

# Conflict over Scarce Economic Resources: An Analysis of the Zimbabwe/Nigeria Small-Scale Business Relationship in Harare

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## Abstract

Zimbabwe is currently undergoing a difficult economic phase where unemployment rate is over 85% and the economy is largely informal. The few formal business operations are in the hands of few foreigners who established themselves during the 2007-2009 economic crises when most Zimbabweans were economically down and crippled. The study sought to establish the relationship between the disempowered Zimbabweans and the few empowered foreigners with a view to establish the volatility vis-à-vis the situation in the neighbouring South Africa regarding xenophobia. The study was conducted in Harare through a mixed method approach which saw 10 key participants drawn from both Zimbabwean and Nigerian business operators being interviewed. To compliment interviews, policy documents and other relevant literature was reviewed. Data was analysed using Constant Comparison method based in grounded theory approach. The study did confirm the dominance by foreigners in business operations and the existence of an aggrieved voice within the Zimbabwean citizens. However, it also established that the possibility of a Zimbabwe/Nigeria conflict is far-fetched given available conditions.

**Keywords:** economic resources, xenophobia, unemployment, immigrants, investments, conflict.

## Introduction

Ever since Zimbabwe's independence in 1980, there have been efforts by the new regime meant to empower the formerly underprivileged indigenous black population through land reform, creation of small businesses, ownership of properties and education, agricultural capitalisation, corporate shareholding allotment and community ownership of mines and other industries amongst others. However, other quarters have argued that black economic empowerment did not start after the 1980 independence. Rather, it is argued that the initial moves were recorded in 1896 when blacks resisted the takeover of their land by the British colonialists in what was called the '*First Chimurenga*'. However, most of them have failed because of a variety of reasons<sup>1</sup>.

Like any other progressive African state, Nigeria has also crafted its economic policies. However, some of the policies have failed either to reach fruition or to bear the expected results. As a result, some of the Nigerian population especially the most impatient but creative and initiative, have gone abroad to seek greener pastures. During the hunt, some have found their new homes in Zimbabwe where they have either established businesses both legal and illegal and established families. It is therefore the intention of this discussion to closely look at the Zimbabwe/Nigeria relations at local level especially with regards to potential conflicts over scarce economic opportunities, which the former allege are being grabbed and depleted by the latter.

## Background

Following the liberalization of Zimbabwe's economy in 1990, which immediately witnessed its sudden demise, there was an upsurge in the coming of people from various countries who intended to either invest economically or to look for employment. Amongst some of these economic refugees were Nigerians who presently according to the Nigerian Consular<sup>ii</sup> and the Nigerian community stands at over 6000, unofficially as some of them are not legally registered while some often shuttle between Zimbabwe and South Africa.

Zimbabwe has a total population of over 12 million people of which over 38% live in the cities like Harare, Bulawayo, Chitungwiza, Mutare and Gweru amongst others<sup>iii</sup>. The majority of the population (about 70%) lives in the rural areas where they survive on subsistence farming. Most of the rural dwellers were forced as they could not secure either jobs or economic opportunities in the urban areas. Officially, according to Zimstats<sup>iv</sup>, Zimbabwe has the highest literacy rate in Africa staggering at over 92% and over 88% female literacy rate. However, despite the abundance of resources, Zimbabwe has become one of the poorest economies in Africa with unemployment rate standing at over 85% as of 2014 and the majority failing to access a \$1.25/day livelihood though the government has repeatedly argued unemployment rate to be at 15%<sup>v</sup>. This figure has however been described as political.

Ever since the Bretton Woods imposed Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) in 1990, Zimbabwe's economy has not enjoyed any growth. It was further worsened in 1997 when the government arbitrarily awarded hefty gratuities to former liberation war fighters popularly known as war veterans, which saw inflation rising from 17% to 70% overnight<sup>vi</sup>. Most of the economic sectors closed country wide rendering thousands of people jobless. However, the economic crisis of 2006 to 2009 marked the final collapse of an ailing economy resulting in the total closure of the retail services. This was the era when the Chinese and Nigerian nationals moved in to open clothing and food shops, hair salons, and liquor and bakery shops amongst other businesses.

After the 2009-crafted coalition government, the economy started to shape up with inflation normalizing from 131 million percent to 6% overnight<sup>vii</sup>. Most of the economic sectors began to see light with some indigenous people venturing back into both formal and informal businesses. However, by that time, most of the lucrative areas and strategic locations had already been occupied by some foreign nationals, much to the disappointment of most Zimbabweans. This situation left over 80% of the Zimbabwean adult population engaged in informal businesses.

### **Methodology**

The study was conducted in Harare through a mixed method approach which sought to accommodate both qualitative and quantitative data. A combination of Action research and document analysis drew 10 face-to-face interviewees from both the Zimbabwean and Nigerian communities and archival and policy documents from 2000 up till 2014. Five respondents from each; Zimbabwean and Nigerians were randomly selected from the business operators in the Gulf Mall in Harare and expected to respond to the following issues:

- The nature of respective investments in the mall.
- The statistics of employment generated and how many locals had been absorbed.
- The type and amount of capital injected and the mood of neighbouring operators.
- The relations amongst the business operators.

The study was carried out in the City of Harare around an area called downtown on the peri-phery of the central business district to the west of the CBD. Precisely, the location was at The Gulf Mall between Chinhoyi and Mbuya Nehanda Streets and between Bute and Bank Avenues. The mall accommodates over 200 small business operators though at the time of the study, another section of the building was undergoing some renovations. It is next to The Market Square Bus Terminus which services most of the south-western high density suburbs and so becomes a busy shopping mall in almost the entire Harare city centre. Data was analysed using Constant Comparison method based in grounded theory approach. Constant comparison method identified themes across transcripts before they were then applied consistently for coding using Atlas.ti software.

### **Nigerians in Zimbabwe**

The Nigerian population in Zimbabwe and in particular Harare is not so significant that they impact negatively on the local social resources. However, what has drawn most attention is the activities that they are into and efficiency through which they conduct their deals. Nigeria is the largest country in Africa and seventh largest in the world with a population of about 167 million<sup>viii</sup>. Every year, thousands of Nigerians<sup>ix</sup> cross the borders for different reasons including; better education, security, employment, improved social amenities, reliable health care<sup>x</sup> and even ignorance.

In Harare, most Nigerians live in an area called the Avenues which is a residential area in the city centre. While this area is vast, Nigerians are mostly concentrated between Fifth Street and Ninth Street and between Samora Machel Avenue and Baines Avenue. This is about one and half kilometer squared area and is a walking distance from the central business district. The area is also popular for its levels of prostitution by commercial sex workers. Apparently in Zimbabwe prostitution is a prohibited activity. There are serious concerns from the civil society and city fathers that most of the commercial sex workers in this area are sustained by foreigners who pay lavishly and live as bachelors. It has however not been established as to who in particular is involved in this activity as it is mostly conducted nicodemously for fear of arrests. The area is also infested with illegal lodges where accommodation for prospective candidates and participants is easily and affordably available at an average rate of US\$10-\$15/hour.

The migration of Nigerians into Zimbabwe is very much different from that of Zimbabweans either into South Africa or Britain whereby the latter are ready to take up any job that comes their way on account of desperation. With Nigerians in Zimbabwe, they decide to settle with some Naira in their pockets and ready to invest in some

venture or another depending on the profitability of that business. Besides, Nigerians are a well-knit community that helps each other when it comes to investments in foreign land.

### **Zimbabwe's Empowerment Thrust**

Indigenous economic empowerment has been at the centre of black Zimbabweans since time immemorial though it may not have been deliberately implemented. This is shown by the black resistance to the early land occupations and confiscation of black resources by the colonial Europeans during the 1894-96 first war of liberation. However, deliberately and most recently, the Zimbabwean government enacted an Indigenous and Economic Empowerment<sup>xi</sup> law in 2007 which sought to ensure that black Zimbabweans who had been previously disadvantaged were now accessible to a share of the economic resources. To some extent, this was complementing the land reform efforts which accessed over 300 000 blacks to bigger and more viable pieces of farming land.

Zimbabwe's foreign policy agenda is basically to defend and improve the security and esteem of the country politically and economically. It is also designed to improve the quality of life of Zimbabweans through collaboration with other countries at different points in order to impact the behaviour of other stakeholders so that the international setting is conducive to the attainment of the set goals. The Black Empowerment and Indigenisation legislation amongst other issues preserved some areas which were deemed less capitalized and least specialized so much so that even Zimbabweans could also operate them without difficulties. Some of these<sup>xii</sup> include the following<sup>xiii</sup> (p.10-11);

'Barber shops, hairdressing and beauty salons have been deliberately preserved for the locals especially the youth. It is a field which is usually taken up by the unemployed school-leavers and some who would have failed to secure other sectors of their dreams.

Employment agencies, advertising agencies and estate agencies were also identified for indigenous entrepreneurs simply for their low cost capital requirements.

Primary production of food and cash crops through the land reform that was recently completed has been reserved for the local players. That way, it avails markets for the producers so that they do not get stuck with their produce.

The transport business such like passenger buses, taxis and car hire services are some of the economic activities which indigenous Zimbabweans have successfully ventured. The sector does not require sophisticated foreign investment or expertise.

The retail and wholesale trade is also considered a low expertise sector which local businesspeople could easily take up.

The arts and craft, marketing and distribution industry has also been left solely for indigenous players since it does not require foreign expertise. Besides, it is one of the sectors that have created employment for the idle youth especially along the high-ways and in resort towns.

Valet services and bakeries are some of the production and processing sectors which do not require outsiders to invest. Rather, these are some of the sectors which have created jobs for the traditionally idle women and men in the townships.

The tobacco grading and packaging sector was identified for the local players considering the fact that it also affords an opportunity to the local farmers to add value on some of their produce. The same argument similarly applies to the milk industry which has also been preserved for indigenous entrepreneurs'.

### **Xenophobia in South Africa**

Xenophobia<sup>xiv</sup> is generally considered an attitude socialized towards aggression against non-natives in a given population. It is generally defined as the dislike of foreigners because of various reasons ranging from political, social, and ethnic to economic. In South Africa, xenophobic attacks are generally targeted at Somalis, Mozambicans, Zimbabweans, Nigerians and Pakistanis amongst others. These groups are targeted for the following reasons; Somalis, Pakistanis and Nigerians run businesses which South Africans believe could be operated by locals whilst Zimbabweans and Mozambicans are treated as threats on the job markets. Actually, these foreigners are known to sell their labour at far below the market rates largely out of desperation thereby

shutting local labourers out of the market.

In South Africa, it has actually become a trend that locals attack foreigners whom they feel are threats in some area. In 2008, thousands of refugee workers and job seekers were displaced amidst serious ransacking and vandalism to foreign-owned property and businesses. The South African based Consortium for Refugees and Migrants in South Africa<sup>xv</sup> (n.d) has revealed that assaults on migrants had drastically gone up with an average of one person per week being killed, a hundred more injured whilst over a thousand were being displaced during the same time span.

From the manner in which events unfold in South Africa, it seems as if the authorities have either failed to control the local population or it leaves citizens killing migrants knowing that they have no solution to the needs of the South Africans. Each time xenophobia attacks start, the responsible authorities take time to respond and yet they would have already either heard of the plans or observed a deteriorating situation on the ground. Such xenophobic attacks have repeatedly strained relations both at the grassroots and at international levels.

### Results and Analysis

After closely analyzing the results of the data collected using the grounded approach, various themes and interesting issues emerged and have been discussed below thematically.

#### Nigerians' Investments

Since the liberalization of the Zimbabwean economy during the Economic Structural Adjustment (ESAP) of 1990, Nigerians and other nationals from West Africa; Senegal, Guinea, Democratic Republic of Congo and some Somalis and Chinese have flooded Zimbabwe operating business establishments that range from electrical shops, clothing boutiques, and communication gadgets and accessories, motor spares, hair salons, liquor and restaurants amongst others. This has shut out indigenous potential players.

**Fig. 1** The study established the following sector distribution from the Gulf Mall;

| Sector        | Zimbabweans | Chinese   | Nigerians | others    |
|---------------|-------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Clothing      | 15          | 22        | 29        | 3         |
| Electrical    | 0           | 5         | 3         | 2         |
| Communication | 13          | 11        | 19        | 7         |
| Motor spares  | 3           | 1         | 3         | 3         |
| Hair salons   | 4           | 2         | 4         | 0         |
| Liquor        | 1           | 0         | 3         | 1         |
| Restaurants   | 0           | 3         | 2         | 0         |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>36</b>   | <b>44</b> | <b>63</b> | <b>16</b> |

Out of the 159 established business ventures within the mall, it was established that there are basically 7 sectors which are run by various nationalities while others are isolated as shown in the table above. Out of the sampled businesses, it was noted that Zimbabweans run 23%, Chinese run 28%, Nigerians run 40% while others run 10% of the businesses. However, there were sentiments that were circulating through grapevine that some of the Zimbabwean businesses were actually owned by Nigerians and Chinese whose residence documents were not in order while others were informally married to Zimbabwean women who were acting as business fronts. This again adds on the percentage of Nigerian run ventures. It could not however be established whether a venture was legal or not as most of the business operators felt that issues around registration and membership were confidential and could not be discussed. What could only be established were Health and fitness and Municipality levy certificates which were in most cases displayed on the walls. It was also established that a sizeable number of Zimbabwean operators were actually renting premises from Nigerians who had secured lease contracts from the estate agent ahead of the locals during the economic crisis era.

#### Inter-Marriages

The study established that like any other human beings, Nigerians and other nationals sought to settle wherever they went so that whatever their endeavors could also prosper. It was established that as the economy in Nigeria had long failed to accommodate the ever rising population numbers, there had been a deliberate effort towards helping nationals out for what was considered 'greener pastures'.

Out in the 'greener pastures', some Nigerians found themselves engaged in marriages; formal or otherwise. The participants pointed out some of the reasons for these marriages.

- The majority sought to secure their residence and business permits as a way of protecting their business deals.
- Some also married so that they could use the spouses as fronts for their businesses.
- Others had married so that they could genuinely establish families.
- There were also isolated instances when other Nigerians married to use the spouses as drug mules.
- There were some marriages that were designed to ensure that local spouses 'greased' the corridors of bureaucracy.
- In other instances, some Nigerians married blindly women who were bent on milking their wealth only.
- Some got married through blackmail as the spouses might have stumbled on their illicit deals.

It was also established that most of the Nigerians in Zimbabwe were male with an enterprising and audacious mind. Rarely were females met within these business circles.

#### Why Nigerians go Abroad

The five participants proffered varied reasons for leaving their homeland. However, out of the five participants who were interviewed, three gave out that they had been motivated by the desire to find descent jobs in new environments after they had failed to secure employment soon after college. During the period they had tried to seek employment in Lagos, they had almost got a point where they were giving in to some offers in illicit deals by some drug barons and others. Because they believed that they had some talent and knowhow in business management and entrepreneurship, it did not take time before they (separately) decided to leave their country. One of the respondents expressed the following;

*"Nigerian government needs to educate Nigerians in Naija that life abroad is not that rosy 'obodo oyinbo'. They think that abroad, they can just pick dollars on the streets or pluck from the trees. Most people who try to leave Naija have no idea what life is like out there"*

In the case of two others, they had first targeted to settle in South Africa before moving to Zimbabwe whilst the other one had travelled through Namibia. One of the participants who had briefly lived in Namibia gave out that most Nigerians the world-over were hard-working people who could transform a poor society into a thriving one; creative and initiative to bring about new business ventures probably unknown to local people. He added that Nigerians could survive anywhere and prosper anywhere in the world. The other participant gave out that he only came to Zimbabwe following an invitation by a relative who had opened a clothing boutique in the central business district of Harare. He however pointed out that while most of the infrastructure in Nigeria was dilapidated, in some of the countries where Nigerians were going, the same infrastructure was also obsolete and grounded down. He said,

*"Most of the people out of Nigeria were stuck there and could not return home out of possible embarrassment as most are not doing well; engaged in criminal and other immoral jobs"*

#### Indigenous Resentment

Some of the causes of conflicts include economic, political, and social inequalities; poor government services; high unemployment; environmental degradation; serious poverty; economic stagnation; and individual incentives to engage in disturbances. The world over, there have been reports of conflicts and even large scale wars that have been caused by scarcity of resources like food, jobs and operating spaces, albeit supported by the existence of other conditions; level of economic empowerment, culture of violence, level of citizen gullibility, experience in violence, governance system, level of authoritarianism, ready organizer, alternative voice, and level of literacy amongst others. This is what the study established with regards to the occupation of the Gulf Mall in Harare.

What was also established is that all Zimbabwean respondents did indicate that there was indeed a potential protest targeted at some foreigners who were competing with locals for menial jobs and small scale businesses reminiscent of the relative deprivation theory scenario. These participants did cite the following reasons for a potential xenophobic attack;

There was a culture of impunity especially within the ZANU PF rank and structures, which made perpetrators of violence, feel that there is nothing that befalls them.

There were also some people within the same constituency who had gone on a corporate share looting spree without any reprimand. Therefore, the same people had the potential to launch a serious and destructive xenophobic attack on some of the identified nationalities especially Chinese and Nigerians. According to the participants, some economic quarters had since raised some concern at how some of these foreigners were



unfairly conducting business at the expense of locals. One business operator said,  
*“Madzikisiro anoita vamwe vedu maprice haasi sustainable zvekuti tichanetsana, inguva chete. Vachazvisiya vachimhanya”*

(The way these guys are reducing their prices is unsustainable that we are soon going to clash. It’s a question of time before they leave these businesses in a huff).

The other reason cited was that most of the foreign business operators and nationalities in general competed with the poorest local Zimbabweans to eke out a menial living. It was felt that the problem was two-pronged; the government had failed to put in place a deliberate policy to cushion locals from foreign competition and that locals had become too lenient and tolerant that they were being disadvantaged in most sectors of the economy.

It was also given that Zimbabwe had grown into a semi-jungle where individuals could assume informal but powerful authority so much so that they could determine who invested where and how and collected taxes without any reprimand. It was revealed that one cabinet minister had collected rentals from government buildings in Harare for over two years whilst another political party youth had also collected rentals from one of the biggest and busiest flea markets in Harare depriving the Municipality and government of millions of dollars in revenue.

There was also a strong belief within the people, according to the participants, that the unsustainable socio-economic burden was being created by the influx of migrants. It was given out that had it not been of the coming of the migrants and some business operators, some of the economic and social ills would not have been experienced. Effectively, this meant that there was a possibility by the same constituency to steer or support hatred towards foreigners.

Four of the foreign respondents gave out that the fact that some Zimbabweans were also victims of xenophobic attacks could also create a fertile ground for the retaliatory approach by locals against any foreigner. The same foreign respondents also suggested that the rate at which poverty was building in Zimbabwe was also likely to push some unemployed locals to resort to attacks on foreigners who were leading better lives compared to some locals.

Other local (3) respondents did indicate that some of the foreign business operators inclusive of Indians, Nigerians, Pakistanis and Chinese, were operating without formal bank accounts, a scenario which negatively affected local financial liquidity. It was also revealed that Zimbabweans have been further angered by some populist policies by the ruling regime, that have continually failed to benefit the locals. This is coming from the backdrop whereby Zimbabwean authorities had in 2013 given foreign small-scale business operators, mostly Chinese, Pakistani and Nigerian nationals, a deadline to cease their operations by 1 January 2014, but that ultimatum had to be extended by 5 years. The same respondents added that some of the businesses had been registered in some locals’ names as a way of evading detection. This was also explained by an increase in marriages of convenience between Zimbabwean women and foreign men.

#### International Relations

It was also disclosed that despite the brotherly relations between Zimbabwe and Nigeria, of late there seemed to be some fall out following President Robert Mugabe’s undiplomatic utterances during his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday celebrations, which suggested that Nigeria was a corrupt nation. According to Mathuthu<sup>xvi</sup>, President Mugabe had uttered the following statement, which was however protested by the Nigerian Foreign Relations department.

*“Are we now in Nigeria where you have to reach your pocket to get anything done?” ‘We used to go to Nigeria and every time we went there we had to carry extra cash to corruptly pay for everything. You get into a plane in Nigeria and the crew keeps dilly dallying without taking off as they wait for you to pay them to take off.”*

Mugabe’s statement followed an aborted plan to arbitrarily take-over all businesses run by foreigners<sup>xvii</sup>; the majority of whom were Nigerians. However, prior to that, Nigeria’s Foreign Relations department had also protested rampant arrests of Nigerian nationals in Zimbabwe purportedly involved in shoddy activities. The brotherly relationship that has traditionally existed between Harare and Lagos, according to some participants had long fizzled out as evidenced by the snubbing of Zimbabwe’s calls by Nigeria to boycott the Africa/European Union Summit held in April 2014 in Brussels as a collective protest to the denial of a visa to Mugabe’s wife. However, other participants argued that the Zimbabwe/Nigeria stand-off was first experienced in 2004 when former Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo refused to invite President Mugabe to Commonwealth

summit in Abuja in 2004 and supported the decision to extend Zimbabwe's suspension from the Commonwealth group. This was further compounded by Harare's accusations that Lagos was financing an opposition political party in Zimbabwe to unseat Mugabe during the 2005 plebiscite. However, it must be noted that President Mugabe has always been one of the most undiplomatic leaders in Africa having caused storms following these utterances.

*"2014 - Europe has an 'evil heart' - after the EU refused Grace Mugabe a visa to attend EU-Africa Summit held in Brussels.*

*2012 - Jamaican men are 'drunkards who are perennially hooked on Marijuana.'*

*2001 - 'Strike fear into the heart of the white man our real enemy, make him tremble.'*

*2000 - Mbare urban dwellers are 'totem-less people.' (Mbare is a suburb in Harare)*

*2000 - British government was led by 'gay gangsters.'*

*1995 - During the Zimbabwe Book Fair, the gay community was 'worse than dogs and pigs'.*

*1992 - White commercial farmers were so 'hard hearted you would think they were Jews.'"*

### Social Interactions

It was established during the study that most Nigerians were sociable people who had time to interact with other groups in various circles. While it was acknowledged that as a small and isolated community, they had their closed relations, by and large, the group could easily mix in society.

Within this neighbourhood, according to some participants, Nigerians meet during closed door get-together parties, watching football and other national celebrations. They also have specific drinking places around town where they meet as a particular group, some of which owned by fellow Nigerians. This is a group that is known for its lavish spending habits especially when surrounded by Zimbabwean women; which irritates some Zimbabwean men who feel threatened by the presence of Nigerians and other nationals. During their get-together parties, it is said that Nigerians share business and other 'deals' ideas and how to perfect their conduct. In short, it was established that most Nigerians are enterprising, bold, united, risk-takers, initiative, innovative, practical, ascetic, optimistic, spongy, flexible and careful about money, confident goal-setters and persistent.

It was also established that most immigrants normally do not live at one place for a period of more than two years before they returned to their home countries either to invest profits or to visit families and spouses. Since most immigrants, Nigerians included, do not typically take part in formal employment which guarantees going back to the same area, they tended to be extremely mobile. This was also attributed to the fact that some were involved in illicit deals and therefore wanted to evade surveillance by security authorities.

Other participants revealed that none of the foreign immigrants, no matter their residence status, invested locally in infrastructure like properties. It was observed that most of the foreigners' investments were in electrical and household goods and motor vehicles which they could easily dispose if need to relocate came about. However, there was an isolated case of one prominent Nigerian who had built two properties in the city downtown along Mbuya Nehanda Street and was leasing the properties to locals while personally running prominent night clubs. The same business people had a record of not opening bank accounts where they banked their profits thereby contributing to the liquidity crunch being experienced in Zimbabwe.

### Conflict Areas

The study established that the presence of some immigrants, their business investments and the involvement of local women had in most cases led to various conflicts. The nature of the conflicts varied from micro to macro where the aggrieved could either bottle-up or openly show annoyance in some cases through reporting any excesses to the local security agents for prosecution.

Some Zimbabwean respondents did indicate that some foreign operators were in the habit of monopolizing source markets of some commodities on demand on the market as a way of ensuring a gradual demise of locals. Therefore, in response, some local operators were resorting to either physical threats or sending gangsters to perpetrate violence or terror.

*'A typical case cited was one of a Nigerian called Okeke who previously operated shops at the Gulf Mall in the early 2000. Following a carefully orchestrated plan by his local rivals, he was set-up in a love triangle with a local married woman. Unidentified gangsters abducted him and cut off his legs at knee level before he was dumped at one of his shops. Okeke eventually left the country disabled'.*

Another type of conflict noted, according to participants involved survival sex on the part of foreigners. Because most of the immigrants lived without their spouses, they often sought sexual services either from local sex

workers or other women married or otherwise. Some of the local women were so desperate for marriage that they were keen engaging with foreigners with the hope of eventually leaving the country for what they believed were 'better pastures'. Others simply got attracted to the foreigners' wealth. It is important to note that there may not be any poor or destitute Nigerian or Chinese national in Zimbabwe as all are in Zimbabwe because of business ventures. Therefore they are all economically sound and all attractive to local desperate women. However, there are some Zimbabwean men who would want to compete with some of these immigrants on women while some have their spouses grabbed from them thereby creating enmity and conflicts.

Some participants did indicate that some foreign business operators were in the habit of abusing their local workers by directing them to work long hours and during some important national holidays and yet gave them no incentive. The question about exploitation and coercion on the part of these foreigners was said to have been raised at some meeting convened by Gulf business operators sometime in 2012 but no solution was crafted. Some desperate local women workers were being forced into sexual relationships by their employers anticipating securing their jobs and getting other benefits.

It was established that most of the foreign business operators had some incomplete documentation or another so much so that their operation of business needed regularization. Realizing this anomaly, some local security agents were demanding bribes monthly as a protection levy. In other cases where all the documentation might be in order, the same business operators were being forced to part with their profits for fear of facing crafted charges meant to fix them. In other words, some security agents' extorted money regularly from these foreigners who were not familiar with local laws and in some instances not ready to spend hours locked up in police cells to clarify issues.

There were some participants who alleged that some of the Nigerian business operators were making use of some magic/juju to boost their investments. It was however suspected by the researchers that the allegations might have been motivated by the popular belief in Zimbabwe that Nigerians were into juju as depicted in most Nigerian movies. Whether the allegation of juju had any substance or not, it could not be ascertained due to the sensitivity of the issue and lack of tangible evidence.

### Conclusion

While it is acknowledged that economic resources in Zimbabwe are scarce and that some are being consumed by immigrants, the common belief that there may be conflicts over their allocation and use may be far-fetched. It is common knowledge in Zimbabwe that a sizeable chunk of the economic resources are in the hands of the few foreigners while the locals are engaged as workers and in the majority of cases being abused as they earn too little for a decent living. We have argued in our other research paper to be published as a book chapter by BUSE Press in 2014 titled 'Unemployment and Conflict in Zimbabwe: An Analysis and Resolution', that the common belief that poverty causes conflicts is not that simple and self-flowing. Rather, conflicts and violence manifest only if other conditions are present like 'governance system, level of repression, level of economic empowerment, level of citizen naivety, experience in violence, willing organizer, alternative voice, and level of literacy and a general culture of violence'<sup>xviii</sup>. It is the submission of this study that people in Harare, while they are suffering economically, may never engage in violence or any form of conflict with local immigrants for the following reasons; level of civilization, tolerance, *unhu/Ubuntu*, culture of peace and good neighbourliness, creativity and hard-working and fear that in the process they might destroy their valuables amongst others. However, it must pointed out that immigrants who have successfully invested in any form of business in Zimbabwe must be encouraged to make use of formal systems like banks, formal cargo facilities and proper labour regulations amongst others.

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<sup>xviii</sup> See v.

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