work. I hung around with Graduate 2 for a week from 08:30 to 2:00 pm, that was the time when she was busiest and had the most customers. Graduate 2 operated at her home. As Graduate 2 was a former high school classmate and I already had a good rapport with her she was more willing to share her experiences.

I hung out at Graduate 9's place of work, but not closely because, as a money changer, he was always looking for customers who wanted to change money. Money changers in Zimbabwe refers to people who buy and sell currencies in the black market. Graduate 9 worked on a street in the Bulawayo CBD where there are customers and an easy access point for customers around Bulawayo. He would just stand around to not attract attention as money changing is illegal. Meanwhile, I sat with vendors. Graduate 9 worked on the street where I had a relative who is a vendor and money changer, so it was easier to just sit with my relative while I observed. This observation included sitting, taking notes, and having casual conversations with different people. I would go early in the morning and be on the street from 8:00 am to 3:00 pm. At first, I would just sit with my relative and, because of my relative, I quickly built rapport with several vendors and money changers. I started the casual conversations by asking about them and their families and then progressed to their experiences in the informal economy. However, most of the information was less useful for this study, as most of them were not young graduates, but were less educated young people or older people. Nevertheless, these casual conversations provided questions that need to be answered in future studies. With Graduate 2 and Graduate 9, I first observed them and their work environment for a week each and then followed with in-depth interviews to gain more understanding of their experiences. Hanging out enabled me to see, hear, and understand using other senses.

### **4.7 Recording of data**

The interviews were recorded on my phone. The audio recordings were then transcribed so that they could be analysed. Recording interviews not only increased the transparency of data collection, but also reliability and validity because as the interviewer, I could always go back

to analyse responses for accuracy (Sullivan, 2010). Consent to record the interviews was obtained from the participants and, for those who were not comfortable recording, I only relied on taking notes. The recordings were deleted after being transcribed and analysed.

#### **4.8 Method adaptations**

According to Bourke et al. (2009: 95), “fieldwork in the social sciences is, by its nature, a messy and complicated process”, thus it is unpredictable what you will find in the field. This was evidenced by the continuous changes and adaptations I had to make. The methods had to be changed to adapt to the reality, challenges, and opportunities when collecting data. Initially, interviews were supposed to be face-to-face, but to adapt to the busy schedules of young graduates, WhatsApp voice recordings and hanging around at their place of work were used to collect data. Through the snowball technique, I got access to young graduates in the informal economy in Bulawayo. However, I ended up with young graduates doing similar work as providing beauty services in the informal economy. I used purposive sampling to pick out young graduates doing different work in the informal economy of Bulawayo, such as changing money and poultry farming.

#### **4.9 Data analysis**

This study used thematic analysis to make sense of the collected data. The transcripts were extracted from available written notes and recorded voice notes of the interviews. I returned with these transcripts to the interviewees to make sure that the information was accurate. The writing of the transcripts revealed more questions to me as a researcher, so returning to the interviewees after the transcription process gave more clarity to the researcher about the experiences of young graduates. I only went back to some interviewees whose experiences I still had questions about and managed to get answers to the follow-up questions I had. To better understand the data, I engaged in coding, which according to DeCarlo (2018) refers to continuously reading the transcripts to identify patterns and to find the themes that emerge. This inductive analysis approach was used to extract themes from the data and observations.

Taking inspiration from the description of Braun and Clarke (2012) cited in DeCarlo (2018: 379), the thematic analysis used by the researcher went through six chronological stages ‘... (a) familiarising with the data set, (b) generating initial codes, (c) searching for themes, (d) reviewing themes, (e) defining and naming themes, (f) and reporting data’. I familiarised myself with the data by transcribing the information after every interview and re-reading it after all the interviews were done. More reading was done to generate the initial codes. After this, I began to compare experiences in search of themes. This was followed by a process of

reviewing the themes and selecting the major themes. The themes were then defined and named. Thematic analysis was used to distinguish and interpret similarities and differences in the experiences of young graduates who participated in the informal economy of Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. The themes were answers to the research questions of this study.

#### **4.10 Ethical Considerations**

Ethics are a crucial component of research. Participation in this study was voluntary and participants had free will to decide whether they wanted to participate or not. Informed consent forms were used, informing participants of the procedures and risks associated with being part of the investigation. In this study, the confidentiality and identity rights of the participants were considered. I ensured that their rights to identity and confidentiality were protected throughout the study by using pseudonyms. For example, one participant who was into small-scale mining informally requested that her identity be protected so that she did not get into trouble with the law. To protect the privacy of the participants, interviews were conducted where the participants felt comfortable and where the conversations were safe. The interviews were carried out in different places, for example, in coffee shops, at the participants' homes, on the street, on WhatsApp or at their place of work. Before recording interviews and taking pictures, I made sure to get permission and consent from the participants. Furthermore, I ensured that the information gathered from the participants was kept confidential on a password-protected storage device/software and that the audio recordings made were deleted after saving them on the university-secured One Drive. Hard copies of the interviews were kept in a safe location.

#### **4.11 Positionality**

As a young graduate who experienced graduate unemployment and waithood in Bulawayo, I recognised the potential risk of how my positionality and experience could influence the research processes and findings. Positionality refers to the position a researcher takes in each research study informed by gender, experience, age, class, and ethnicity, which could influence the research process (Holmes, 2020). However, knowing my positionality, caution was taken to address any bias throughout the investigation by including the opinions of other people, such as my supervisors and those separated from the study, such as peers. I carefully collected data, taking note of my own positionality (Nyamnjoh, 2016) as a mechanism to observe, interpret, and explore the experiences of young graduates in the informal economy explaining how they represent webs of meaning, a phrase borrowed from Geertz (1973). Identity, experiences, and lived realities result in bias when it comes to research (Holmes, 2020). As a young graduate who was unemployed, it was crucial to realise that in the field I am not an insider and not to

assume that my experience is like those I was interviewing in the informal economy. Hence, I went into the field with an open mind. I quickly let go of my assumptions about the challenges and experiences of young graduates and allowed myself to learn from the stories of my participants. For example, before entering the field, I believed that young graduates preferred ‘hustling’. Although some did, I found that most young graduates preferred formal employment with a stable income and benefits. Furthermore, as a young university graduate, it was important to recognise my bias when selecting participants that included young graduates from other tertiary institutions, such as polytechnics and colleges. This is because it was easy to select young graduates from the Lupane State University where I studied. However, I was able to intentionally interview young graduates from different universities, colleges and polytechnics in Zimbabwe.

#### **4.12 Limitations**

*Challenges faced included access to the young graduates.*

Young graduates were busy, and to deal with this challenge I scheduled phone calls and WhatsApp interviews.

Male participants were less willing to be interviewed and more female participants were willing to be interviewed. As such, using the snowball technique, I found more female participants than males since my initial participants, who referred me to other female young graduates, were female. This went on until intentionally, through purposive sampling, I searched for young male graduates. Another challenge was that some male youths with whom I was familiar who were participating in the informal economy had dropped out of tertiary education and decided to focus on their hustle. Consequently, this slowed down the initial interview process as I had to look for those who had graduated.

As a young graduate, a Zimbabwean, and a resident of Bulawayo, participants viewed me as an insider. This was a double-edged sword because it allowed some young graduates to freely share their experiences. However, other young graduates assumed that I knew their situation and already knew their experiences. For example, when asked about their challenges, when referring to the economic challenge some participants would say “*Lawe uyayazi iZimbabwe*” (You also know Zimbabwe). Although this was a phrase that I understood, I had to investigate more for different answers.

When interviewing organisations like the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Corporation (SMEDCO), it was difficult to get information on young graduates. This is because

although they do work or assist young graduates, they do so under the banner of youth. This means that their programmes are targeted at young people and graduates are not their target population. Young graduates constitute a small part of the overall youth population. This makes them less visible in youth interventions. There are fewer organisations that prioritise young graduates as beneficiaries of projects. I was able to take only a few pictures in this study because most of the young graduates did not consent to pictures and most of the work was done online, and I was unable to take pictures of them at work. In this situation I managed to get consent to take pictures of just their workspace for young graduates that did not consent to a picture of themselves. I did manage to take screen shots of their social media (with their consent) for those I interviewed online.

#### **4.12 Chapter summary**

This chapter highlighted the research methods and design used in this study. This study justified the data collection instruments used, such as interviews and hanging out. The chapter also highlighted how the data were recorded, and the steps taken to avoid interviewer bias. The data analysis strategy used was articulated. This chapter explained the data collection process and the limitations faced in the field.

## **CHAPTER 5: DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the findings of the data collection process. The chapter discusses the narratives from the interviews and narrows them down by distributing the information into themes. Themes such as unemployment and financial freedom were discussed and related to the questions asked in Chapter 1. Tables are used to present and understand the demographic profile of participants. The major findings are then discussed.

#### **Presentation of results**

*Table 1: Demographic profile of participants*

<b>Names</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Education</b>	<b>Formal occupation</b>	<b>Informal economy activity</b>
Graduate One	26	F	Diploma in Science Technology	Social Media Manager	Founder of Brilliance Beauty
Graduate Two	27	F	Degree in Human Resources	None	Make-Up Artist
Graduate Three	25	F	Degree in Agricultural Economics	None	Poultry Farmer
Graduate Four	32	F	Diploma in Beauty and Therapy	None	Beauty Therapist
Graduate Five	28	M	Degree in Marketing	Company	Selling food hampers
Graduate Six	25	F	Degree in Development Studies	Company	Manufactures perfume and foam baths
Graduate Seven	27	F	Degree in Social Work	Volunteer at an NGO	Small Scale Mining
Graduate Eight	28	F	Diploma in Geology	None	Founder of a company that hires and sells wedding gowns.
Graduate Nine	28	M	Languages	None	Money changer
Graduate Ten	27	F	Degree in Political Science	None	Sells hair and makeup products.

In this study, ten young graduates and officials from two organisations were interviewed, namely Unemployed Graduates and Youth and the Small and Medium Enterprise Development Corporation (SMEDCO).

*Table 2: Age of Participants*

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean
Age	25	34	28

The maximum age of the participants in this study was 34 and the minimum was 25. The mean age of the participants was 28 years. This shows that young graduates close to the age of 30 who participate in the informal economy of Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, are still waiting for a formal job that is satisfactory to their needs and wants and can allow them to achieve the cultural markers of adulthood. Of the 10 graduates, only 2 were married, and the rest had not yet reached this cultural marker of being an adult. This shows that the livelihoods of young graduates are precarious, preventing them from attaining cultural markers of adulthood such as getting married, which requires money in Zimbabwe (lobola) and being able to support a family.

*Table 3: Type of Activities in the Informal Economy in Bulawayo*

<b>Business Type</b>	<b>Activity/Product</b>	<b>Number of people</b>
Beauty and makeup	Makeup and beauty services	2
Manufacturing	Manufacture candles, body scrubs, perfumes	2
Small scale mining	Mining	1
Farming	Farms poultry	1
Wedding services	Hires and sells wedding gowns	1
Retailing	Selling hair, hair extension and food hampers	2
Money Changing	Provides money changing services	1
Total		10

Table 4: Framework for Discussion of Findings Table

<b>Research objectives</b>	Examine young graduates' experiences and motivation to participate in the informal economy		To analyse the usefulness of formal (tertiary) education in an informal economy.	To investigate the importance of the informal economy for young graduates	To explore the viability of the informal economy as a long-term career option for young graduates
<b>Research questions</b>	What activities do young graduates participate in the informal economy		How do young graduates apply skills and knowledge from their formal education in the informal economy of Bulawayo, Zimbabwe	What are the opportunities and challenges for young graduates participating in the informal economy of Bulawayo, Zimbabwe	What are other coping strategies used by young graduates to navigate the challenges that affect them in the informal economy
<b>Main themes</b>	Reasons for participating in the informal economy	Reasons for young graduates' unemployment	Usefulness of Tertiary education in the informal economy	Benefits of the Informal economy to young graduates	Challenges of Young graduates in the Informal economy
<b>Sub-categories</b>	Unemployment Passion Multiple streams of income Culture of informality Doing Nothing Unsatisfactory income	Unemployment Coping strategies	Competitive advantage	Financial independence To cope with waithood Supporting family Independence Jobs	Competitive disadvantage Hustle mentality. Coping strategies Competition Capital

The table above shows the main findings of this study that guide the analysis. The purpose of this study was to understand the experiences (perceptions, benefits, challenges, and usefulness of their qualifications) of young graduates as they participate in the informal economy. Furthermore, this study sought to find out the reasons that motivated young graduates to participate in the informal economy, their strategies of coping with challenges in the informal economy, and their perceptions of the future of work for them as young graduates.

## **5.2 The Everyday in the Informal economy**

To obtain more accurate data, observations were made. According to Hammersley et al. (1993 as cited in Suryani, 2013: 125) the “ethnographer can participate in people’s daily lives for an extended period of time, watching what happens, listening to what is said, asking questions; in fact, collecting whatever data available...”. As such, I participated in the participants’ everyday lives by hanging out with some of the young graduates. Observations from Graduate Two (make-up artist) and Graduate Nine (money changer) were noted. This gave me an idea of what the everyday life of young graduates looks like. Although the goal was to observe young graduates during my time at Graduate Nine (money changer) ‘s place of work, I observed how every day the street became busier and more crowded as the days passed. I observed how in each space that had been vacant, I would find a new face and in front of them new goods. The day would start to slow down as people bustled on their way to work, vendors set up and money changers already standing around or sitting on their makeshift chairs made from cardboard boxes. Everyone knew each other on the street, and when the police came, whistles filled the air, and vendors and money changers quickly dispersed.

Graduate Two, because she worked at home, did not have to face running away from the police. Her house was like an office where customers and students would come one by one for her services. Graduate Two was not only a make-up artist, but she also taught makeup techniques to other young graduates. She would chat to each one about their lives and occasionally I would be part of these conversations. Graduate Two would make bookings; she had business cards and active business social media, and her customers paid before the service. Graduate Two’s business although informal seemed organised and professional. Graduate Nine had been operating for a few years and now had a network of loyal customers who would contact him for his services. He stood on the street, though, to catch other customers who would pass by. Graduate Nine would sometimes provide his money-changing service in the customers’ cars to avoid being caught by the police, especially if he was dealing with large amounts of money.

However, it was difficult to observe the everyday of digital entrepreneurs like Graduate Six who had a day job and hustled in between.

## **Discussion of Findings**

### **5.3 Reasons for participating in the informal economy.**

#### *5.3.1 Unemployment a pandemic? Push factor to the informal economy.*

Most of the graduates mentioned that they had never been formally employed, although they have been looking for jobs since graduating. This corresponds to Jeffery (2008) who found that young people wait because they are unable to find formal employment. When asked why they thought this was so, Graduate Two mentioned that although she had never had a job, she was also picky because she wanted a job that had good benefits and could provide her with financial security. According to the World Bank (2017), if the supply of educated labour exceeds demand, then the returns of education will be less. Most young graduates admitted feeling the burden to relieve their families of financial stress and get better returns for the education in which their families invested. Due to this, they do not settle for jobs that have low pay and poor working conditions, but they find having their own businesses better. For example, Graduate Five quit his job at a university and participated in the informal economy due to an unsatisfactory salary. The president of the Unemployed Graduates and Youth Organisation highlighted that from his experience, working young graduates were underemployed because the salaries they receive are not in line with their qualifications and skills, and that is why they 'hustle'. He used an example of his experiences meeting graduates who say, "After work *ndine madhiri angu andiri kuita*" (I have my deals to do after work). Graduate Five mentioned that in his opinion young graduates were facing unemployment because the salaries do not match the energy and time, unlike the informal economy, where you can see the fruits of your labour.

#### *5.3.2 Livelihood Diversification*

It should be noted that some young graduates like Graduate Six pursued many activities simultaneously. Graduate Six, for example, manufactures perfumes and sells airtime. Pursuing many different activities in the informal economy describes hustling. It shows the desperation to survive and to make a living by not putting your eggs in one basket in this economy filled with uncertainty but to diversify. In this study, a variety of activities that generate income were observed. Graduate Six highlighted that during the Covid pandemic she learnt the skill of making perfumes from a woman in Harare. The choice of a business to pursue in the informal economy was influenced by the knowledge, skills, opportunities, and passion of young graduates. For example, when Graduate One was asked the reason for choosing and starting

the self-care business, she highlighted that she decided to start her business in the informal economy as a passion project. She also excitedly explained with a smile on her face her passion for self-care and brand management. Graduate One mentioned that “I started my business for income and passion”.

Graduate Four mentioned that her passion for makeup is one of the reasons she decided to participate in the informal economy as a makeup artist. It was interesting that the degrees and diplomas that all participants pursued were in line with their passion. All of them mentioned that they chose their degree or diploma because they have a passion for it. However, when it comes to their participation in the informal economy, some are driven by passion, and others by the need to gain a livelihood. This shows that if young graduates are given jobs that meet their salary needs, they can contribute positively to different disciplines. For example, Graduate Eight became a geologist because she loved rocks, but moved to having a bridal store because she saw an opportunity for such a business in the market.



*Figure 3: Graduate One advertising her products for her digital business*

\*This picture is made by EMANGRAPHICS and belongs to Brilliant. Brilliant has provided the picture and given their full consent for the picture to be used.



*Figure 4: Graduate Four's beauty therapy business.*

### *5.3.3 Culture of informality*

*“Everyone is selling something”, Graduate Seven said.*

Zimbabwe has grown and nourished informal work due to the volatile economy. In waithood young graduates in Bulawayo use their cultural capital to cope through hustling in the informal economy. Most of the current young graduates were born after the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) was implemented or were born into this instability. This has caused feelings of mistrust and unreliability when thinking of the economy of Zimbabwe and even formal jobs. Young graduates have witnessed parents, relatives, or just people they know who have been retrenched or failed to secure jobs. Thus, Graduate Ten, a young graduate, mentioned that when thinking about his future, he envisions himself working abroad because he thinks he could secure a job that has a better salary, benefits, and even stability.

Some young graduates mentioned that most of their family has always participated in the informal economy. That is why after graduation, when they could not get a job, the informal economy was the default. However, this is not work they dream of, and some dream of finally

doing the job they were trained or educated to do. But even for those formally employed in jobs they liked; they too participate in the informal economy for extra income.

#### *5.3.4 Doing nothing.*

Doing nothing is shunned in Zimbabwean society. Unemployed young graduates participate in menial jobs such as being cashiers in small stores or in the informal economy so that they can 'do something' and have a better perception in society as not lazy. It is common practice that after greeting, older people usually ask what you are doing, which means any work or activity that brings you income. The informal economy provides that space to 'do something' while in waiting. This has brought about 'making do', 'kukiyakiya' or 'ukubambabamba' in the informal economy (Jones, 2010). Graduate Seven excitedly said the informal economy keeps her busy, she mentioned that "As a young person I have so much to do, I don't have time to joke around". According to Jeffery (2010), if waiting occurs for a long time or is prolonged, it becomes chronic waiting, which is attached to surplus time. In his study of unemployed young men from India, Jeffery (2008) found that a challenge in waiting was the unstructured time they had. However, this study revealed that to avoid this surplus time and 'do nothing', young graduates keep busy participating in the informal economy. Waiting is attached to feeling of lost time by those in waiting, and this pushes young people to engage in different activities such as hustling whilst waiting. These activities can be temporary or almost permanent depending on the duration of waiting.

#### *5.3.5 Unsatisfactory income*

Interestingly, Graduate Four mentioned that she felt that working in the formal sector was risky because of the low and late salary, which can lead to people stealing to make ends meet. She said that from her experience "*Nxa usebenza ucina sutshontsha*" (If you are not working you end up stealing). Thus, Graduate Four decided to participate in the informal economy and is now happy with her beauty therapy business because she is in control of her salary and income. In this study, personal agency and power are strongly emphasised. It manifested itself in young graduates deciding to take control of the work in which they participated and taking control of their income by working for themselves in the informal economy. Graduate Four mentioned that she left formal employment because she was tired. She was tired of being given last warnings and not being able to please her employees. She gave an example of her time at the lodge with a laugh when she left because her manager kept saying 'awu *aynanga kuhle*', which means 'you did not iron well'. Another challenge she faced was '*ukukhombiswa*' which means

being courted at work by managers. *'Uyakhombiswa* and *ungayala isalary iyaphongubuya silutshwane'*, which means that 'if you are courted and do not agree the salary will just become less'.

Graduate Eight mentioned that she started participating in the informal economy when she had a baby and a family and that her salary was no longer enough for her. When she was a geologist, her work was not conducive after having a baby, as she worked on the outskirts of cities. To be closer to her family, she left her formal job, which she mentioned was a lot of physical work, and started participating in the informal economy by providing hiring services for wedding gowns. Graduate Five similarly also left his formal job. Graduate Five mentioned that he felt that the salaries do not match the energy and time, unlike the informal economy, where you can see the fruits of your labour. This was interesting, as the informal economy has been deemed as the last resort for survival and livelihoods, but for other young graduates like Graduate Five, it is a choice due to the freedom and control over salaries and work.

### *5.3.6 Multiple streams of income*

Even in uncertainty (waiting) goals, dreams exist, and these imagined futures inform activity of the present (Cooper et al., 2015). For example, in this study, Graduate Two's goal was multiple income streams and that is why, although waiting for a formal job, she was growing her own business so that when she gets other income streams, her goals would be realised. When she started participating in the informal economy, she was doing different activities, such as cooking classes and makeup services. However, she decided to focus on makeup services because the former business was less profitable. Graduate Seven, who is into small-scale mining, remarked that she has been inspired by hustlers such as Dj Sbu in South Africa, who had formal jobs and side hustles as well. Hustling is becoming a valued urban practice by young graduates like Graduate Seven, who appreciate the income they get from it. Graduate Seven mentioned that she has always hustled. Even when she was employed, she would bake cookies and sell them at work, or she would travel to Zambia on off-days and weekends to buy braids and hair extensions that she would resell in Zimbabwe.

## **5.4 Reasons for the Unemployment of Young Graduates**

Graduate Three mentioned that she had never got a formal job and that ever since graduation her poultry business has been her sole source of income. She mentioned that she believed that she had never secured a job because as a newer graduate and she had not searched hard enough for a work *'I have not been able to get a job yet maybe it is because I am still a newer graduate'*.

She was excited about her future work prospects and hopeful about getting a job in the formal sector.

Graduate nine mentioned that he believed that university curricula are more theoretical, and polytechnics could be more practical. The president of Unemployed Graduates and Youth believed that improving the curriculum could strengthen the skills and knowledge of graduates, making them more desirable for the labour market. Improving the curriculum could strengthen the cultural capital of graduates. However, in this study, both graduates from universities and polytechnics or colleges find themselves unemployed. Despite practical experiences from school and industrial attachment, young graduates still find themselves unemployed. It should be noted that companies could be looking for more work experience. In one of the casual conversations I engaged in, a graduate mentioned that unemployment was high because organizations now prefer attachment interns (these are interns still pursuing tertiary education who intern to fulfil requirements of tertiary education in Zimbabwe) over graduates, *“Organizations have realized that they can operate with attachees and it is now difficult to get a job as a graduate”*

This coincides with Edziwa et al. (2015) who mention that companies and organisations in Zimbabwe now prefer attachment interns rather than graduates because they are cheap labour and organisations do not need to invest in training for this replaceable labour.

## **5.5 Usefulness of tertiary education in the informal economy**

### *5.5.1 Competitive advantage*

All participants highlighted that their qualifications give them a competitive advantage in the informal economy. For Graduate Two, her Human Resources degree gave her knowledge on strategic management which has given her competitive advantage in terms of forming strategies for her business. Therefore, he has been able to attract more customers to her business despite the competitiveness that exists in her niche. She highlighted that her formal education skills have been relevant in the informal economy. Educational attainment, which is an example of cultural capital, can be used as resources by young graduates not only to survive unemployment, but also to catapult their success into the informal economy.

Although some participants were doing something different than what they learnt in school, they claimed that their education was relevant in the informal economy. This is because of the soft skills gained from tertiary institutions such as critical thinking, problem solving, and

adaptability. For example, when asked how she deals with the challenges she faces whilst participating in the informal economy, Graduate One mentioned that,

*“We just keep going and keep trying different things.”*

Young graduates in cities have learnt the ‘rhythms of endurance’ (Simone, 2018) to survive unemployment, other socioeconomic challenges and challenges in the informal economy. Other graduates also mentioned that some courses they had studied enabled them to be more competitive in the informal economy. When asked if her qualifications gave her a competitive advantage, Graduate Six was excited and said confidently,

*“Even if I were a vendor I would sell differently as a young graduate”*. She explained that even as a vendor she can deploy her critical thinking skills gained from tertiary education to have a competitive and successful small business.

Graduate Six further explained that she felt her tertiary qualification equipped her with transferable skills such as critical thinking, problem solving skills, communication skills and creativity. These skills enabled her to formulate and implement better business strategies that gave her a competitive edge when selling her perfumes. However, even with these competitive advantages, young graduates faced challenges while participating in the informal economy.

Graduate One mentioned that her qualifications and education enable her to be more professional, unlike what she had observed from her less educated counterparts in the informal economy. She also mentioned that her communication skills enable her to attract customers to her business. Graduate Eight mentioned that one of her modules at school included knowledge on digital marketing and social media strategies on marketing, entrepreneurship, business strategies, and public relations; so, her skills from her tertiary education do apply in both the formal and informal economy. Her digital media skills have enabled her to connect with more customers and make more sales unlike her less educated counterparts, who rely mostly on WhatsApp she uses Instagram, and Facebook. She explained that she used these online platforms not only to advertise, but her skills in social media have enabled her to grow a following and an online community interested in her brand and her products. Mining and clothing businesses are two different activities, but skills such as marketing apply in both. Graduate Five mentioned that he believed that it is easier for young graduates to grow their businesses in the informal economy because of their educational background and skills. However, the informal economy needs connections and links that are not taught in tertiary education.

### *5.5.2 Education the key to success?*

When asked about the value of higher education in Zimbabwe, where the economy is unstable and volatile, the participants were divided. Some participants like Graduate Two highlighted that although there is unemployment and securing employment is a challenge, tertiary qualifications and skills are a necessity for young people. Graduate Two said:

*“People should still pursue tertiary education by all means”.*

When asked about her perception of the value of tertiary education, Graduate Six with a qualification in development studies highlighted that she believes that it is valuable and relevant if it is more practical than theoretical. Graduate Three, a young graduate in agricultural economics, mentioned that she specifically chose that degree so that she could be self-employed, and she had never been formally employed. However, she mentioned that her skills from her education were helpful to a lesser extent when it comes to the growth of her business. Rather, she highlighted that her social capital (customers and parents) was an important factor in the growth of her business. Young men in Free Town, Sierra Leone, enacted their waithood by building social ties with customers and colleagues in the informal economy (Finn et al., 2015). Almost all the graduates believed that tertiary education was not a waste of time, but it was useful. However, some changes needed to make young graduates employable.

In terms of success, none of the graduates believed that they had already succeeded. Rather, they believed that they were on their way to success. With hopeful faces and voices, some believed they could be successful if they got formal jobs, some believed that working in both the formal and informal economies would bring them success, and others believed that they could be successful if they grew their businesses.

## **5.6 Benefits of the informal economy for young graduates**

### *5.6.1 Financial Freedom/Multiple income streams*

*“I love having side money”*, said Graduate Seven.

One of the major themes that surfaced from the interviews with young graduates was the notion of financial freedom. Across the board, this was a common desire and goal for young graduates. While hanging out with Graduate Three at her work, she mentioned that she was not particular about whether she works in the formal or informal economy, but what was important to her

was work that could give her financial stability. Financial freedom meant financial stability for some graduates and meant the ability to earn or look for money without restrictions. Graduate One highlighted that she was happy that in the informal economy she was able to earn income and did not have to wait for a pay cheque. Even if the income is irregular, she appreciated the freedom she found while participating in the informal economy. Graduate Six mentioned that she felt that she could be financially free in the informal economy, her social life and health are not compromised unlike in the formal economy.

According to Palmer (2017), the oversupply of skilled labour in the informal economy leads to more wage or salary fluctuations in enterprises than in formal employment. However, Graduate Four, who had been formally employed at various companies, highlighted the insecurity she felt at these jobs because salaries could change anytime or did not come on time sometimes. She mentioned that she preferred to work for herself rather than being formally employed because, as an entrepreneur, she does not wait for a monthly salary, and it is flexible.

Graduate Eight prefers a formal job as a geologist but would also keep her businesses for multiple streams of income. A common trend among the participants was that they never did one thing at a time, but actively engaged in different activities at once in the informal economy. Graduate Seven remarked: *“I have always told myself that the salary will never be enough, no matter how much I earn it will never be enough”, “I love having side money” and “I have always found myself doing something extra even when I was formally employed.”*

### *5.6.2 Livelihood and adulthood*

Most of the participants mentioned that through their hustle and participation in the informal economy, they were able to sustain their livelihoods. Being able to sustain a livelihood ensures that they can participate in adult activities such as marriage, and this leads them closer to being perceived as adults. When asked if their livelihood would be better in the informal economy or elsewhere, most of the participants believed that it was better off in the informal economy, but some believed that a formal job gave a sense of safety and security of livelihood. It should be noted that the definition of being able to sustain a livelihood differed from one participant to another, depending on the various stages of life. For example, Graduate Eight was able to buy a car while Graduate Three with her poultry business can financially support and employ her parents, thus becoming less dependent on her parents, which makes her happy and feel like an adult. Young graduates can escape waithood (Honwana, 2012; Mwaura, 2017) when they engage in alternative livelihood strategies such as participating in the informal economy. This

is through the perceived social markers of what adults have, which could be tangible like a car, a house, or intangible benefit like being independent and self-sufficient. However, it is crucial to also note that some young graduates like Graduate Two, although she has a successful growing business, are still *'waiting'* for the right job; one that has the salary and benefits she believes she deserves as a young graduate. Graduate Eight mentioned that she has had positive experiences in the informal economy because it has improved her life and made her independent.

### 5.6.3 *New skills*

Most young graduates admitted that through participating in the informal economy, they have gained new skills. For example, Graduate One mentioned that although she had manufacturing and marketing skills from her diploma, some of the skills (time management and being adaptive) that she uses in the informal economy to strengthen her brand were self-taught. According to Mahiya et al. (2020) informal trading opens opportunities for informal traders and equips them with skills such as being adaptable. Urban informal traders in Harare, Zimbabwe, used cash to cope and adapt to the volatile economy and multi-currency system. Graduate Five mentioned that experience in the informal economy has taught him to survive and adapt, he emphasised that *"When a graduate can survive the street life and with his knowledge of entrepreneurship they can succeed because he has the best of both worlds"*. Thieme (2017:543) similarly remarked, "therefore, the 'hustler' who can adapt to a multitude of uncertainties and create multiple potential opportunities with diverse stations of remuneration, planning, aspirations, and disappointment is not only a survivalist but also potentially an activist, a community organizer, an entrepreneur, an opportunistic jack of all trades." This means that young people who can survive in the uncertainties of hustle have a huge potential. According to Thieme (2021) in her study in Mathare, Nairobi services breakdown, disruption, and crises were the norm, and thus being adaptable was an important skill for urban life.

### 5.6.4 *Employment*

Graduate Seven mentioned that the informal economy provides jobs and income to people who do not have access to traditional employment opportunities. It allows people to be their own bosses and to have control over their work. However, the informal economy is associated with low wages, poor working conditions, and little job security, and has less access to social safety nets like healthcare and social security. For example, in small-scale mining, where she operates, miners go there without safety clothes.

## **5.7 Challenges of young graduates in the informal economy**

### *5.7.1 Competitive disadvantage*

Some graduates noted that their education allowed them to operate in the informal economy in a somewhat more professional manner. For example, Graduate Two mentioned that following up with her customers and asking for feedback has improved the quality of her service and enabled her to nurture relationships with her customers making them loyal customers to her business. However, they also highlighted that compared to their less educated counterparts, they had less of a ‘*hustle mentality*’. When asked about how their formal education is a disadvantage when participating in the informal economy, Graduate One highlighted that she has less of a ‘*hustle mentality*’. When further asked what that meant, she explained that she finds her hustle is less driven than other entrepreneurs who are not graduates. Graduate Five mentioned that he observed that less educated and other people in the informal economy were able to form and fully leverage connections and links better than young graduates. Thus, he believed that if a young graduate could survive street life, they would succeed because that would be the best of both worlds. Cultural capital manifests itself differently for young graduates. In this study, while young graduates confessed to their institutional capital (knowledge and skills) giving them competitive advantage, their less educated counterparts had stronger social networks within the informal economy.

Other challenges included that it is a challenge to thrive in the informal economy, and more so to succeed in the unstable Zimbabwean economy. The outdated transport infrastructure makes it difficult for young graduates to order raw materials that are not available in Zimbabwe. It is difficult because Zimbabwe does not have effective or working delivery systems. Thus, young graduates use informal delivery systems that take longer and are not reliable. This volatility is evidenced by continuous high inflation and currency changes. Some graduates like Graduate Three mentioned that one of the biggest challenges they have faced is Covid 19 because at that time only formal businesses were allowed to operate, thus leaving those working in the informal economy in a precarious position.

### *5.7.2 Raw materials*

Due to a shortage of raw materials. Access to raw materials and access to affordable raw materials are a challenge for young graduates who pursue their entrepreneurial activities in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. Graduate Six, who manufactures perfumes, highlighted that the raw materials she needed to manufacture perfumes were not available in Bulawayo, and she had to source them from Harare (the capital city of Zimbabwe) and South Africa. She mentioned that

this was a challenge because it slowed down her production. Graduate Three mentioned that as a poultry farmer, her challenge is a shortage of feed for her broilers in Bulawayo. Since she was not financially able to source the feed from other cities such as Graduate Six, she had to wait until it was available in Bulawayo.

### 5.7.3 Competition

Graduate Three mentioned that the challenge she faced while operating in the informal economy is competition, as her line of work is 'over saturated,' so there are not many opportunities. Graduate Three highlighted that due to this competition, the challenge is that “people will do anything to get to the top, such as reducing prices”, so they easily gain and lose customers. To cope, she uses her knowledge of customer retention by doing follow-ups on her customers, which has helped her business grow. Her skills enable her to manage dynamics that arise in the beauty industry.

## 5.8 Future work

Table 5: Future work

	<i>Formal</i>	<i>Informal</i>	<i>Both formal and informal</i>	<i>Not sure</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Number of Participants</i>	1	3	5	1	10

### 5.8.1 Perceptions of young graduates about the future of work for them

Gukurume (2018) in his study on young people in the small and medium enterprise sector found that although they desired white collar jobs, they were happy to have a job to get by and survive. As evidenced in this study, young graduates participated in the informal economy, but for most of them it was more than just survival, as they aspired to grow their businesses and enjoyed the freedom and control over their salaries. Although Graduate Six was employed, when it comes to her future work, she envisioned/imagined work that did not take a toll on her body and could give her freedom for social activities. Given a choice between a formal job or her business, Graduate Six preferred participating in the informal economy as a long-term strategy for her. Graduate Two also mentioned that being an entrepreneur was convenient, unlike a formal job, because it was flexible, giving her time to take care of her two-year-old son. However, she was not sure if that would be the case in the future as she gets older because

her work involves a lot of standing and she was not sure she would be able to stand for such long hours. Graduate Two mentioned that the informal economy was attached to uncertainty of income, and this made the future uncertain as well, that is why she also said:

*“Entrepreneurship has a lot to do with risk and risk management, things increase and decrease, so it’s better to stay in the formal economy”.*

Graduate Four mentioned that the informal economy was a long-term livelihood strategy for her. She mentioned that this is because from her experience in formal employment she was tired of failing to please employers and she felt that because sometimes employers do not give salary on time and this pushes people to steal as a means of survival, this she prefers to be self-employed in the informal economy. The President of the Unemployed Graduates and Youth mentioned that one of their programmes is educating final year tertiary students to prepare them for the reality of life after graduation.

For other participants like Graduate Seven, participating in the informal economy was not a long-term livelihood strategy because it is a sector filled with uncertainty.

*“Certainly not it’s all about what you get now without really looking forward to what you will get tomorrow, and laws and regulations are changing on a daily basis so you cannot base your future on the informal economy, it is about what you get now and finding other long-term ventures”.* She mentioned that laws change easily, especially with mining because *“you can wake up and the land belongs to the government, nothing is promised, you wake up tomorrow and everything belongs to the elite”.*

Graduate Seven emphasised that she preferred to have a formal job because it comes with benefits and employee packages that protect her. When asked if she thought her livelihood would be better off elsewhere, Graduate Eight concurred and remarked that geologists get paid better than in the informal economy. Graduate Four mentioned that although she was doing well and planning to expand her business to breeding pigs, this was not long-term, and she prefers to be employed both formally and informally. Although in waiting, she aspired to attain the formal job she was waiting for.

Young graduates were asked if they were waiting for employment or not. This study found that most of the young graduates were in waiting. However, some had an air of hopelessness in waiting, and it seemed they had decided not to wait for formal jobs but to establish and be successful in the informal economy. In India, Jeffery (2008) found that whatever activities

young men engaged in, they viewed them as ‘timepass’, not work they envisioned to do in the future. Unlike Jeffery's (2008) study, for most young graduates in this study, the informal economy is more than just passing time, but fulfilling dreams like having a thriving business. Some graduates saw the informal economy as their future work, whilst some envisioned the formal work for their future.

Scholars such as Stasik et al. (2020) and Honwana (2019) argue that waiting can be productive. While waiting, youth plan, talk, play, and form connections that transform their lives. Waiting is attached to hopes for the future, activity, and improvement in the present, *“It is an experience of time in which engagement with the present is shaped by visions of the future”* (Stasik et al, 2020: 2). The experiences of young graduates in Bulawayo also revealed that the waithood period informs their activities in the present and their hopes and desires for the future. It is crucial to not over-romanticize this productivity in waithood, the hustle, and the agency of young graduates in the face of unemployment as many of the young graduates in this study admitted the need for formal employment and security.

If waiting is prolonged it can be chronic and is characterised by “surplus time, heightened suspense, lost time, and panic and inertia” (Jeffery, 2010: 955). Bourdieu (2002: 212) asserts that although those waiting can imagine a brighter future whilst pursuing other activities in the present, it is difficult for those who experience chronic waiting. He terms this as those in waiting moving ‘between fantasy and surrender’. In this study, most of the young graduates had not experienced chronic waiting and were still optimistic about a better future.

## **5.9 Chapter Summary**

In conclusion, this chapter discussed some of the factors that motivate young graduates to participate in the informal economy. This was followed by an interrogation on the usefulness of higher education in the informal economy. It was discovered that young graduates possessed both a competitive advantage of knowledge on marketing and business, but also had a disadvantage, as most alluded to having less drive for the hustle than their less educated counterparts. Some benefits that young graduates acquire through participating in the informal economy include financial independence, avenues for multiple streams of income, ability to attain livelihoods and move closer to being an adult. Some challenges young graduates face while participating in the informal economy include capital, competitive disadvantage, and competition.

## **CHAPTER 6: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

### **6.1 Introduction**

This chapter looks at the summary, conclusions, and recommendation. It first summarises the experiences of young graduates in the informal economy of Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. Furthermore, the chapter concludes this study but also presents some recommendations to address the unemployment of young graduates and the support that can be provided to those participating in the informal economy. Recommendations for further study are presented.

### **6.2 Summary**

The general objective of the study was to investigate the experiences of young graduates participating in the informal economy. The first objective was to investigate the motivating factors that push young graduates in Bulawayo to participate in the informal economy. This study revealed that there are varying reasons for the entrance of young graduates into the informal economy. These include the need to pursue their passion, the need to have their own businesses, the need for employment, the culture of informality that exists in Bulawayo, the need to do something and to have multiple streams of income. Young graduates mentioned the need to be in control of their salaries and income and used their agency to participate in the informal economy, which gave them autonomy over their salaries and their work.

The second objective was to analyse the usefulness of formal tertiary education in an informal economy. This study found that formal tertiary education was more useful in the informal economy. However, young graduates mentioned having to learn other skills in the informal economy to help them survive, such as intensity in carrying out their hustle and making connections. The third objective was to investigate the importance of the informal economy for young graduates. According to Thieme (2021), little is known about these spaces of struggle in the informal economy and the everyday of youth navigating these spaces of struggle and uncertain futures. The diverse group of young graduates who participated in the study highlighted that the informal economy is an important space for them, as they get benefits such as employment, income, skills, and independence. However, this also did not remove the longing for a formal job that comes with social security benefits.

The fourth objective was to explore the viability of the informal economy as a long-term career option for young graduates. Although all young graduates mentioned that the informal sector was important to them and useful, most of them envisioned themselves working in both the formal and informal economy regarding a viable long-term career. Finn et al. (2015)

highlighted those young men in Free Town, Sierra Leone who worked in the informal economy who wanted better jobs such as having 'proper shops' but felt discouraged because they had no certifications and qualifications. In this study, I discovered that young graduates wanted both a formal job and to keep participating in the informal economy.

The research was carried out in the urban area of Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. A sample of twelve participants were purposely selected for interviewing using in-depth interviews and casual conversations. Hanging out was also carried out to better understand the everyday of the young graduates as they participate in the informal economy of Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. Key informant interviews were conducted with a governmental and non-governmental organisation, SMEDCO, that deals with small and medium enterprises in Bulawayo, and unemployed graduates and youth to get their perspectives on the subject.

The general demographic characteristics of young graduates in Bulawayo who participate in the informal economy indicated that the average age was 28 years. The study included more women than men, which corresponds to the fact that more women have degrees than men in Zimbabwe (ZimStats, 2022). Another reason was that as a female researcher, using a snowball sampling method, I managed to get connected with young graduates who were females. All young graduates participated in different kinds of businesses that showed a diversity of participants. The young graduates all possessed different educational qualifications (degrees and diplomas) which enabled me as a researcher to attain a different perspective from young graduates with different backgrounds.

This study employed Honwana's (2012) concept of waithood, Bourdieu's (1972) cultural capital and Thieme's concept of the urban hustle. Waiting for young people can manifest differently, "For young people, waiting often exerts a type of triple pressure: they are excluded from objects of desire, such as an education, marriage, and financial independence; they are incapable of moving into socially ascribed age-based categories, especially adulthood" (Jeffery, 2010: page 956; Argenti, 2005). However, in this study, young graduates already had access to education, but despite this find it challenging to access formal employment which leads to financial independence, marriage, and other markers of adulthood. To cope, young graduates in Bulawayo participate in the informal economy in different activities in hopes of gaining financial independence, getting married, escape unemployment, and other cultural markers of adulthood.

Youth scholars have focused on the gap between youth expectations and the reality of stagnation (Archambault, 2012; Cole, 2004; Hansen, 2005; Mains, 2012; Masquelier, 2005, 2019; Weiss 2009), from which the root of experiences of waithood emanate. In this study, young graduates have expectations of a formal job and to also participate in the informal economy, however, their expectations are far from reality.

### **6.3 Conclusions**

#### **Informalisation of Bulawayo's labour force**

At independence in 1980, Zimbabwe was the second most industrialised country in the sub-Saharan and the city of Bulawayo was the hub of many of those industries (Mlambo, 2017). At that time Bulawayo and Harare housed 70% of the country's industries (Ndlovu, 1994). Bulawayo as the industrial capital of Zimbabwe was the centre of employment. These industries ensured the employment of many in Bulawayo, including those who migrated specifically to the city for employment. However, this changed as after independence, the Zimbabwean economy rapidly declined. The Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) implemented in 1991 aimed to upgrade the economy, however, it did the opposite and by 1992 approximately 25,000 people had reportedly been retrenched (Sanders, 1996). For example, liberal policies in the economy, such as the removal of price control, led to inflation and a low consumer demand in the market (Saunders, 1996). After ESAP and other challenges (like liquidity challenges, expensive electricity, high interest rates and the 1992 drought), the decline of the Zimbabwean economy and the volatile political environment, industries in Bulawayo closed (Mlambo, 1997,2017; Ndlela and Robinson (2003). This decline led to the closure of these industries in Bulawayo, leading to retrenchments that affected many livelihoods dependent on the manufacturing sector (Mbira, 2015).

Bulawayo's glory of being a hub of industries, economic activity, and employment is a story that almost seems like a myth to unemployed young graduates, except for the physically abandoned industries in the city that give testimony to that. This is because Bulawayo once an industrial powerhouse and formal employment has become a city rife with informal activity and unemployment. By 2015, Zimbabwe's industrial sector had collapsed and then 90% of the population was working in the informal sector which has grown to 94% (Mlambo, 2017; Gukurume, 2018). The growth of the informal economy is an indicator of the massive unemployment problem and the shrinkage of the formal economy in Bulawayo.

According to Meyer (2021), understanding labour markets helps alleviate social challenges such as poverty and inequality. Therefore, it was crucial to understand the experiences of young graduates participating in the informal economy to develop pathways for young graduates waiting to escape and gain sustainable livelihoods. Young graduates are vulnerable to unemployment and, through their agency, find alternative employment and work in the informal economy. However, there are fewer studies on their experiences in the informal economy and on their work preferences. The main aim of this study was to understand the experiences of young graduates and to find out if they have a competitive advantage or disadvantage while working in the informal economy.

The main findings of the analysis were that young graduates do have a competitive advantage in the informal economy. This is because they can use knowledge obtained from tertiary education to navigate the informal economy. For example, most alluded to being able to be more professional and tactical than their counterparts who are not graduates participating in the informal economy. The experiences of young graduates in the informal economy are both positive and negative. In terms of prospects of future work, some saw themselves permanently employed in the formal sector and some saw themselves continuously growing their businesses in the informal economy. These findings suggested that the informal economy is important as it enables young graduates to sustain livelihoods and potentially escape waiting, while for others it is a waiting place. It should be noted that studies related to hustle culture mostly explore the experiences of men, however, in this study of young graduates, more women experiences were explored.

In conclusion, young graduates have both positive and negative experiences while participating in the informal economy of Bulawayo. Understanding these experiences is crucial to devise interventions for young graduates' unemployment, for supporting young graduates who are participating in the informal economy, and for supporting the informal economy.

#### **6.4 Recommendations**

Waiting can be prolonged, almost permanent, and detrimental to global South urban livelihoods. Waiting in the Global South is generational, which has resulted in prolonged waiting, as mentioned by Jeffery (2008). This has resulted in generational unemployment that affects even educated and skilled young graduates.

Although most young graduates highlighted that higher education is still valuable, there is a need for better policies and improvements in higher education curricula that correspond to the

current needs of the labour market. There is a need for a system change in policy to adapt and improve higher education. According to McGuiness (2017) and Palmer (2017), policies that were employed in developed countries only partially address the skills mismatch. Zimbabwe could learn from this and work to implement policies that address more than labour demand and supply mismatch, but all aspects of skill mismatch in Zimbabwe.

Due to low-quality tertiary education and high levels of unemployment, young graduates face a different perception in society. Graduates were attached to prestigious jobs, better livelihoods, and better social standing in society. However, present-day graduates are less respected in society. I remember my high school teacher lamenting about this change; she recalled being a university student and receiving ‘pay out’ from the government. Furthermore, only a few people could qualify for tertiary education, and she mentioned in those days that going for tertiary education made you more respected.

The president of Unemployed Graduates and Youth emphasised the need for career guidance from as early as high school so that young people can wisely choose degrees and diplomas that make them employable. This is because universities and colleges are more profit-driven and less focused on providing degrees and diplomas that provide the skills needed for the labour market. Moreover, some universities admit students who have not performed well in Advanced Level (A’ Level in high school) and they are enrolled for degrees that do not make them employable.

Based on this research, I recommend two pathways to dealing with the challenge of graduate unemployment. The first would be to support the available coping strategies of young graduates employed in the informal economy. The second path that would produce long-term returns would be structural changes in the education and economic sectors. Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 8, aims to ‘promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all’ (UN, 2015: Goal 8). Looking at the findings of this study, it is important to understand the work that young graduates and young people desire to do to move closer to SDG 8.

Mwenje (2021) in his paper looking at factors that deterred young graduates from engaging in entrepreneurship in the informal economy in Mutare in Zimbabwe found that this was determined by experience and the growth of young graduates already in the informal economy affected by socioeconomic factors. The main conclusion of this study was: “It is unclear why the rapidly growing informal sector in Zimbabwe, with the potential to absorb university

graduates, cannot use the high-level skills generated each year from the country's universities to enhance growth and global competitiveness" (Mwenje,2021, page 34). Thus, it is important to explore dynamics of graduates in the informal economy.

The findings of this study in Bulawayo revealed that although the informal economy has the potential to absorb skilled graduates, the nature of the informal formal economy does not allow maximum growth or utilisation of the skills of young graduates. This is because of its unpredictable nature and being tied to illegality. One young graduate with a beauty therapy business highlighted that although she was happy and preferred her business over formal employment, the informal economy was risky because the profit and income fluctuate. Steps like providing funding and operating space should be taken to recognise and support the informal economy.

### **6.5 Areas for further study**

This study focused on the experiences of young graduates in the informal economy of Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. Future studies could narrow down to focus more on young graduates in specific industries of the informal economy. There is also a need to look at the entry and exit of young graduates in the informal economy, to determine how easy or challenging it is for young graduates to enter or leave the informal sector. There is need for further study on graduates who are employed but still hustle in the informal economy. Further studies should also be conducted on the mismatch between education, degrees, or diplomas being offered by tertiary institutions and the current labour market needs. Another important area for further investigation is the interconnectedness of the formal and informal economy and how young graduates navigate that.

### **6.6 Chapter summary**

The main aim of this chapter was to present the summary, conclusions, and recommendations. This chapter summarized the study findings in relation to the objectives and aims. Recommendations to reduce unemployment and support young graduates are presented, as well as potential policy interventions. Areas for further study are also suggested.

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Appendices

## Appendix A: UCT Ethical Clearance



2023/06/09

EBF/00201/2023

RE: Research Ethics Committee Project Approval Letter

Dear Moreblessing Chipangura,

Your application for ethics review of your project titled

Hustle Revolution: Young Graduates' Participation in the Informal Economy of Bulawayo, Zimbabwe.

has been reviewed and evaluated by the

EGS:Dept of Environ & Geographic Science Research Ethics Committee (REC).

Based on the information supplied your application has been successful and is approved.

You may proceed with your research project titled:

Hustle Revolution: Young Graduates' Participation in the Informal Economy of Bulawayo, Zimbabwe.

Please note that should:

- (i) any serious or adverse effects to participants occur and/or,
- (ii) aspect(s) of your current project change and/or
- (iii) any unforeseen events that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project occur then you should immediately report this to the approving REC. You may be required to submit an amendment to this application, in order to determine whether the changed aspects increase the ethical risks of your project.

Please note the following additional conditions associated with this approval:

- (i) Since the information shared by some of the respondents will be sensitive, it is advised to pay special attention to the storage of this data and not to share folders. Perhaps select the most secure cloud storage option instead of all three. Google Drive may not be as secure as OneDrive for example. The hard copies from interviews must equally be kept in a safe location.

Regards,

EGS:Dept of Environ & Geographic Science

Research Ethics Committee



## Informed Voluntary Consent to Participate in Research Study

**Title of Research:** Hustle Revolution: Young Graduates' Participation in the Informal Economy of Bulawayo, Zimbabwe

**Name of Researcher:** Moreblessing Chipangura

**Contact Details:** [chpmor003@myuct.ac.za](mailto:chpmor003@myuct.ac.za)



### Participation

You are invited to participate in a research study focusing on young graduates in the informal economy. The study aim is to understand the experiences of young graduates in the informal economy which might contribute to future solutions to graduate unemployment. Please understand that participation is voluntary. If you choose not to participate, there will be no negative consequences. If you choose to participate but wish to withdraw at any time, you will be free to do so without explaining yourself and without negative consequences. However, I would be grateful if you would assist me by allowing me to interview you.

### Expectations of Participants

The participant is expected to participate in an interview after providing consent. Interview time will depend on comfortable time for the participant but approximately 30 minutes to 1 hour. It should be noted that there is no reimbursement available for any costs for example transport costs.

### Recording

If permission is granted by the participant, the interviews will be recorded. If the participant consents photographs may be taken.

**Benefits**

There will be no direct benefit to the participant.

**Risk of Harm to Participant**

There is no anticipated risk of harm to the participant.

**Anonymity and Confidentiality**

All information collected in this study will be kept private. Confidentiality will be taken seriously by use of pseudonyms for participants who prefer anonymity.

**Sharing and use of data**

Feedback to participants will be provided by giving back pictures. Data collected will be used for the research and stored in the University data repositories like Zivahub.

**To Note:** By signing this consent form you agree to participate in this research and that you have understood the aims, benefits, and risks of participating in this research.

I am aware that this interview might result in research that may be published but my name **may be/ may not be used** (circle appropriate)

- I consent to the interview            Yes                    No
- I agree to be audio recorded        Yes                    No
- I agree to be photographed        Yes                    No

observations, interview recording, pictures, or none of the information I provided, to **be used /or not used for the research** (circle appropriate)

Name of Participant.....Date.....

Signature of Participant.....

Name of Researcher.....Date.....

Signature of Researcher.....

## Appendix C: Information Letter



Dear Participant

Good day! my name is Moreblessing Chipangura and I am conducting research towards a master degree in Southern Urbanism at the University of Cape Town. I am researching young graduates who are participating in the informal economy in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe and would like to invite you to participate in the project. For the fulfilment of the program, I am conducting research titled: *Hustle Revolution: Young Graduates' Participation in the Informal Economy of Bulawayo, Zimbabwe*. The purpose of this research is to explore the experiences of young graduates and as they participate in the informal economy of Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. I am interested in finding out the motivation for young graduates to participate in the Informal economy. I want to understand how they navigate the informal economy and the opportunities and challenges they face. I want to find out if their formal tertiary education is useful in the informal economy. I would like to find out if the informal economy is a short-term livelihood strategy or a long-term career option.

Please complete the above consent form to grant your permission to participate in this project. If you would like any further information about the study, please feel free to contact me or my supervisors at the University of Cape Town, Dr Mercy-Brown Luthango (██████████) and Dr Martin Magidi (██████████).

Warm regards

Moreblessing Chipangura

MPhil Southern Urbanism Candidate

African Centre for Cities



## Interview Guide

Name of Researcher: Moreblessing Chipangura

Programme: Master's in philosophy in Southern Urbanism

Research Topic: Hustle Revolution: Young Graduates' Participation in the Informal Economy of Bulawayo, Zimbabwe

### 1) Young graduates

#### a) Ice Breaking questions

1. Briefly tell me about yourself (probe on name, age, and marital status)?
2. What is your degree or diploma in?
3. Why did you decide to pursue this area of study?
4. Why did you decide to participate in the informal economy?
5. Is what you do in the informal economy related to your qualification and skills?
6. Where you formally employed before participating in the informal economy?
7. If so, how long were you employed in this job and why did you decide to leave?
8. Are you employed somewhere else right now besides the informal economy?
9. Are you employed or an entrepreneur in the informal economy?

#### b) Activities by Young Graduates in the Informal Economy?

1. What activities are you involved in, in the informal economy?
2. Why those activities?
3. For how long have you been participating in the informal economy?
4. If you are an entrepreneur, what made you start your business?
5. Have you been able to grow your business?
6. What is your business involved in? What does it entail?
7. How many workers/employees do you have?
8. Do you have any graduate friends or colleagues working in the informal economy? If so, what business or activities are they into?

#### c) Usefulness of formal (tertiary) education in the Informal economy?

1. Is what you do in the informal economy related to your qualification and skills?

2. How do you apply your skills and knowledge from formal education in the informal economy?
3. Are your skills gained from formal education relevant in the informal economy?
4. Do you think that your formal education is relevant in the current formal and informal workspace?
5. Have you been able to tap into networks and connections gained from tertiary education in the informal economy?
6. How is your formal education an advantage when participating in the informal economy?
7. How is your formal education disadvantage when participating in the informal economy?
8. Are your experiences in the informal economy positive or negative? Explain why?
9. What are the opportunities available to you in the informal economy as a young graduate?
10. What challenges do you face when participating in the informal economy as a young graduate?
11. What are the coping strategies you use to deal with challenges faced when participating in the informal economy?
12. How do you use your skills from tertiary education to deal with these challenges you face in the informal economy?
13. Do your skills from tertiary education enable you to make any positive change in the informal economy?

**d) What are the perceived implications of the Informal economy to young graduates?**

1. Are you able to sustain your livelihood by participating in the informal economy?
2. Has your standard of life changed since you started participating in the informal economy?
3. Is participating in the informal economy a coping strategy or a viable long-term career option?
4. How important do you think the informal economy is in terms for future work in Bulawayo?
5. Do you think that your livelihood would be better off with pursuing other livelihoods options that are not in the informal economy?
6. How do your family and friends feel about your participation in the informal economy?
7. Do you know any other people who, like you, have a university degree, and are employed in the informal economy?
8. How prevalent do you think this is?
9. Do you think that it is becoming a socially accepted practice?
10. What are your perceptions on the value of tertiary education in regards with failure to get a formal job after graduation?
11. Given a choice between a formal job or continuing with your hustle, what would you choose?

**Thank you for your time, it has been a pleasure interviewing you. The interview has been insightful. Do you have any questions that you would like to ask?**

**2) Government Organization**

1. Can you introduce yourself and your position?
2. In your opinion what are the challenges that young graduates in Bulawayo face?
3. What is the type of informal activities that young people are involved in Bulawayo?
4. What challenges do young people face in the informal economy of Bulawayo, Zimbabwe?
5. What is the available support for young people participating in the informal economy of Bulawayo?
6. In your opinion how important is the informal economy to young graduates?

**3) Non-governmental organization**

1. What is your name and name of Organization?
2. What are the objectives of the organization?
3. What challenges are faced by young graduates?
4. What kind of support does the organization offer young graduates or young people in the informal sector?
5. In your opinion what do you think are the contributions of the informal economy to young graduates?
6. What are the challenges faced by young graduates in the informal economy in Bulawayo?
7. Do you have any projects or initiatives that support young graduates in the informal economy? If available, please explain.