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FREE MARKETS, FREE WOMEN? CHANGING CONCEPTIONS OF CITIZENSHIP AND GENDER RELATIONSHIPS AMONG WOMEN CROSS-BORDER TRADERS IN CONTEMPORARY SOUTHERN AFRICA

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A research report submitted to the Faculty of Arts, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

Johannesburg, 1998

Abstract

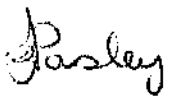
This research report explores the ways in which the networks of women cross-border traders challenge or affirm traditional conceptions of citizenship and gender relations. Located within the context of globalisation and the associated liberalisation policies, it analyses what types of social relationships are necessary to participate in the market and how through these economic activities, social relationships are subsequently shaped.

The context of globalisation is transforming the southern African region. Women cross-border traders are used as a lens through which to investigate the effects of these transformations on relationships between states, within states and within households. Borders are used as a metaphor to analyse the ways in which the networks of women cross-borders influence, alter or challenge social relations.

Women cross-border reflect a contradictory response to the effects of liberalisation which is seen to erode local and pre-market relationships. The women enter into trading due to negative economic effects of liberalisation and in the process challenge gender relations through their economic autonomy. Their networks are however rooted in relationships that are local and familiar, particularly female-based kinship networks. Women cross-border traders provide evidence of bounded liberation for despite their economic assertiveness, they fail to launch an unified challenge to the patriarchal structures of the state.

Declaration

I declare that this research report is my own unaided work. It is submitted for the degree of Master of Arts in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination in any other university.



Jenny Parsley

2.12.98

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Economic crises and the subsequent liberalisation policies have resulted in a burgeoning of the informal economic sector. With reference to gender relations, women have increasingly had to leave the home and enter into income-generating activities. This is transforming social relations in the region including relations between states, within states and within the household.

The economic changes in the region have resulted in the generation of new forms of income-generating activities. For women, this development is contradictory in that increased economic burdens can create new opportunities for economic autonomy and thus the potential to alter oppressive gender relations in both the private and public spheres.

The key focus of the research will be to explore the ways in which the networks of women cross-border traders challenge or affirm traditional conceptions of citizenship and gender relations. It explores what types of social relationships are necessary to engage with the market and how, through these economic activities, social relationships are subsequently shaped. With reference to their trading networks, this research investigates whether such networks transcend ethnicity, religion and national identity; or whether these are strengthened through cross-border trading networks.

This research also explores issues around borders. Firstly, to what extent does cross-border trading break or affirm the notions of territoriality associated with the state? Secondly, it looks at social borders/boundaries that these activities brings into question. These include societal boundaries confining women within particular roles within society, the household and the economy. It explores the possibility of women generating new boundaries within which their networks operate.

In order to achieve this, twelve women were interviewed, all of whom are engaged in craft and curio trade. They work from four markets around Johannesburg: these are the Rosebank Rooftop market, the Bree street market (next to the Market Theatre), Fourways and the Bruma flea market. 5 of the women are from Zimbabwe, 2 from Kenya, 3 from Swaziland, 1 from Cameroon and 1 from Venda. The women were chosen on the basis of their willingness to be interviewed.

Chapter Two outlines the literature surveyed which provided the foundation for the report. Most of the literature, however, focuses on male migrants and where a gender analysis has been conducted, it appears to have been confined to the dynamics within states. The literature highlights economic aspects through detailed analysis of the effects of Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) and how this has led to declining living conditions. Fairly extensive literature exists on the effects of SAPs on women, most of which is also confined to a particular state (Elson, 1992;

Mbilinyi, 1995; Tripp, 1992; Pearson, 1990; Riddell, 1992: Saunders, 1996; Callaghy, 1987).

By contrast, this research contributes to our understanding of the changing social and economic relations in the region through looking at the reasons why women cross borders to trade in South Africa. The emphasis is on their networks and networking activities. Whilst the region is defined geographically and national borders are fixed, networks are ephemeral and subject to mutation. They extend from one country to another, from one market to another and link families, friends and kin. In the process they affect conceptions of citizenship as well as power and social relations between men and women, women and the state, women and other women, women and children.

Chapter Three outlines the methodology used for this research. Reasons why the methodology used differs from the original proposal are discussed. Limitations of the methodology are explored, such as issues of building trust, the unexpected impact that the weather would have and possible limitations of the data which include reliability and generalisability.

The fourth chapter provides a description of the activities undertaken by the women. This chapter explores why the women trade across borders, that is, the causal and structural factors that make cross-border trading an activity that these women undertake. It provides an outline of how their networks operate, what they do, and how they manage their money. It

examines the networks from the initial acquisition of supplies to the production of the goods and finally sales. It traces the network through the women's journeys to South Africa, how they get here, where they get their information from, where they stay, where they trade and their trips back home. It identifies the differing experiences of cross-border traders in South Africa.

The fifth chapter analyses the themes that can be extrapolated from these activities. It examines how participation in the market affects the relationships between the women and the state, and the women and men. It explores the themes of borders and boundaries that these activities bring into question. It investigates the bases of the networks and what relationships determine who is in the network and who is excluded. These themes are linked with conceptions of citizenship and how constant migration influences this.

The final chapter draws these themes together. It addresses the questions of whether liberalisation creates opportunities or is merely a response of necessity. The bases of the women's social and economic networks are highlighted in addressing the question of whether liberalisation erodes pre-market relations or harnesses them as a survival asset essential to these activities. It attempts to syntheses the debates around the state, society, polity and family that these activities and networks generate. It also raises new questions and areas for further research.

There are a number of factors motivating this research, most importantly personal interest in the region due to previous travels. The principal motivation came in a train journey to Cape Town where my fellow travellers were women from Zimbabwe heading to Cape Town to trade in African clothing and embroidery. They spoke of circular migration where they returned to Zambia to complete the economic cycle.

An Honours study tour to Zambia in December 1996 provided further motivation. In the scorching summer heat our entire bus was delayed on the Zimbabwean side of the Chirundu border post. We observed many women with large bags carrying goods to trade in neighbouring countries. All of their bags were thoroughly searched. Much negotiation appeared to be underway with the border officials to allow for the entry of the goods. It contributed to my fascination with this research topic. There appeared to be a form of solidarity amongst the women. This point in the journey revealed engagement with authority and raised questions such as, are the customs officials part of the women's network or are they a hindrance to be overcome and outsmarted? One woman, following the bag search, appeared to remove items from under her dress and thus it is possible that numerous strategies of evasion are employed to avoid the surveillance and regulation of the state. These experiences ignited a spark of curiosity to find out more about how the women operated their business, what kinds of networks and solidarity were necessary to ensure the viability of these activities and what kinds of goods were being traded. It raised questions about these women's power and their relationship with the authority of the

state. This research goes some way in addressing these questions and provides a resource for further research into this stimulating topic.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Globalisation and the trends associated with it are the context in which the study is undertaken. Debates relative to the influence of globalisation as a positive force empowering the individual to pursue economic gain are discussed alongside the critiques which stress its negative impacts on communities and states. This section explores the validity of each contention and also evaluates the possibility that a more contradictory outcome of bounded liberation and empowerment may be likely.

These debates are essential to the core of this study which investigates women cross-border traders' conception of citizenship and gender relations and how these relations influence their activities in the market. The global era which promotes the market as supreme encourages migration and international trade, diminishes the role of the state and alters social relations. Women who engage in cross-border trading challenge many structural relations through independent control of their movements, engaging with the market and possible financial autonomy. The World Bank's view would point to the individual pursuing their individual financial interests whilst critics point to informal sector trading as a strategy to survive the hazards of economic deterioration. A more nuanced view is explored in this study in which liberalisation does afford women the opportunity for economic independence but is at the same time they are constrained through structural relations. It determines to what extent existing social relations are harnessed, eroded or mutated in order to make cross-border trading a viable activity.

The literature review is divided into three main areas. The first of these is the literature on the nature of globalisation and its effects on the SADC region through the enforcement of SAP. This is useful in providing the key structural variables which affect developments within the region. The second section explores debates on migration with special reference to the historic links of labour migration in the region. This section focuses on themes raised in the literature rather than a historical construction of migration in the region. It highlights the ways in which the activities of cross-border women traders are different from migrant labour in that it is an independent activity where the women are not subject to the structures and requirements of organisations such as the mines. The third section looks at network building and issues of citizenship. It examines in what way constant cross-border trading affects women's conceptions of the state, their sense of national identity and relations within the household? A gender analysis is included with reference to all of the above-mentioned sections. It explores how the increased freedom associated with independent travel influences gender relations. With reference to networking, issues of ethnicity, religion and national identity are considered.

The purpose of this section is to explore the developments in the field as well as expose the weaknesses in the literature published thus far.

1. GLOBALISATION

In an attempt to understand the dynamics of the region, it is important to locate it within the current economic context of political and economic liberalisation. Northern financial institutions have, since the early 1980s, been enforcing both economic and political conditionalities in exchange for aid. These are in the form of Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) which focus on increasing production and export trade in order to increase foreign exchange. The key plan is to integrate African economies into the global capitalist economy. This is to be done through "unleashing" the freedom of the market by reducing government intervention. The aim is "getting the prices right" through deregulating the economy to ensure that prices are dictated by supply and demand.

The impact has been generally negative with rising inequality, declining incomes and living standards, and a consequent rise in the informal sector (Harsch, 1993). Amin warns that liberalisation, "will ensnare the economy into deflation and spirals of stagnation, unmanageable at the international level, multiplying conflicts which cannot be mediated, against the empty promises of a future 'healthy' development" (Amin, 1997: 96).

An example cited is Zimbabwe where ESAP was implemented in the 1990s. They have resulted in massive unemployment and falling living standards. According to Saunders, "The Zimbabwean Congress of Trade Unions estimated that about 55 000 jobs were lost up to 1995, about double the figure estimated by the government". This has resulted in a,

"burgeoning informal sector of hawkers, small-scale backyard production and cross-border traders" (Saunders, 1996: 12). The informalisation of the economy has contributed to undermining the ability of urban-based social movements to challenge the current economic trends. This is linked with a cautious attitude that many Zimbabweans take to the state due to the state's propensity to resort to repression when any opposition is evident. The legitimacy which the state enjoyed in the immediate post-independence period has been undermined. Politicians are seen as unaccountable elites, far removed from the reality of the shop floor. Workers develop a sense of fatalism, a preoccupation with immediate survival (Adler et al, 1996). This research explores whether these views of the state as unaccountable as well as the sense of fatalism are prevalent in women cross-border traders and how this influences their strategies and activities as cross-border traders

For Schmitz (1995), the World Bank's approach is based on the questionable premise that competitive capitalist development is empowering. He sees it rather as an exercise of institutional self-preservation whereby elites in the south collaborate with elites in the north. The Bank accepts the hegemony of existing structures and fails to address issues around the unequal structural relations of market power. Amin (1997) argues that history is not shaped by the infallible laws of pure economics. "It is a product of the social relations to the effects of these laws, which in turn define the social relations of the framework within which economic laws operate" (Amin, 1997: 103).

These unequal relations are strongly felt by women who enter the informal sector as a survival strategy, providing a shock absorber to economic crisis in the third world. Mbilinyi (1995) sees SAPs as having serious implications for gender relations in that they fail to challenge the patriarchal structure of global capitalism and are facilitated through the forms of patriarchy within the adjusting country. According to Mbilinyi,

> SAP reproduces the divisions in society between pr[illegible] reproduction and market and non-market activities w[illegible] structured by - and - in turn, structure gender relations
>
> Mbilinyi, 1995: 7

SAPs are seen to reflect a male bias in that they fail to acknowledge the process of reproduction and the maintenance of human resources. Furthermore, these programmes fail to recognise the role of unpaid labour of women and the continuity of pre-market relations in the free market system. Households are viewed as harmonious, homogenous entities. Women are responsible for making ends meet without control over resources and the tensions this generates are ignored in the programmes (Elson, 1992).

These positions are not mutually exclusive. Whilst the Bank may accept existing structural relations of market power, social relations are dynamic and thus activities such as women engaging in cross-border trade can challenge the hegemonic powers. Cross-border women traders could

represent a contradictory outcome of economic liberalisation, for despite the patriarchal structure of global capitalism, certain spaces are generated whc ›by a level of autonomy is claimed by women. Brand et al (1995), in their study of Zimbabwean women in the informal sector, identify cross-border trading as, "One of the few women-dominated branches of the informal sector which appear likely to be profitable for participants and through which certain women can accumulate." (Brand et al, 1995: 135). Independent travel, access to income, the break fr omestic duties and independent organisation and relationships reflect opportunities of autonomy not available where women are confined within the household.

Networks are, however, crucial in ensuring the viability of these activities. Hansen's study of Zimbabwean women traders affirms this.

> To undertake such trade, women have to be familiar with travel and ways to avoid custom inspections... a social network [is a must in that it] provides information about where to shop and a place to sleep.
>
> Hansen, 1990: 152

Responsibility for both production and reproduction allows the possibility of new forms of consciousness amongst women that may have been limited prior to cross-border trading. Brand et al (1995) identify that, "Some women with enough resources to initiate successful trade have actually

been able to benefit from the general atmosphere of liberalisation accompanying ESAP" (Brand et al; 1995:200).

Non market social relations and networks

The proponents of neoliberalism would see the success of certain women as affirming their contention that liberalisation can result in the realisation of individual interests and aspirations through a return to the neoclassical order. Granovetter (1989) challenges this assertion by arguing that economic action is socially constructed and cannot be explained by individual motives alone. He identifies economic action as embedded in ongoing networks of personal relations.

The term networks refers to the set of members who are linked by one or more specific types of relations between them. Historical, cultural and social networks cut across the world system, national, institutional and organisational levels. These networks shape economic behaviour. They are patterns which link people and are defined by resource flows from one member to another, including material goods or information. With reference to women cross-border traders it refers to goods and information as well as the chains linking production, distribution and sales. Networks interlock and operate at multiple levels which may transcend national boundaries and include cultural, economic and social dimensions (Ellison and Gereffi, 1990).

These networks are often founded on personal ties based on mutual trust and reciprocity. Linked with features of a country's historical legacy, networks based on ethnicity, kinship and links with local communities often have the strongest foundations (Gereffi, 1997). Reitzes (1996) affirms this assertion with reference to migrants where she mentions the existence of support networks of friends and family. Brand et al (1995) argues that levels of co-operation are essential for women cros border traders. The main areas whereby co-operation occurs is in the sharing of information about goods, markets and the sharing of transport/accommodation arrangements. Many of the women start by travelling together and gradually establish their own networks. Migrants therefore find it relatively easy to become integrated into "underground geographies".

These "underground geographies" provide the basis upon which the activity of cross-border trading is able to sustain itself. According to Granovetter,

> Economic activity is the activity of co-ordinated social groups rather than isolated individuals ... [Economic institutions] are constructed by individuals whose action is both facilitated and constrained by the structure and resources available in the social networks in which they are embedded
>
> Granovetter, 1989:78

The neoliberal's disregard of social relations therefore fails to recognise the interaction of the market with the social. The key link, for Granovetter, in establishing economic relationships is the ability to trust someone with both authority and resources. Trust is facilitated through a continuous and ongoing relationship where individuals are encouraged to be trustworthy to ensure future financial transactions. Although recognising that close personal ties do not necessarily ensure trust, it is widely accepted that, "In the family ... each is confident that the others can be counted on" (Granovetter, 1992:61).

This challenges the neoclassical and modernisation theorists who assume that through liberalisation, social or kinship obligations will diminish. Globalisation does not necessarily efface pre-existing social relations, rather these may be essential to ensure survival in the market and thus may serve as an asset to those participating in the market. The reliance on the familiar and the local may ensure survival in the global context. Lemarchand (1992) argues that despite the claims that liberalisation will remove informal and unregulated networks, it is likely that these networks will remain but in mutated forms.

Tripp's (1994) study of women's organisations in Tanzania and Uganda, however, points to an arena where groups have rejected sectarianism. She attributes this to women's common interests in fighting for greater inclusivity in the process of political liberalisation. Tanzania and Uganda experienced state decline and economic crises," but out of these crises

new spaces of associational life emerged." (Tripp, 1994: 111). She suggests that opportunities exist for women to redefine themselves through a recognition of their own capabilities and thereby to challenge boundaries, expand the horizons of women's experience and redraw borders. This research explores both Tripp's and Lemarchand's assertions by probing the foundations of the women's networks, the ways in which they are established and how trust is maintained to ensure their trading activities are viable. It examines the implications these have for reinforcing or eroding existing relations defined in terms of ethnicity, kinship or locality.

Women and Men

For women, the "freedom" of the market reflects not only emancipation from economic subservience, but an added burden of both domestic work and the task of reproducing goods and services. Elson points out that women would gain if sexual divisions in the household were to change, but no social system of incentives is implemented to encourage change. For most women she argues, "the choice is not between dependence on the state and independence, but between dependence on the state and dependence on a man" (Elson, 1995: 38).

This research explores this assertion by Elson and interrogates whether this bipolar division is valid. It probes whether new spaces are generated where some levels of independence are claimed. Brand et al's (1995) study of Zimbabwean women in the informal sector identified female

kinship based working partnerships. This research investigates whether the woman's choice extends beyond dependence on the state and dependence on a man through creating a new space in which a level of independence can actually be claimed.

For Tripp (1992), the contributions of women in Tanzania are crucial to survival. The growing importance of female income transforms the household division of labour and has altered gender relations. "Informal activities have not merely supplemented male wage employment but have been necessary for sustaining the entire urban economy throughout the years of unprecedented hardships" (in Feldman, 1992: 21). She identifies the promotion of small-scale and informal enterprises as long term consequences of the processes of global restructuring that need to be included in nation-based industrial policy formulation.

In terms of changing gender relations, Tripp (1992) sees men as more willing to accept women's increased control of their own wages, but less willing to share household labour. Brand et al's (1995) study of Zimbabwean women informal sector traders concurs with these findings. They find that men are threatened by women's control of their own money. For cross-border traders this is exacerbated as many of their husbands fear that their women will be unfaithful whilst trading in the other country. On the other hand, they have got used to the financial contribution that their wives make. Cultural factors therefore impinge on these activities, but are also modified in the process during which these activities are

undertaken. Women in the informal sector therefore have more decision-making powers within their households.

This research explores to what extent women cross-border traders are prosperous informal sector traders and possibly more able to take control of their situation. This is mentioned in Hansen's study of women small-scale traders in Zambia. These women undertook shopping trips to neighbouring countries in order to buy commodities for resale in Zambia. She describes it as, "A risky business, but a profitable one" (Hansen, 1990: 152). This raises interesting questions of their conceptions of the state and citizenship. If the state - as a consequence of SAPs - can no longer play its role as provider of social services, and men - through retrenchments and rising unemployment - are unable to be of any support, then women are forced to enter into the economic sphere. Thus, gender relations are redefined not only with reference to the state, but also within the household. Cross-border women traders could reflect a form of contradictory liberation, but notwithstanding increased economic burdens, a certain group of women, are afforded the possibility of increased freedom and power. Cross-border women traders could furthermore contribute to changing class relations whereby some women gain power over some men and therefore alter patterns of domination.

Women and the land

Despite the World Bank's focus on building agriculture, Mbilinyi (1995) says that SAPs undermine sustainability of small-holder agriculture and

increase the subordination of working people to the market. With reference to women, the position is exacerbated in that most women have rights to land, but not ownership thereof. This could also affect the ability of women to migrate. Women without ties to the land and in need of income may feel that the only option for accumulation/survival is to leave the land.

In the case of Tanzania, Mbilinyi (1995) highlights contradictory outcomes of liberalisation. There are beneficiaries, especially large-scale producers and commercial interests. The shops become filled with imported goods, but at the expense of those previously produced locally. There is an increase in rural impoverishment due to a rising cost of living and the expulsion of women and children from smallholder farming into the labour market as cheap, casual labour (Mbilinyi, 1992: 12).

This research explores an alternative option whereby women are not fully integrated into the capitalist market as some factors of production are secured through non-market relations. Women who do manage to retain access to the land as well as gain income through trading, would fall into category of petty commodity producers. Petty commodity producers pursue a variety of income-generating activities necessary for survival, other than farming. This activity is well theorised by Bernstein who argues that, "The fate of most poor peasants today is their marginalisation as agricultural, petty commodity producers: even if they retain access to some land, the major part of their livelihood has to come from activities other

than farming." (Bernstein, 1994: 62). The concept of petty commodity production means that women are both capitalists and workers at the same time. They own or have access to their means of production, but are also workers in that they utilise their own labour power. Petty commodity producers are differentiated and unstable in that they have to produce their own means of production and labour with great risk and limited opportunity. They are affected by conditions of access to resources, nature, markets and government policies. Petty commodity producers are constituted by capitalist relations of productions with internally contradictory social relations - in other words, they are self-exploitative.

The literature provides evidence of contradictory outcomes of the global influences. The decline in the ability of the state to provide social services, as well as the decline in the ability of males to support the household, have resulted in shifts in the relations between the state and civil society and relations within civil society, especially gender relations. The outward orientation promotes trade and the ability of women to operate in different countries should therefore be facilitated through the creation of a more enabling trading environment. Indeed SADC has adopted trade liberalisation and a commitment to regionalism based on a free trade model (Gibb, 1997). Links within the region are, however, not new and have existed in various forms prior to the global context.

2. MIGRATION

Migrancy has been a phenomenon in southern Africa long predating the implementation of SAPs. These include both zones of warfare and corridors of trade. Migrancy and the promotion of trade have occurred under formal arrangements such as the Southern African Customs Union which dates back to the colonial era, and the more recent Southern African Development Community (SADC) into which South Africa was incorporated in 1995 (Gibb, 1997).

Economic interdependence was facilitated through the migrant labour system which since colonialism has been a feature of the region. Solomon (1993) affirms that the contract labour system has been a centuries old structure of trans-national migration which criss-crossed the sub-continent. He points out that the, "incentive to migrate was further sharpened by the effects of economic structural adjustment programmes." (Solomon, 1993: 13). Most migration has been circular with migrants returning to their home destinations after periods of work or trade in another territory.

Cross-border trading differs from migrant labour in that the activities undertaken are autonomous and self-exploitative in nature. There is, however, much to learn from consideration of the similarities between these activities. Much can be gleaned from the ways in which migrants construct themselves in the new place by developing contexts of familiarity, the utilisation of networks for support as well as information and

the sharing of resources. These relationships are based on a common history which facilitates trust.

Harrie's (1994) study on Mozambican migrants in South Africa from 1860 to 1910, concentrates on the manner in which workers construct new ways of seeing themselves in a new context. His study of male migrants looks at how they mobilised, adapted and shaped available cultural resources to construct their own notions of social inclusion and exclusion, mutuality, morality and self-worth. The men, "carved a new social space for themselves through communal activities ranging from eating and drinking. dancing and fighting, to church and school going." (Harries, 1994: 56). They built their own society based on what was comprehensible and familiar. He refers to the miner's gaze as constantly directed towards the rural home. "Black miners, " he argues, "did not see themselves reflected as a class in the eyes of their employers and constructed narrower identities bound by conformity to their own norms and standards, values, beliefs and ideals." (Ibid, 224).

Van Onselen's (1976) study of migrant workers to the mines in southern Africa at the turn of the century affirms the links within the region. He describes the mining industry as set within a regional economic system which embraced a large geographic area covering southern and central Africa. Labour agents scoured the region in search of workers in attempts to trap the poorest into long contracts with low wages. In order to retain their independent status, workers adopted creative and complex strategies

which included subtle processes of knowledge sharing. Information was essential if Africans were to succeed in 'working the system'. Returning workers would inform other aspirant miners in their villages of wages and conditions in the various mines. This would subsequently affect labour flows. This information sharing is what Van Onselen calls a network of market intelligence. It expanded in the region and served as a coping mechanism for workers facing an otherwise hostile environment. Van Onselen suggests that,

> The patterns of labour flow within the regional economic system themselves should thus be seen as a creative and sophisticated African response to the emerging capitalist system in southern Africa. Van Onselen, 243

Thus Harrie's study reveals the significance of migrant identities and the importance of reconstructing and retaining links with the familiar. Van Onselen's study raises similar issues of support and through the sharing of information in networks based on locality and familiarity. These themes are developed in this study of the women's response to their migration and strategies used for their survival.

Similarities between men and women are likely to exist with reference to strategies such as the sharing of market information and the importance of trust through retaining relationships to the village and with kin. Buijs (1992) points out that women attempt to recreate what is familiar as a

coping mechanism to deal with forced separation from their family. Women refugees and other women migrants appear to show a greater resilience and adaptability than do men. Women who are forced to leave their homes due to circumstances beyond their control, often attempt to replicate the past and to construct a meaningful identity within an alien context. For many women, however, the boundaries that they cross provide hope and inspiration, especially when the women are in pursuit of wage labour or other income- generating activities whereby their power within the domestic sphere is strongly influenced. Links with the society of origin are viewed in a positive light by many women migrants.

Women and migration

The migration of women in southern Africa has posed challenges to established authority, be it husbands, chiefs, employers or the state. Bonner (1988) explores these issues in his article on the migration of Basuto women to the Rand from 1920 to 1945 who came to the Rand for numerous reasons. These were women who were having trouble with their husbands, widows who were vulnerable to other men in the village, girls who eloped with other partners, and married women who had been deserted by their husbands engaged in migrant labour. During the depression, women flooded to the Rand and the only economic opportunities available to them were either beer brewing or prostitution. These economic activities were seen as vital to family survival in the first four decades of the twentieth century. When the state clamped down on illegal beer brewing in the 1930s and the 1940s, beer riots erupted as the

women violently protested to protect the only income-generating activities that were available to them. For Basuto women on the Rand, this was their only defence to protect the fragile family life that they had constructed. The state saw this as a serious problem with the possibility of jeopardising the migrant labour system. African chiefs and elders in Basutoland also feared the exodus of women and the challenge that this posed to their authority. Laws were therefore enacted in collaboration with the chiefs to ensure women were unable to leave Basutoland without permission of their husband or their father. The migrant labour system had, however, profoundly warped marital relations and thus already destabilised social relations within villages. Despite attempts to install an effective system of pass control, women merely adopted techniques of evasion and sophistication in manipulation of the law. (Bonner, 1988).

In Zimbabwe in the 1930s, similar social dynamics emerged. The flight of women from villages to urban centres was of concern for both African and European men. The colonial authorities were anxious as the reserves served the interests of capital, especially through the maintenance of the migrant labour system. The flight of women destabilised the reserves in that women were unable to perform their productive and reproductive tasks in the reserves and thus men were less likely to return. African men were concerned because they wanted to keep girls and women under their authority. Schmidt argues that, "Older men struggled to maintain control over women, their labour, their mobility and their marriages." (Schmidt, 1993). Women increasingly became engaged in income-generating

activities which undermined the authority of their husbands or their fathers. Nonetheless, according to Schmidt, "Jealous husbands, w..o were beneficiaries of the cash earned by the wives, nonetheless tried to restrict their mobility." 'Schmidt, 1993). The colonial state, too, attempted to intervene by enacting laws designed to coerce women to remain with abusive, disinterested or absentee husbands.

Women, however, continued to run away to farms, towns, mining compounds and mission stations. Chiefs and senior men charged that the government was responsible for the women's abhorrent behaviour whilst the native commissioners cast the blame on African men. By the late 1930's legal restriction on African women's mobility had been tightened considerably yet the ability of senior African men or the state to control African women remained limited.

African women were not the only women forced to migrate in the 1920s and the 1930s. Brink's (1987) article investigates Afrikaner women who migrated to the Witwatersrand to work in the garment industry. For these women there were two forces driving them from the farms. The first was impoverishment that their families experienced on the land and the second was changes and growth in the garment industry which was able to absorb women. "As the capacity of men to earn declined," Brink argues, "so the stimulus for women to seek work increased." (Brink, 1987: 182). As these women migrated to the towns and became breadwinners, they defied traditional conceptions of womanhood and often became effective and

militant trade unionists. Their militancy subsequently came to be seen as a threat to the political and patriarchal status quo and the women were hastily reeled in.

Thus the migration of women has the ability to challenge the construction of gender and gender relations. It has the ability to challenge patriarchal structures and the patriarchal structures of the state and elicit resolute responses from patriarchal authorities who attempt to curb this challenge.

The migration of women raises conceptual issues of transcending boundaries and borders. Through travelling from one country to another, women transgress national borders. Simultaneously, migration also challenges gender boundaries and has the ability to undermine patriarchal structures through the more robust assertion of women's autonomy.

Borders

Brah describes borders as,

> arbitrary dividing lines that are simultaneously social, cultural and psychic: territories to be patrolled against those who they construct as outsiders: aliens, the Others: forms of demarcation where the very acts of prohibition inscribes trar sgression: zones where the fear of the Other is a fear of the self: places where claims to ownership - claims to `mine', yours and theirs are staked out, contested, defended and fought over. Brah. 1996: 198

The arbitrariness of borders in post-colonial Africa was based on their demarcation by colonial powers. Borders were not only to "construct outsiders", but were constructed by outsiders. Colonial borders cut across and through ethnic, religious and cultural groups. Thus, the legitimacy of borders has been consistently rejected, neglected or ignored. Anti-colonial struggles were conducted not in defence of a territory, but in an attempt to get rid of occupying powers. Borders thus reflect sites of struggle for competing claims. Reitzes points out that many migrants, "are members of trans-national communities and have what are, in effect, multiple national identities" (Reitzes, 1996: 41). Borders are fluid and subject to differing conceptions over the relation to the land. Conceptually, many migrants' understandings of borders defy western conceptions of private property and nationalism (Ibid).

The understanding of border is shifting (Hannerz, 1997). They are no longer seen as absolute but are, "only relative, artefactual and thus problematic." Although borders can be constraining they are also a possible resource. They symbolise discontinuity and difference but also represent fields, flows and networks. Hannerz identifies a new sense of borders in the 'borderland'. This suggests, "something in between, a contact zone, an area where discontinuities become a bit blurred; a region where not only new elements but also new combinatory rules may be introduced." (Hannerz, 1997: 540). Crossing borders can be constraining

due to the structure of power and inequality. The unequal power structures can lead to misunderstandings and unease.

The concept of transgressing borders will be used metaphorically in the analysis of gender. When looking at issues around women's migration, it will be framed around the fluidity of borders constructed for the regulation of gender relations and to what extent the migration of women challenges the boundaries of patriarchal structures. The crossing of borders suggests also the construction of new spaces, and the possibility through the activity of constant cross-border trading, for women construct to new boundaries, new borders within which these activities are conducted.

Migration in Africa is multi-causal with both push and pull factors and is, more often than not, a survival strategy. People continuously migrating from one side of the border to another may feel little allegiance to any one state. Indeed, according to Reitzes, "For many migrants, borders symbolise continuities and connections rather than barriers and breaks" (Reitzes, 1996: 42). For women cross-border traders, this research explores to what extent continual crossing of borders represents continuity or whether it represents a break from family, a break from the familiar.

3. CITIZENSHIP

Despite the recent resurgence of democratisation in Africa, the most common franchise referred to in the literature is that of voting with one's feet, the exit option, living without the state and being masters of pretence

and evasion (Reitzes, 1996; Saunders, 1993, Bayart 1993). Bayart points out that, "The state remains in Africa... a purely imported product, a pale imitation of the diametrically opposite European political and social system." (Bayart, 1993: 8). This raises complex questions over the nature of the state, sovereignty, the conceptualisation of the nation state and its relations to civil society.

Yuval-Davis (1997) sees a common destiny as crucial in constructing a nation. The common destiny, she argues, needs to be enhanced through the construction of a "symbolic border guards", the creation of boundaries dividing the world into "us and them". In many post-colonial countries, boundaries exist, but do not necessarily coincide with the borders of the state. According to Bayart, "South of the Sahara the key problem for the dominators is to find the dominated and then force them to settle down in a domestic social space where they can be further dominated and exploited." (Bayart, 253). This has resulted in the generation of terms such as the "uncaptured citizen" who remains disengaged from the formal, political and economic spheres. The rise of the informal economy is linked with this concept. As Reitzes points out, "States which cannot exercise recognisable and legitimate authority over their populations are characterised by an intensifying informalisation of their economies and governance." (Reitzes, 1996: 27).

This raises questions about the notions and conceptions of citizenship which need to be linked to the previous discussion around migrancy.

Citizenship is described by Yuval-Davis as a multi-tier concept that sums up the relationship between the individual and the state. It refers to a person's legal status within the territory. It is both inclusive and exclusive and accords different status to those within and outside of the borders. Citizenship determines the rights and entitlements of citizens of states, but also includes duties and obligations (Reitzes, 1996, Yuval-Davis, 1997). According to Somers (1993), the resurgence of discussions on citizenship and democratisation is linked with escalating international migration and nationalism. She points to three areas of convergence around the issues of citizenship. The first is the personal status one has, consisting of a universal body of rights and duties of a member of a state. The second is based on rights within the emergent capitalist society. The third is the relationship between capitalist economy and the state. Citizenship practices are based on relationships between the legal sphere, political culture and associational life of local communities. Citizenship is an instituted process whereby social practices which are contingent on networks of relationships stress membership of a particular community. Somers challenges the idea that markets and economies exist outside of institutional and cultural relationships: citizenship rights are relational social practices and not things. Analyses of citizenship therefore need to include not only states and economies but also family, communities and associational life.

According to Yuval-Davis, the traditional notion of citizenship is based in individualistic terms and focused on individual rights. This conception fails

to consider divisions along lines of gender, ethnicity and class. Yuval-Davis highlights the gender inequalities associated with the traditional conception of citizenship. She argues that, "Women have tended to be differentially regulated to men, being constructed as dependent on their family men." (Yuval-Davis, 1997: 24). Women's citizenship is therefore usually of a dual nature in that they are included in the body of citizens but are subject to rules, regulations and policies which are specific to them. Women's location in structures of domination are, however, not homogenous in that ethnic, class or religious differences can place them in varying positions whereby some women have control over other men and women.

Citizenship needs to be examined not just in terms of the state, but often in relation to multiple formal and informal citizenships in more than one country. According to Yuval-Davis, "Membership of nations can be sub-, super- and cross-states, as the boundaries of nations virtually never coincide with those of so-called nation states." (Ibid, 3). Tripp problematises the dualistic notions of civil society, that is, the reference of civil society as in contrast to the state. She says that in the African context this dualism, "may overlook a complexity of some of the more fundamental political, economic and social transformations taking place that do not easily fall in the state society dualism as civil society implies" (Tripp, 1997: 124). She attributes the limits of this notion to the colonial imposition of the state in Africa. Her research on women's groups in Tanzania and Uganda provide evidence of women deliberately locating themselves

outside of the political (state) sphere which they see as perpetuating sectarianism and undermining their interests.

For states in Africa, this is highly problematic: many members within the state are not choosing to become - or are unable to become - full members of their own society. Bayart describes Africans as masters of pretence and evasion making state hegemony difficult and rendering the spatial hold of the state incomplete. This reflects a lack of embeddedness of the state whereby Africans pursue activities that evade the state and form networks that operate in frameworks divorced from state intervention and control. The geographic mobility of Africans is enormous, contributing to the difficulties of "capturing" the citizenry (Bayart, 1993: 254 to 258).

With reference to women cross-border traders, states have consistently embarked on attempts to undermine their mobility and women's ability to partake in income-generating activities. By trading across borders, they are locating themselves within a territory where they are excluded from the rights and entitlements that are afforded to the citizens of that country. They are therefore constructed as outsiders and not afforded the rights and entitlements which citizens of the host country can claim. Women cross-border traders are located in a space in which, through their gender, their rights are curbed within their own nation state and through their location in their host country, their rights are curbed through their construction as outsiders.

SAPs exacerbate these dynamics. The state is no longer seen as providing entitlement and rights are limited by participation in elections without addressing issues of economic rights. The balancing act of rights and entitlements and duties and obligations on the part of a citizen is therefore overturned. Saunders points out, "A large number of Zimbabweans have turned away from their weakened government and focused on their own survival." (Saunders, 1996: 12). Reitzes further suggests that, "The issue of who is entitled to what rights is further compounded by whether or not people recognise boundaries... whether, in the course of trying to survive, they can afford to recognise them." (Reitzes, 1997: 22).

CONCLUSION

The changing economic terrain in Southern Africa is therefore affecting social relations within the region. The economic crisis and subsequent liberalisation policies have resulted in a burgeoning of the informal sector. With reference to gender relations, women have increasingly had to leave the home and enter into income-generating activities. This research integrates the above-mentioned issues with a focus on the networks of women cross-border traders. It explores the links between the post colonial concept of borders and to what extent women cross-border traders view borders as an obstacle to their economic strategies. It looks at the necessary networks that are built in the process of cross-border trading and whether they reveal the emergence of a more co-operative approach between women from different languages, religions and ethnic groups.

The relation of these traders to their own nation state, as well as the states in which they trade, is investigated to get a sense of their conceptions of citizenship. It probes to what extent women attempt to engage or evade the state. It looks at the applicability of traditional conceptions of citizenship or whether another kind of citizenship is generated. If women are falling into a rightless vacuum, it explores the possibility of new spaces being produced whereby women ensure their survival and the future prosperity for their children and their families.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Economic activity cannot be divorced from social structure and, as previously mentioned, economic networks are based on trust. Thus the issues under discussion, especially the social construction of networks cannot be measured through quantitative techniques, as they are intangible and meaningful. Whilst the geographic unit of analysis is defined, the nature of the networks is fluid, ephemeral and extensive. Flexible and largely qualitative methods were therefore necessary to allow the researcher to adapt to the research situation and to facilitate the generation of the most valid findings.

This chapter begins with a discussion why qualitative methods were chosen. The second section looks at the importance of qualitative methods in producing valid findings for this research. The third section looks at the role of the researcher and how this has an influence on the findings. The fourth section looks at the actual research process and how, through conducting the research, the initial methods and design had to be changed and adapted.

1. WHY QUALITATIVE METHODS WERE CHOSEN

The nature of this research is to study processes and the meanings associated with social relations that are generated through an economic activity. The issue of crossing border, relationships with the state, the

market and with men are sensitive and represent the perceptions of a group vulnerable to a host of oppressive structures.

Qualitative methods best elucidate the meaning of a social situation, they explore how people experience, interpret and structure their lives. Qualitative methods look at the way in which the world is structured from the point of view of the participants. Qualitative methods examine how meanings have been produced and their relations with power structures. They therefore focus on processural understandings of the social rather than structural or static ones and are concerned with the creation of culture and forms of social consciousness that give meaning to human practices (Joyce, 1995). It stresses the importance of the relationship between the researcher and the researched and allows for a research design that can continually be modified and developed during the project. Sociologists are viewed as participants and not voyeurs (Patterson, 1989).

This research employed the qualitative methods of oral histories and participant observation. These were seen as the most appropriate mechanisms of prioritising the experiences of unheard voices, tapping into consciousness, and generating an understanding of a perspective on what has happened. Qualitative methods acknowledge that, "Consciousness is never fixed, never attained once and for all because discursive boundaries change with historical conditions." (Scott, 1988: 6). It acknowledges that the home, the location, histories are retrospectives, that the past is fixed

from the vantage of the present. Thus, meaningfulness is interwoven with social memory (Alonso, 1988).

Oral history provides the researcher with a chance to access the consciousness and meanings of groups where texts are unavailable. Alonso describes social memory as, "integral to the creation of social meaning: representations of the past are central to the symbolic constitution of social groups and social identities" (Alonso, 1988: 33). Oral histories can be used to retrieve hidden histories and provide a voice for those previously unheard.

In The Women of Phokeng, Bozzoli (1991) focuses on an analysis of consciousness. She describes the aims of the book, "to expose the elusive, the invisible and the intangible... Conventional sociological methods are poor tools for understanding this elusive force." (Bozzoli, 1991: 2). Oral history was therefore chosen for, "inherent ideas are more likely to be contained in oral sources than printed ones, particularly in the case of illiterate or semi-literate populations" (Ibid, 244). In order to probe more private areas of life, oral histories provide the best option in an attempt to understand what really happened. Bozzoli thus attempted to fill some of the gaps of South African sociology by tapping, "the realities of African culture, childhood, family, gender, class, race and resistance" (Ibid: 15). As this research aimed to explore attitudes and perceptions, the use of interviews to elucidate oral histories was the most appropriate research

method. Bozzoli refers to the importance of the researcher to adapt to the style of the interviewees.

For this research I had to adapt to the style of the woman being interviewed. If I sensed that she may `close up' to sensitive questions, I had to manoeuvre my question asking techniques to less sensitive areas and then return to them later.

Harries points out that the importance of oral history is to reconstruct and record the lives of the obscure and to examine consciousness as a product of everyday experience. "Meaning is not lodged in the mind, has no single, true essence, is never static, and is indissoluble from the material" (Harries, 1994: XVIII). He points out that understanding social action cannot be divorced from causal explanations linked to impersonal forces. One needs therefore to look at climate and environment, prices, demography, kinship and politics, the state and mental constructs. He sees that, "Identity is situational and fluid rather than an organic product of a bounded community" (Ibid, XVIIII).

For the research, it was important to consider this fluidity of identity. The women are here in their capacity as traders and thus the stories of home and the past are constructed within that identity. Furthermore, as Granovetter (1992) argues, economic behaviour is not only linked to external constraints but is, "embedded in networks of interpersonal relations" (Granovetter, 1992:73). This study is therefore an exploration of

social relations which shape and are shaped by the women's situational location.

2. INITIAL PROPOSED METHODS AND SUBSEQUENT MODIFICATIONS

Initially I had planned to travel with two traders to get an insight into the practices of trading across borders through experiencing their social reality as well as gaining knowledge about cross-border traders' life histories. It was hoped that participant observation of this kind would provide a more detailed understanding of the dynamics and relations as well as the strategies adopted to deal with state regulations e.g. border controls, tariffs and taxation.

Upon embarking on the research, numerous obstacles immediately became apparent. The first obstacle was that of time constraints. During the interview process and attempts to gain access to the sample, it became apparent that more time would be needed for this type of research to take place. The second constraint links with the first and that is finance. Although finance was available and interest in the project was evident, time constraints to process the funding would have resulted in serious delays. The third constraint, once again, links with time and this is the timing of the women's trips home. The women are often here for extended periods of time and could not be expected to pack up and interrupt their pre-planned trading schedules. Many of the women were only returning home at Christmas time, or in 1998. It therefore became apparent once

again that more time would be needed for this type of research to take place. The fourth and most pressing issue was that of trust. As the women's networks are very closely integrated and insulated, it is difficult for an outsider to gain access. This is likely linked to the issue of race whereby an alien white woman walking off the streets asking to go home with them, would have been seen as a highly strange request. Thus, time and patience was necessary in order to build rapport before the doors of trust were finally opened. Even if finance had been available from the beginning of the this project, it would not have been possible to go travelling with one of the women immediately.

In order to cope with these constraints, some new techniques had to be formulated. It was therefore decided to interview women who were trading in markets here in Johannesburg. The sampling method chosen was a combination of snowball sampling and opportunistic/availability sampling. According to Neuman, snowball sampling is useful if the researcher is interested in, "an inter-connected network of people or organisations" (Neuman, 1994: 199). It is the most effective sampling method if linkages are both direct and indirect. It begins with one or a few people or cases and is built on the basis of links to the initial case. Snowball sampling would be able to provide evidence of whether the networks are close-knit, for example, limited to within one family; or loose-knit networks whereby the strength of the ties may be weaker and more fluid (Worsley, 1992). Opportunistic or availability sampling is where one uses co-operative informants, who are available and willing to participate in the research.

Given the constraints of this study, these sampling techniques most were appropriate although within certain limits. During the interview process, it became clear that the networks were close-knit networks mainly within one family. The possibilities for meeting further informants was therefore limited as the networks are confined to family. Benefits were evident through my introduction by one trader to another. The women's confidence to be interviewed increased as I was seen interviewing other women in the same market.

Opportunistic or availability sampling were the only sampling methods available as I was only able to interview co-operative informants. Initially, during the perusal phase where I was attempting to solicit informants, many refused. Interest was sparked through the participation of other informants.

Twelve women participated in the study. A combination of methods were used. These include participant observation, oral histories and interviews.

Participant Observation

Participant observation is the research method in which the researcher both observes the social processes of a group and actually participates in the life of that group. Participant observation broadly means that the researcher should become part of the social group or organisation that they study, and that they should try (without any disruption to the normal

flow of events) to form an understanding of the actions of the group as well as the meaning that the actors attach to these actions.

Gold (1958) suggests three roles that the researcher may play. The first is that of a complete participant, concealing his/her true identity and intentions from the group and living entirely as they do. This was not possible in this research due to race, cultural and language differences of the researcher and the researched. It would have been necessary to pose as a trader from another country and for the above-mentioned reasons this would have been unrealistic. The second is a participant observer who is actively involved in the group, but is clearly a researcher and not really one of them and finally, an observer as participant. This is a less common mode which involves a brief visit with limited participation.

A combination of b) and c) was utilised for the purpose of this study. Due to the limited time available for this research, however, brief visits with limited participation were the most common form of participant observation undertaken.

The weakness in participant observation as a method is that the researcher risks losing the objectivity. Being directly involved with people and their daily concerns for an extended period of time may predispose one to become effectively engaged with the research subject and to lose detachment from people and events. Participant observation intends to prevent imposing alien meanings upon the actions of the subjects. What

an observer will see, however, will depend largely on their particular position in a network of relationships. The role of the participant observer and the images which respondents hold of them are central to the definition of their social positions. These two shape the circumstances under which the researcher works and the type of data to be collected. Harries (1994) stresses that, "Even long spells of participant observation in the field are no longer thought sufficient to strip a trained anthropologist of the preconceptions that will structure both the investigation and the final text" (Harries, 1994: XVII).

The intention of this research, however, was to gain an understanding of the women's subjective experiences. Certain challenges did emerge and attempts were made to maintain a balanced approach. Whilst retaining rapport through a sympathetic ear to the women's stories, there were aspects to their perceptions and attitudes that I firstly, did not expect and secondly, did not agree with. I did not, however, challenge the women as the intention of this research was to elicit their attitudes and meanings and not to impress mine upon them.

Interviews

Interviews were conducted with the women traders. The interviews were semi-structured and informal interviews which were conducted in concurrence with participant observation. Life histories were recorded to get a sense of historical changes and to what extent the transition in southern Africa has affected social relations and the women's conceptions

of citizenship. The interviews were mostly unstructured interviews. As a researcher, I became a friend to some of the women researched. It was necessary to acknowledge the role of the interviewer and how this can be affected by age, social status, race, ethnicity and experience. In the process of interviewing, it is important to acknowledge that it is impossible to follow a rigidly preconceived plan. It is necessary to explain why the interviews are being conducted and what will happen to the material.

In-depth interviews are another technique with which to explore attitudes and experiences. Two types are identified. These are structured and unstructured interviews. In structured interviews, the same wording and order are used for all respondents to ensure comparability which some see as generating more reliable "factual" information.

Unstructured interviews are informal and conversation-like. The researcher has a broad set of issues and topics to guide the conversation, but no pre-set questions. They are more likely to probe degrees of meaning. According to Burgess, these "conversations with a purpose" are likely to provide more detailed data. He stresses the need for detailed knowledge and preparation as well as observation in the conducting of unstructured interviews (Burgess, 1993: 103). In terms of procedure, Burgess says it is difficult to follow a rigid plan as this can influence relationship building. A range of themes and topics should be identified and then used to guide the questions.

Data recording of interviews is essential to ensure that material is not lost or distorted. Transcribing and tape-recording are common methods. The method used depends on whether the researched are comfortable and prepared to accept that particular method. For the purposes of this research, tape recorded interviews were initially planned. The first woman expressed a reluctance to speak freely during recordings and due to the outside nature of the interviews, noise interfered with the recordings. Notes were subsequently taken during the interviews. These were transcribed immediately after the interview to ensure that information was not forgotten and that observations were recorded.

A limitation to the research was that I chose to interview women who were involved in the craft and curio trade. This was for two reasons. Firstly, the women were more visible and the accessible in the different trading markets. It was also easy to identify their non-South African status by the nature of what they were selling, their dress or accent. The second reason for choosing this trade was that at the time there were numerous incidences of violence and antagonism against vegetable hawkers and other hawkers in the city streets of Johannesburg. Another researcher engaged in research on migrancy in the informal sector of foreign traders found this to be an obstacle to her research.

My research began by investigating the locations of different handicraft markets. Those that I found were located in Bruma, Four Ways, the Rosebank Rooftop Market, and the Bree Street Market opposite the Market

Theatre. As far as I am aware, these are the most representative of the handicraft trade. I began at the Bruma Market by walking up to traders and asking whether they would agree to be interviewed, explaining exactly what I was doing and what the research findings would be used for. I spoke to every woman trader that I could see, requesting an interview.

After numerous failed attempts, a young woman from Zimbabwe named **Rumbi Kangara** finally agreed to an interview. I arranged to return the following week to interview her at her stall in Bruma on a day when trading would be quiet. As it was still winter, trading was not busy and I agreed to return on a Tuesday morning to avoid the week-end traffic of tourists and South Africans who frequent the market. Bruma Flee Market is well-established and provides forms of infrastructure not available in other market areas. Advertising and publicity attracts a large amount of customers. The women trading in this market pay high rents to benefit from the services provided. (See Appendix for map)

Rumbi was the first person with whom I managed to get an interview . I arrived at the market in the morning at 11.00 am. Rumbi's stall was already set up at one of the entrances to the market. She was sitting in a white plastic chair, crocheting a doily for which she had an order. She was dressed in a matching red skirt and shirt set. During the interview, I noticed that selling was the number one priority. Her whole day is spent trying to entice potential clients to her stall. She will literally drop what she is working on, jump up and call, `Nice bedspreads and table clothes'. She

does not let a potential client walk idly by, all of whom are engaged, even if they ignore her, which many do.

I returned the following week. Rumbi was dressed in a brightly coloured dress and hanging on a coat hanger was a fake fur coat. She was wearing a blue corduroy hat, a gold watch and white running shoes. She looked like somebody off a 1940s movie set. Not once was she not wearing a petticoat.

Rumbi loves to talk and I seemed to relieve her boredom on the quiet winter days at the market. I had decided to break the interview up so that I could build rapport before getting to the more complex issues. This turned out to be a mistake as her mother found out about the interviews and said that Rumbi should not be sitting around conversing all day and should be selling. After this we only had brief informal discussions and I was unable to develop the interview further. I learned that it is best to elicit as much information as possible in the first interview and rather to use follow-ups to put some meat on the skeleton of the interview. With Rumbi it ended up rather limbless although she is a lovely, fun loving albeit very conservative and serious minded young woman. She was very interested in my private life as well as the progress of my research. She began to call the women my 'customers' and would ask whether I had any new customers for the day.



Rosemary Muya at the Bree Street Flea Market

Rosemary Muya is from Kenya. I met her whilst interviewing another woman at the Bree Street flea market. Thus the snow ball sampling technique was working. She was interested in why I was there and kept on interjecting at the interview. I then asked if I could return the following week to interview her. She agreed but when I returned she said that she was having a bad day and that I should return the next week. On both of

these occasions informal discussions took place. The next week the market was a frenzied place with a children's carnival and a COSATU rally happening at the same time. It was decided that I return the following week when the interview finally took place.

The interview took place at her stall at the Bree Street market. Her stall is located along the edge of the market which is where most of the handicraft traders are located. The stall consists of a small tent structure which provides shade and is also used to display items such as wall hanging batiks, mobiles, necklaces etc. We sat at the end of the stall on small chairs. I took notes while we spoke. We were occasionally interrupted as customers came to peruse or to purchase the goods. She sells a variety of goods which include kikoys, masks, Masai calabashes, small leather chairs, carvings, necklaces, ornaments and wooden spoons. All are laid out on a plastic sheet to protect them from the ground and to demarcate the stall. It was a busy day at the market with many people wandering around. There was a strong wind which in the end blew the tent away knocking over a lot of the display as well as carrying the goods attached to the tent along with it. Rose was very flustered and I wondered whether the interview was going to take place. She is an attractive, charismatic and articulate woman who has much travel and trade experience.

While sitting with Rose a black South African trader who works at the market commented that she looks exactly like another Kenyan woman at the market. The two women told the South African trader that they were

sisters but when she left they asked if I thought they looked alike. When I said no, they said that black South Africans think that all Kenyans look the same.

I spent most of the morning with Rose, talking in between customers and trying to reorganise her stall after it got blown away.



Anne Gidhere trading at the Bree Street Market

Anne Gidhere is from Kenya and trades next to Rose at the Bree Street market. Anne was dressed in a funky outfit of black jeans, a white shirt, a denim jacket and a baseball cap. She looked almost American in

appearance. She is a very dark, large and physically powerful looking woman. She speaks very quickly and at times it was difficult to keep up with her whilst taking notes. The interviews were conducted near her small truck which was parked behind her stall. It is a small red bakkie with a cover on the back. Some other traders wandered over occasionally to see what we were up to.

Her stall was fairly sparse without a covering tent. She had mainly smaller items such as spoons, small carvings of giraffes and zebras and necklaces. The interview was relatively uninterrupted as it was a quiet day in the market. I sat on the front seat and on the bonnet of her car and we spoke whilst she stood. I returned the following week to complete the interview.

Habiba (also known as Bibi) is a Camer·onian woman whom I met through two friends of mine who live in Yeoville. Habiba is their neighbour and the initial interview was therefore conducted at Habiba's house in Yeoville. The house has a large unkempt garden which is scattered with a few broken statues and masks. Every room of the house is also filled with bags of statues and masks. Some of them are life-size creatures with beautiful and intricate designs of lions, dog-like creatures and people with three heads. The house has wooden floors and a dark and dirty feel to it. We sat in the lounge with the curtains drawn and the television on. The gaze of various masks, lions, dogs and statues hovered over us from different angles as the interview was conducted. Habiba is a young woman

with lots of passion and fire for her country. She spoke easily and with conviction of the situation in Cameroon and of her experiences in South Africa. I seemed to alleviate a day of loneliness and boredom as she invited me to return whenever I wanted to. During the interview we stopped for some coffee. The kitchen, like the rest of the house, was full of bags of masks. The kitchen was extremely dirty with layers of old grease coating the stove. Dishes lay piled up in the sink. She cleared away a space in between the masks and dirt to prepare us some Cameroonian coffee - very strong and sweet.

Two more, although less formal, interviews were conducted with Habiba at the Bree Street market and at the Rosebank market. At Bree Street, the stall is uncovered. All of the traders were crowding for a spot in the shade that a truck was providing. We sat on a small wooden log-like chair and spoke. Bibi is the only woman from Cameroon so is constantly caught up in a 'man's' world. She said that they often tease her but she seems to handle the jest with humour. The men were quite interested in her new friend although in a joking kind of way. Humour seems to occupy the sellers as the young men are constantly playing around and making jokes, most of which I could not understand as not only were they not in French (I can understand some French), they were speaking in the dialect that they speak in Fumbani in Cameroon.

At the Bree Street market, Bibi got into fierce negotiations with a woman from Zaire who trades in handbags which she sells to the other traders.

Bibi wanted to buy some bags to send back to her family. The negotiations became quite heated and ended up with the Zairian woman leaving without a sale (and me without a potential interview).

The other interview was at the Rosebank market. As the rooftop market is full, the Cameroonian group of traders are located next to the second hand market in the parking lot downstairs and outdoors. All of the craft traders at this spot were from Cameroon, Zaire and Senegal. Once again Bibi seemed to be the only woman trading. All the traders were sitting together under a tree to get some shade. The men were making jokes and Bibi seemed to be enjoying herself. Her boyfriend was also there. He is a tall handsome man from Cameroon whom she met through trading in South Africa. It was his last week at the market for a while as he was returning to Cameroon the next Friday.

Bibi constantly asks me to phone her as she has very little female company and few friends.

Thandi Mthumzi is from Swaziland. Thandi trades at Bruma flea market, inside the market unlike many of the traders who work from the streets outside where the rent is cheaper. I met Thandi whilst interviewing another trader at the Bruma flea market. I had arranged to meet with Thandi on numerous occasions. Once I was unable to meet her so rescheduled. The next two occasions it was raining. Thandi was so busy

trying to protect her goods from the rain that we had to reschedule once again. We finally got to speak.



Thandi Mthumzi trading at the Bruma Flea market

During the interviews, we sat on upturned crates for the first part of the interview. Thandi is a plumpish woman with a soft round face, large eyes and is friendly although shy. She was wearing a skirt around which she tied an African print material and a doek on her head. We sat at the back of the stall so that she could monitor her customers. The stall has many items mostly large, colourful masks with hollowed eyes and designs of

birds and other animals worked into the face. She spoke easily until a customer from K' ' came to place an order for 10 000 masks of three different varieties. Negotiations began in which I realised I was causing confusion as the Korean man thought that I was the boss and constantly wanted to refer negotiations to me rather than to Thandi. At this point I chose to leave and get a drink at the food-stalls on the other side of the market. Once the man had left, Thandi came and joined me at the table and we continued the interview whilst her relative looked after the stall. I returned once more and had informal discussions although not a formal interview.



Magdeline Dlamini trading at the Bree Street Market

Ruby Ndlovu and Magdalene Dlamini are both from Swaziland. I initially went to meet Tessa, a Swazi woman who agreed to meet on Saturday morning. On arrival at the Bree Street market I discovered that she had gone back to Swaziland. I then walked down to meet with Magdalene to whom I had been referred by her sister who said that she couldn't meet as she was returning to Swaziland. Magdalene and Ruby agreed to meet and we sat on chairs and upturned crates under a tree at the back of the stall. It was very cold so we ended up under a leopard skin printed blanket to continue the interview. Ruby initially scolded me for not speaking an African language so I said that I could arrange for an interpreter in the language of her choice, including Seswati. She then agreed to participate but said that I should learn Zulu or Sesotho through the university. Ruby was very communicative whilst Magdalene seemed more reserved and at times I was not sure whether she was being sarcastic or merely shy in her responses. Ruby is an older woman, large in physique. She wears thick glasses and a doek on her head. She only wore dresses. Magdalene is younger, also largish wearing a dress but no doek. They explained that in Swaziland women are large because they eat lots of pap and spinach.

I returned to interview the women separately two weeks later. Ruby was trading while Magdelene's sister sat on the floor making bead work. She listened intently to the interview and occasionally sang songs, relating to religious themes. By the end of the interview, Ruby invited me to come to Swaziland so that I could see how things were for myself. A second interview was conducted with Magdalene the following week as Ruby had

the day off. I also conducted informal discussions with them at the Rosebank rooftop market. Here they have a very well-located stall at one of the entrances to the mall. Most of the time three or four women were trading at the stall at any given time. Although this was probably unnecessary with reference to sales needs, they keep each other company and are constantly making the bead work. Magdalene's daughter and grandchild were also at both markets.

Katherine Mooketsi is from Zimbabwe. I met Katherine by driving up and down William Nicol Drive in Fourways and stopping and speaking to traders along the way. Most of the non-South African traders were men except for Katherine whose stall is right at the end of the street at Four Ways. It is difficult to call her trading area a stall as it is merely a piece of dusty ground next to the street. Bedspreads and table clothes are hung on a wire fence that encloses a farm off from the road. Cows graze behind the fence. Smaller doilies and table clothes are laid out on the dusty floor. There is no protection from the rain or cold. There is a green plastic portable toilet across the road which is provided by the council but paid for by the traders. There is no water available except at the shopping mall down the road. A woman sells cooked food of pap and meat at the corner of the road. Katherine has a small wire pole that is pushed into the ground. She balances an umbrella over it to protect her from the sun. We took canvas bags and sat on the floor under the umbrella to do the interview. The spot is very dusty with lots of cars spewing fumes across the road. This cannot be very good Katherine's health reasons or for the

goods. One customer who drove up during the interview drove over the bedspreads before stopping and selecting a cleaner table cloth that he had not soiled.

Katherine is a very chatty women who seemed to enjoy company in what could be a lonely day. She did not seem to want me to leave so I spent most of the day with her. She tried to show me how to crochet without much success. She also hoped that I would be able to be of some assistance to help them get out of their difficult situation. This was difficult as a researcher. She was interested in what the value of the research was, what it could do to alter her situation.

During the interview, a woman from Kenya came and spoke to Katherine about how to go about opening a stall next to hers. Katherine at first insisted that she speak Zulu (khuluma). When realising that she did not understand, Katherine reluctantly spoke to her in English. It appeared that some kind of informal authority level exists with reference to the allocation of stalls. I was surprised that Katherine insisted that she speak Zulu, considering that she didn't when she first came to South Africa!

I met with her again a week later. I noticed that the Kenyan woman was not there. The weather was cold and cloudy so at first I was unsure of whether I would find her there. She was sitting on a grass mound crocheting and speaking to another woman who had a large physique, was wearing a blue T-shirt, white skirt and had a doek on her head. Katherine

was wearing a blue dress, two jerseys and a red doek on her head. She had a towel wrapped around her waist and was wearing slip-on shoes. Two other stalls that were usually next to hers were empty due to the weather. I was introduced to the other two women, one Prishka and the other Chaka - Katherine's co-sellers. We then set the umbrella up as the sun came out. We sat on the canvas bags under the umbrella and Katherine began to crochet whilst I interviewed her.

Katherine was proud to share aspects of her culture like wearing long dresses, never wearing pants, putting a towel over her waist and walking me to the car. "In Zimbabwe and Shona we walk people half way when they leave." I tried from then on to wear dresses to future interviews although in cold weather jeans seemed to be okay. I planned another interview with Katherine but two weeks of rain delayed another meeting. I went informally again to greet her.

Constance Rambani is from Venda. Constance sells crochet items at the Bruma flea market. Her stall is at the end of the other crochet sellers. According to Rumbi she is relegated there as she refused to co-operate when it was decided to take turns at the different stalls. Constance is a large woman with a coal dark complexion. She has braids which are woven tightly on her head. She looks much younger than her 40 years and of all the women looks the least South African. I was surprised to discover that she is from Venda. Despite the fact that she is from Venda, I decided to interview anyway. This was firstly because while she was in Venda, she

was engaged in trading through crocheting items which her aunts brought to South Africa to sell. Venda's incorporation into South Africa facilitated her trading activities as she moved to South Africa unconstrained by borders. Thus Constance's case study provided a testing ground for how national borders can be an obstacle in the freedom of trading. Secondly, as she is not from Johannesburg, which is where she engages in trading, I thought that her story would provide an interesting reference point as to whether her issues were different from the other women's. I explored to what extent her networks were still located in Venda or whether due to the freedom of her movements since 1994, she had formed new networks closer to her place of work.

Constance brings her baby daughter to the market every day. The little girl runs around the goods jumping on the doilies and playing. Constance breast-feeds her at the stall. It is the first child of her and her husband's that has grown up with both parents present. She is a 'laat lammetjie' (late lamb) and is doted upon by her mother. She calls her their 'little flower'.

During the interview, Constance had a steady stream of customers who purchased mostly crocheted shirts. Most of the customers required a lot of attention to ensure a sale. She had a greater variety of colours for her items although the designs were the same. Constance sat and crocheted throughout the interview. She seemed to enjoy recounting the past and describing what life is like in Venda and said that I could return anytime.

I returned two weeks later to conduct the second interview. As I was interviewing other women in the market we had had informal discussion in between. The second interview was once again conducted in the stall, sitting on chairs whilst she crocheted and tended to customers. Some customers were confused about my presence, assuming that I was the real boss with whom to negotiate prices. During the second interview, a Korean man came over to greet Constance. He is a friend of her husband's and is here as a preacher. He said that he was looking for an English teacher and Constance recommended me for the position. I observed that she introduced me to him as her friend.

Delico Mutengambiri is a crochet trader from Zimbabwe who trades at the Bruma flea market. Delico is very shy and lacking in confidence. It took numerous informal conversations with her and her seeing me interview other women before she agreed to participate in the study. We sat in the corner of her stall on plastic chairs. Her hands were shaking whilst we spoke. I was not sure whether the shaking was due to nervousness or health reasons. Her designs appeared to be more delicate and intricate than at some of the other crochet stalls.

In subsequent interviews with her neighbouring trader, I realised that the other women called her Cecilia and not Delico. It is therefore possible that she changed her name to protect her identity or that Cecilia is an affectionate name which is used by her friends. During my many other

visits to the market, Delico relaxed a lot and would always greet me and was very friendly.



Delico trading at the Bruma Flea Market

Winfilda Saul is a batik and basket trader from Zimbabwe. I found out about Winfilda when ambling through the Rosebank market searching for participants for this study. Whilst others were shopping for goods, I was shopping for women. In the centre of the market. I met a young woman selling Tsonga and Mxenge baskets. I spoke to her for a while, explaining the project and she referred me to her mother - Winfilda Saul. She said that Winfilda was away in Zambia for the week but would return the following week. I returned to the market the following week and was disappointed to see a middle-aged, white Scottish male selling the

baskets. Before accepting defeat, I asked him where I could find Winfilda. He referred me to his wife who was selling batiks at another stall in the market. At the first meeting, I was surprised that she had daughters in their 20s. Winfilda is a beautiful woman, with long braids that extend down her back and dresses like a true artist in paint splattered pants and a waistcoat. We spoke and arranged for me to return the following week.

The initial interview was conducted at the Rosebank market, whilst sitting on the wheel of her trailer which doubles up as a display platform. The larger batiks are hung from the car covers, whilst the smaller items, like the cushion covers are displayed on a table in front of the trailer. During the interview, her daughters, who sell T-shirts at a stall in the row behind Winfilda came to visit. I therefore got to meet the whole family.

The Saul family appear to be a very close knit unit with lots of love and respect for each other. The whole family seem very at home in the market. Kenneth seems a bit older than Winfilda and is a very friendly and sociable man.

There is a passion in Winfilda for what she does as she sees it as an expression of her artistic talent. She markets her goods through telling the customers stories of what inspired each batik. She is a reluctant bargainer as she insists that her goods are hand made and therefore labour intensive. As she is an artist, some customers request their own designs which she then paints.

I tried to return for subsequent interviews but the market was always busy. We then arranged for a telephonic interview. I called her at home and once again, even on the phone, the weather interrupted. The rains from the previous day had delayed Winfilda's painting and as the day that I phoned her was sunny, we decided to reschedule the interview so that the batiks could dry. I phoned her later in the evening and in between her bathing her baby, we managed to complete the interview. Two more observation visits along with informal discussions were undertaken at the market.

Grace Chadereka is from Zimbabwe and trades at the Bruma flea market selling crochet items. She agreed to participate in the study after listening in on the interview with Delico. Although she willingly agreed to participate, she spoke reluctantly and it was difficult to illicit much more than one word answers in her responses. We sat on plastic chairs at her stall. She was less willing to engage with customers. After two more follow up meetings and informal discussions, I was able to find out more information.

3. THINGS TO CONSIDER

Although the research provided many interesting findings, it is difficult to test issues of reliability and consistency. Attempts to mitigate these limitations included attempting to interview more than one woman from each country to explore whether commonalities were evident within countries of origin. It was impossible to interview another woman from

Cameroon as Habiba appears to be the only woman trader. Numerous interviews also allowed for the testing of inconsistencies. These were rare with each interview producing more corroborating evidence rather than inconsistencies.

Other limitations which resulted from the deviation from the original methodology was the issue of firstly, not going to the women's countries of origin and secondly, not going to the women's homes in South Africa. Only one interview was conducted in a private home and this interview provided far greater insight into her living conditions as well as her trading life. All of the other interviews were conducted in the markets and therefore with reference to participant observation, only one space of their experience was observed. All findings are therefore based on the women's oral intervention. Further research which is undertaken utilising the methodology of the original proposal would therefore provide valuable findings to complement this research.

A concern with qualitative methods is the ability of other investigators to reproduce the results. Although this type of research is dependent on interpersonal relations, the findings generated common responses on the most important issues raised by all of the women, notwithstanding differences in their socio-economic status, country of origin, the trading site or the time in which the interviews were conducted. This gives confidence that other researchers would be more than likely to replicate the findings.

The emergence of common themes also lent strength to the limited sample size. Due to the short time available and the desire for depth to the study, a small sample size was chosen. At first, I was concerned with the generalisability of the sample and certainly a larger sample studied over a greater length of time would produce richer findings. Despite differentiation of the women's individual experiences, consistent themes and issues emerged from women trading in different markets, in different items and from different countries. This allows a more confidant assertion of the generalisability of the study.

As this research relied on oral histories and interviews, it was important to recognise that memory can border on myth, that is, that the attempt to construct a particular version of the past is based on the present. Myth making can result in a romanticisation of the past or of other places. It is therefore difficult to know whether one is being told the truth. Oral history can however be a powerful tool to tell the history of marginalised groups. These issues were relevant to this research especially as I was unable to travel with the women and observe their experiences and relationships in their home country. I was therefore reliant of their construction of home from the vantage point of their dislocation from the familiar and in the capacity as traders. This links with what many migrants utilise as coping mechanisms in a foreign country whereby aspects of the past or the familiar are drawn upon as a source of inspiration is an alien environment.

As a white woman interviewing black women, the power dynamics of this relationship need to be considered. Edward's (1990) argues that the gender of black women is constructed differently from white women as black women are subject to both race and class oppression. She highlights the necessity of recognising that there are divisions between women which affects research, especially if interview techniques are employed. Black women may not easily open their private lives to a white researcher. Trust is therefore not easy to establish on the basis of sex alone.

A key constraint in this research was the issue of trust and developing a rapport to facilitate free flowing participation. As I became increasingly aware of the small and insulated networks in which the women operate, it became clearer that this research was delving not into public realms but more intimate domains of friends and family.

Nkululeku (1987) completely rejects research done by white women on black women. According to Nkululeku, groups of oppressed people should not rely on its oppressor for its liberation and production of knowledge. Furthermore, alien researchers, as she describes them, will be laden with the trappings of their own history, values, culture and ideology and thus be unable to reflect other people's experiences.

What Nkululeko fails to recognise is that the experiences of black women are differentiated. This study researched women from different countries, religions, ethnic groups, languages etc. Recognising that power dynamics

of race need to be acknowledged, under some circumstances a black researcher will also face limitations. Furthermore, is possible that my race was an asset for many of the women fear competition and moreover fear the competition of South African traders. Being a white women, reduced this fear for it was not assumed that I was planning to entering trading.

During the research and interview process, numerous other unexpected obstacles emerged. The first was that of the weather. Due to the outdoor nature of trading, I had not anticipated the effect that the unpredictable highveld spring would have both on the business of the traders as well as this research. It rained for almost three weeks of the fieldwork. Many of my expeditions to the markets resulted in disappointment as most of the women did not trade on rainy days as their goods got damaged due to the lack of shelter associated with outdoor trading.

Another aspect that was both a constraint as well as an opportunity was conducting the interviews during trading times. The interviews were constantly interrupted and often, if apport had been established, an idea or issue that was being probed would suddenly halt in order for the trader to attend to her client. The advantage was that I was able to observe how the trader interacted with her customers. A further reward was that the time often afforded me the chance to restructure my thoughts and refocus the discussion if it was necessary.

Language proved to be an obstacle in some instances. Ruby, from Swaziland, initially refused to participate unless discussion could be conducted in the language of her choice. I suggested finding a translator after which she agreed to conduct interviews in English. I did, however, notice that during the discussions, she often shifted from one language to another inadvertently and thus I missed out on some of the information that she was providing. The women as a whole were fluent in English, an indication of the language of trading in South Africa as well as the quality of education in their home countries.

Despite the obstacles and constraints, the numerous interviews, visits and discussions produced valuable insights and fascinating life histories. The following chapter develops the stories by following the women from how they got involved in trading to the details of their travels and trade.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE STORIES OF TWELVE CROSS-BORDER TRADERS

Through participant observation and interviews, the stories of the women came into focus. This chapter paints a picture of who the women are and what they do. It explores the casual influences of why the women engaged in this form of income-generating activity. It thus begins to draw the links between globalisation and migration. How the women trade provides insight into the necessary networks they develop to ensure the viability of this activity and provides a basis for analysis of their conceptions of citizenship and gender relations. As their networks are social relationships based in specific historical contexts, the exploration of their journeys takes us further in understanding why very specific social networks are formed to survive or prosper as a cross-border trader.

The chapter begins by looking at the situation in the women's home countries as well as in their households. It explores how these influences contribute to why and how they become cross-border traders. The second section looks at what they do. It traces their activities from the point of acquisition of supplies, to production of the goods, to how the goods get to South Africa. It follows them on their journeys across the borders, their search for accommodation here and their experiences of living in South Africa. It then looks at how they manage their finances and who has the ultimate control over the decision making in these activities. It looks at how they access markets, the sales of their wares and their trips back to their

home countries. Throughout these sections, the theme that emerges is that of differentiation. The women come from different countries, speak different languag , come from different education backgrounds, different class backgrounds and have adapted to the needs of trading in different ways.

1. BACKGROUND TO TRADING

Their home countries

All of the women interviewed have access to land and housing. The women therefore all have established accommodation in their home country. Ten of the women have electricity in their homes. Two of the women come from farms, two live in thatch houses, five live in brick houses, one in a caravan and one in a rented brick house. None of the women said that they live in informal settlements in their home country. Eight of the twelve households are inter-generational either with adult children or parents living with them.

Of the twelve women interviewed, nine still retain links with the rural areas. Of these nine, six of their families are reliant on subsistence farming. Katherine, who lives in Harare, grows vegetables and fruit in the urban area to ensure sustenance for her family. Grace Chadereka's family sells food that they produce, whilst Rumbi Kangara's family used to sell food as a means of income generation.

Their parents

Eight of the women's mothers were engaged in informal sector activities. Four of the women who crochet had mothers who crocheted and thus their craft was passed down from one generation to another. Ruby's mother was engaged in a different informal sector activity. She brewed beer in the 1940s. Thandi's mother did washing for whites in Swaziland whilst the other four traders' mothers were housewives. None of the women's mothers were therefore engaged in formal sector activities. It is possible that this influence of their mothers and the independence that came along with formal sector activities steered them into the sector. This assumption is not intended to under-estimate the survival issues related to cross-border trading.

As regards their fathers, Habiba's father is an accountant. He was the only father engaged in a professional occupation. Two of the other women's fathers were migrant labourers who were working in South Africa. This concurs with the literature in affirming prior links across the region. Four of the women had absent fathers whilst two of their fathers were working in factories. Two of the women's fathers were farmers and one failed to answer the question.

With reference to the women's education levels, all of the women have relatively high levels of education. Anne was trained as a secretary and has a level of tertiary education. Habiba was in the process of studying before having to leave Cameroon. Five of the women completed high

school, two attended high school, two left in primary school and one did not attend school at all. From these findings, the Swazi women appear to have less education whilst the Kenyan and Cameroonian women are better educated. The younger women are more educated than the older one The average age of the women is from 22 to 58, with the average being 33,5.

The choice of trading

With an idea of the women's education levels, we now turn to what they did prior to trading and what encouraged these women to become cross-border traders. In this area, the theme of differentiation once again emerges. Three of the women were in relatively professional jobs. Winfilda was a nursery school teacher, Anne was trained as a secretary and Rosemary was trained as a typesetter. These women gave up these formal sector jobs in order to engage in cross-border trading. Two of the Swazi women were street hawking in Swaziland. When street hawking became flooded, they moved to cross-border trading. Five of the women have only traded and not had any jobs previously. Habiba was a student and Magdeline was farming. Thus we see that women from different classes, different countries, different levels of training and education all entered into a similar trade. The reason given for this choice was to improve their economic opportunities.

An examination of their family situation in their home country reveals how this could have influenced their decision to become a cross-border trader.

Of the twelve women, five are married. Two of the women are divorced and four of the women are unmarried. The ages of the unmarried women ranges from 22-40 years old. According to Grace, her reasons for not getting married are that, "Men, they've got a big problem - they talk too much!". She has decided not to get married despite the fact that she said it is not good to be seen as unmarried in Zimbabwe.

Of the five women who are married only two of the husbands share their earnings with their families. Two do not contribute to their families and one does not earn as he was retrenched. The majority of the women do not therefore receive financial assistance from their husbands. Most of the women cited the need to generate income as a reason for entering trading as they cannot rely on the men in their lives to assist.

The women describe their husbands as not happy about their working wives. They do, however, like the money that their wives bring in. Constance recounts that, "Sometimes he is grumbling, but the money for his job is not enough .. He is trying to stop me from working. Sometimes you give up, you know when you're fighting, you keep quiet but keep working. Now I pay for this and that, so he says to keep working." Thandi's husband echoes similar sentiments, "He has been crying all along but now he's quiet. I give money for school fees and dresses so what's he worried about?"

The women do however worry about what their husbands are up to while they are away. According to Constance, "Living apart is terrible but he would be phoning. He's found someone once but now I'm no longer worried. Living apart is no good." Katherine also worries about what her husband is up to while she is away but says, "What can I do, we have three children." All of the women have relatively small families. The number of children ranges from 0 - 5, with the average being 2,3 children per woman.

When asked whether their family's had another breadwinner, four of the women highlighted the importance of subsistence farming in order to ensure their family's survival. Both Ruby and Magdeline, from Swaziland, said that they grow mealies, cabbage and onions. Children and relatives look after the fields while they are away, ensuring that there is always food in the house. Some of the women receive limited contributions from other family members such as fathers, brothers, daughters, sisters and other relatives,

Of the seven unmarried women, six have children but only Grace receives maintenance from the father of her child. When Matilda divorced her first husband, she received no maintenance. "If you chase him," she said, "and report him, he will leave his job, then even the government will not force him to give you money." Magdeline is in a similar situation, "I get no maintenance and did not go to court - God will help." Thus, for the women both married and unmarried, the burden of childcare, educating the

children and looking after the welfare of their families become their responsibility. Not only do the women have to support their own children, but a majority also support other family members. The network of support is however reciprocal for of the women trading here, most insisted that they would not bring their children to South Africa. Thus it is essential for relatives and friends to be able to assist in looking after the family back at home.

Thus we see numerous reasons why women engage in cross-border trading. These have been divided into four categories. The first are the political refugees, Anne and Habiba, who need to ensure their survival in South Africa. Anne was forced into exile due to her husband's association with the opposition Safina party in Kenya. Habiba's mother is an organiser for one of the opposition parties in Cameroon and due to their fear of reprisals the women have been forced to leave their respective home countries.

The second category is based on economic limitations to women in that the informal sector is the only income-generating activity available or viable to them. These women are Constance, Delico and Grace. As Delico points out, the only jobs available to women in Zimbabwe were to sweep the streets, work in factories or to crochet. She chose the latter.

The third category is linked with the second in terms of economic limitations but also in that cross-border trading is a means of

supplementing subsistence production on the land. These women are Katherine, who grows fruit and vegetables at their home in Harare, but is unable to meet their subsistence needs through this activity. Ruby and Magdeline also face economic limitations and need to supplement the limited amount of fruit and vegetables that they manage to produce in Swaziland.

The fourth category results from a more entrepreneurial spirit whereby women perceive that better economic opportunities are available through cross-border trading. Rumbi falls into this category. Initially her mother was trading door-to-door in South Africa, but is now exploring new markets in Europe and will be leaving for the United Kingdom soon and will then hand the business in South Africa over to Rumbi. Thandi began as a hawker and when she found that was not making money, moved to curio trading. She now runs a successful wholesale business and while I was there, made a sale of 10 000 masks to a Korean trader. Winfilda is another who fits the entrepreneurial category. Initially trained as a nursery school teacher, she started making batiks and then joined the National Gallery of Zimbabwe. Being a member of the National Gallery facilitated links with Johannesburg galleries. Since 1994 her business has flourished and expanded. She has managed to put two of her children through school and the third one is in high school. Rosemary is another woman in pursuit of better economic opportunities. Her trading endeavours have taken her from Europe to Asia and she has since found that trading in South Africa is profitable. She, however, has links with the land in Kenya as her father is engaged in

subsistence farming. She left a trained, formal sector job in order to make her fortune in the informal sector where she has more control over her labour and her mobility.

The women were asked when they had started trading in order to ascertain whether liberalisation policies, which have been implemented since the early 1980s, influenced their decision. Three of the women started in 1990; three in 1989; three in the 1980s; and three in the 1970s. Nine of the women therefore started trading after 1984 when the full force of liberalisation was felt across most of the African continent. When asked why they started trading, two cited the political situation in their country. For most, however, it was an issue of economic survival. Being single mothers with unsupportive husbands and rising prices, many women have been forced to leave their homes and try to make a living for their families elsewhere. This has also combined with the flooding of informal sector markets in home countries. Economic survival is therefore a push factor which exposes the structural weaknesses within the home country. The sense of entrepreneurial spirit, however, also exists and this serves as a pull factor to some of the traders mentioned above. None of the women made a direct link to liberalisation or SAPs as the cause of their entry into trading.

The women's commitment to making an income lies in their commitment to their children and their children's education. It may appear contradictory that mothers who are so concerned for their children will leave them. It is

therefore essential to the women traders that there is someone reliable to look after the children in the home country. In the case of eight of the women with young children, the children are looked after by the trader's mother. Rose, when her mother passed away in 1996, had to leave her child in the care of her father. She felt that her mother was the better care-giver and therefore decided to employ a 'houseboy' in order to help with the domestic tasks. Thus we see a women who through her economic activities gains control over a male who is in a subordinate position to her. Of the women who are married, only two of their husbands help to look after the children while the woman is away trading. Mostly it is mothers, siblings, mothers-in-law, female relatives and sisters who are responsible for looking after the children and the upkeep of their homes. Relatives, mostly female, also contribute to the business, with husbands once again playing a peripheral role.

None of the women interviewed said that they would prefer to stay at home and be a housewife. All said that they needed to work for their own and their family's survival. Constance highlights the close relationships that are essential for cross-border traders. She says, " Mother helps me to look after the kids. I can't manage on my own and she can't manage without me. So at the end of the month I give her money. We just share." Constance points out the contributions that her earnings make to the family. Her husband, the taxi driver, did not work for a month. She says, "the month was so difficult so he says keep working,". Rumbi, too, for many years, saw her mother suffering after her father left and so started to help

her in crocheting in order to relieve the suffering and contribute to the family income.

Thus the experiences of women cross-border traders differ. The women however, all need to work in order to ensure their families survival. For some women, it appears that cross-border trading is a means to elevate the status and class of their children above their own. By providing their children with educational opportunities denied to them, they are trying to ensure that their children's future is different from the hard work that they have had to invest to ensure their family's survival.

Despite the overarching need to ensure their family's survival, many different influences propelled the women into cross-border trading. Thandi Mthumzi describes a dream that she had of walking in a dry place with R10, R20 notes and other money lying in the dust. It was dry, very dry and she was picking up the money. The same dream came to her twice so she went and spoke to an old woman who said that her ancestors wanted her to trade in handicraft. The ancestors have indeed blessed her. Thandi started with R35 capital, with this she bought eight belts but sold only seven,

> My aim was to sell everything. I felt sick so I went back to the factory. The mother there borrowed me beads and said I could give the money back later (Others give me boosts. She said I was

costing very low and paid me R30. After that, I started buying all of these things

For many of the other women their entry into trading has been equally challenging. Anne, on her flight from Nairobi to South Africa, met Kenyan women traders on the plane and told them of her plight. She says,

I had to borrow from them to sell. I told them my problem and they were helpful. They told me how we come here for trading. They were giving me things wholesale price and I started from market to market

Constance had to be resourceful and go behind her husbands back in order to get the money for cotton. He would give her money for the purchase of consumer items and savings whilst she was living in Venda, Instead she used the money for cotton. She describes how her mother-in-law co-operated with her and would refund the money if she was unable to sell her items by the time her husband returned. "I was worried that if he comes the money won't be there, but was consoled by my mother-in-law."

Most of the women used their own savings and assistance from relatives, usually sisters, otherwise they worked alone with no-one to help them. Four of the women could rely on production from the land in bad times when trading would not provide enough money to cover subsistence needs. Ruby and Magdeline were not in need of start-up capital for they

were using wood and grass which they would cut themselves to make the masks as well as the grass mats and other items made of grass. None of the women referred to assistance from a stokvel, few of the women took loans and many did not believe in loans. According to Rumbi,

> Even when we lived on the farm, if there were no tomatoes to mix with the meat, you just cook it without and eat the meat dry. My mother does not believe in asking the neighbours for tomatoes.

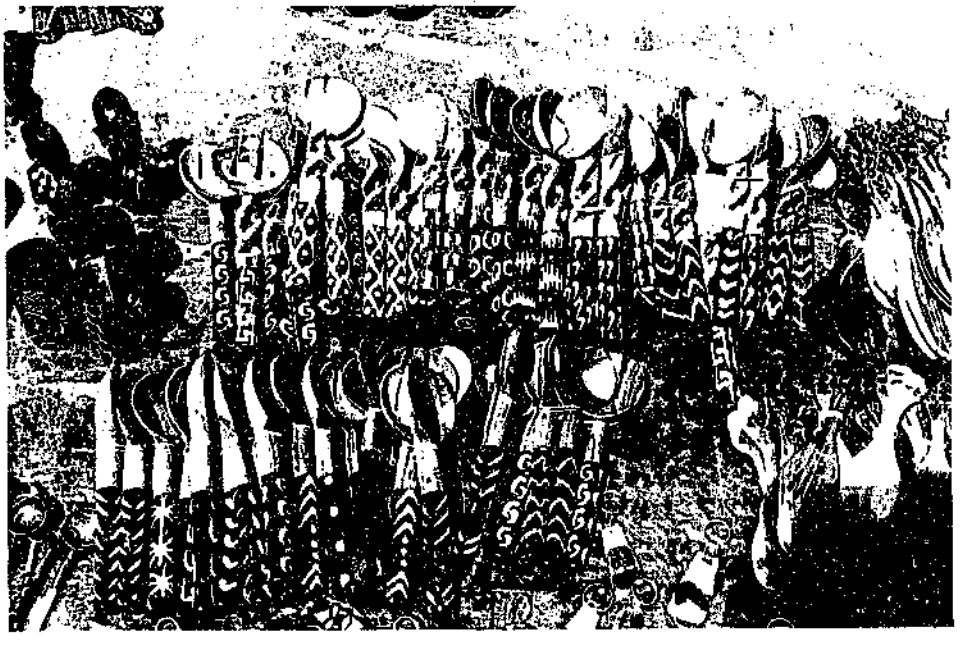
All of the women expressed a reluctance in taking loans from strangers or lending institutions. Rose said that, " I started with R300 and worked it up. You struggle and with God's help things will get better. If you work hard and don't cheat people, God is there to see." Thus the women, mostly through their own resources and the sweat of their own labour, managed to enter into cross-border trading and have attempted to make it a viable income-generating activity for their families.

2. WHAT THE WOMEN DO

Supplies

Two different types of supplies are necessary. These are firstly the supplies needed to make their own goods and these women therefore purchase supplies in order to make the items. For women who sell already-made gouds, they either need to go through a wholesaler or manufacturer to acquire the items. All of the women who sell crocheted items, buy their own cotton and make the items themselves. Constance buys her cotton

from the Oriental Plaza, whilst the four women from Zimbabwe buy their cotton from Zimbabwe. They all said that the cotton is not available in South Africa although it is possible that the cotton prices are lower in Zimbabwe. Rumbi identifies the rising cotton prices as hindering their business, "These days, everything is becoming high, not like before". Ruby and Magdeline from Swaziland, purchase their supply of beads which are imported from Taiwan and China. They buy the beads in the 'Transvaal' and take them home to make the beadwork. They also continually make the beadwork whilst selling at the market. Kiaat wood is used for the masks and the grasses are cut in the nearby veld in Swaziland. The masks are made by the men of the two families whilst the grasswork, dolls and beadwork is made by the women.



Wooden spoons made in Kenya

Winfilda also makes her own goods, the batiks. She buys the paint, materials and the T-shirts in Johannesburg. Winfilda also purchases already-made goods from the villages in Northern Zimbabwe and Zambia. These are the Tsonga baskets from Zimbabwe and the Mxenge baskets from Zambia.

Anne, as she is unable to return to Kenya, purchases already-made items from a wholesaler who operates between Kenya and Johannesburg. The Cameroonian curios are purchased from the villages in Cameroon by Habiba's parents and sent over to her. Thandi peruses the markets in Manzini in order to buy her stock. She describes an open market where the men sell their items.

Swazi Masks



> Only the men make it but the sellers are mixed, women and fathers (Sometimes I get stock from Mozambique. They come to Swaziland for one day to sell goods, can't get longer permits.

She says that the Mozambican producers cannot sell in South Africa as it is difficult for them to acquire visas.

Rose operates as both a wholesaler and a retailer. She goes to the different villages in Kenya to purchase the items. The people who make the crafts are organised into societies which operate in Mombassa and Wangunu. She says that, "We place orders so we must have some capital. We have to give half deposit and once finished, when we go to collect them, pay the balance."

Those who are purchasing larger quantities of unwieldy items tend to purchase in bulk. Habiba points out that it is more cost effective to purchase in bulk due to the flight costs of sending the items to South Africa. Thandi, who purchases her items in the markets in Manzini, prefers to buy in bulk in order to avoid unnecessary transport costs. The same applies to Rose. She says that, "It is a little bit cheaper, better than buying one one. Also its easier to transport." Bulk purchasing does not apply to Ruby or Magdeline as all of the items are made between the two families. All of the other traders purchase supplies and items as they need them.

Supplies are therefore acquired through a number of means and the acquisition of supplies is differentiated by whether the woman is a producer or a retailer of the goods.



Cameroonian statue

Production

Production is divided into two categories. The first category is when the goods that are sold are already produced. In the case of the Kenyan items, Anne purchases items that are made by different tribes. The carvings are made by both men and women but women usually do the finishing. Rose points out that the Kumbas make the best items. The calabashes come

from the Masai tribe, although all the tribes are represented in the various different artworks. Habiba sells items made in the villages in Cameroon. They are made by both men and women. She points out that there are no jobs in Cameroon so anyone who wants to get n... ney will make the different statues and carvings. The items that Thandi sells are produced in different parts of Swaziland. She says that, "Old men make it and we buy the stuff." The craft is however being passed on and young boys are also involved in the making of the masks.

Behind many of the masks and statues are stories. Habiba said that a statue of a lion is designed to protect you. Many of the masks are based on spiritual rituals, and fetishes are used for fecundity. She says that all of the designs and all of the items come with stories. Winfilda affirms that the Tsonga and Mxenge baskets, which are used in their tribe as utensils, are also inscribed with patterns and meaning. Her sisters, however, were told different meanings than that which her husband was given. They therefore market the baskets based on where they are sourced rather than the stories that are associated with them. All of the women assert that the items are not made in mass-based production houses but are made in the villages and homes where the artists are from.

The second category of production relates to those women who make the items themselves. This category applies to the crochet women, Ruby and Magdeline from Swaziland, where the goods are made within their family's, and Winfilda who straddles both categories as she is also an artist making

her own batiks. Most of the women who are selling crochet items work in female-based and often kinship networks. Constance sells the items made by her cousin, her mother as well as her aunt. Grace's items are produced by both herself and her sister. Katherine also makes the goods herself although sometimes production is shared between more than one woman. The woman is not paid and the relationship is based on reciprocity, a favour will be asked in return. Production takes place where ever the women are. During all of the interviews with women selling crochet items, the women never stopped crocheting. Rumbi says that, "If I miss crocheting, it seems as if I'm missing something big." None of the women employ people to crochet for them. The money from the sales of these items is shared between all those who have contributed to production.

Crocheted shirts made by the Zimbabwean women



With reference to designs, all of the crochet women say that the designs are in their heads. According to Constance, "I see designs and can make it exactly." Delico says much the same, "All goods are my creation ... I try to make different things." Katherine, too, does not use patterns, "I am just thinking in my mind." Although all of the women have the designs in their heads, the goods appear to be much the same between the different sellers and the different markets. The actual designs within the bedspreads, shirts and the doilies are all exactly the same. Sometimes a small deviation is made on the item, but usually it is a variations on the old, rather than a radically new style.

According to Ruby and Magdeline, their two families work together in order to teach each other the different patterns and designs that each family knows. They point out that some women try to do the woodwork, but that it is not very good. The women focus on making beadwork, grass mats and dolls. They say that the designs are based on what the customer likes. This, however, appears contradictory for as Ruby said, "Swazi stuff is old-fashioned, the new masks [from Zaire and west Africa] are more in fashion." Thus is appears that they are making what they are used to making and not necessarily what the customer is buying. Changes in design do not appear to be a common phenomenon.

The designs of Winfilda's batiks are also in her head, but are also associated with African folk tales. She says that she knew that they would sell because of the success at the Gallery and the Village Walk Pavement

Arts. Winfilda makes all of the batiks at her caravan home in Krugersdorp. She takes orders for specific designs if a customer requests these. She has also moved into new market channels whereby batiks are sewn onto shirts in brightly coloured designs which are apparently a great seller. The shirts are purchased by her daughters at the Oriental Plaza. Winfilda makes the batiks but her daughters sew them onto the shirts as they are the ones who sell the shirts. Winfilda appears to be more customer-oriented than some of the other traders who were interviewed.

As all of the women trading in South Africa are trading in goods that are specific to their different countries, they have some competitive advantage in that South Africans are not producing their items. Quality is controlled through either locating the production process in the actual seller, for example the crochet women or through purchasing from a wholesaler, society or village where the purchaser can choose from a vast range of producers. Rosemary points out, "When you start, you don't know what to buy. You buy things that people don't like and have to sell at cheap prices to get rid of it."

Once the women have the goods, the goods need to be brought to South Africa. Goods from further afield, such as Kenya and Cameroon, are brought here by aeroplane. Anne purchases her items through a wholesaler who operates in South Africa. Rose brings the goods that she has purchased in Kenya over by plane. If she cannot get to Kenya, her sister makes the purchases for her, puts them on the plane and Rose

collects them in South Africa. Winfilda's sisters are also her source of support. Her sisters purchase the Tsonga baskets in Northern Zimbabwe and will at times purchase the Mxenge baskets in Zambia if she and her husband, Kenneth are unable to go themselves. Habiba's parents buy the items in the villages in Cameroon and then pack and ship them here for Habiba to collect in South Africa. Thandi stores her goods in Swaziland and brings them to Johannesburg by bus. Magdeline and Ruby so the same with their items especially the masks. The women who are involved in crochet activity bring pre-made goods of their sisters, mothers, aunts and other relatives here by train or by bus. For many, bringing in the cotton is a way of avoiding customs duty and cotton is therefore brought to South Africa and the items are produced in South Africa by the women themselves.

The Journey to South Africa

All of the women traders co-ordinate their own travel plans. Before leaving their country, the women need to secure travel documents as well as ascertain the visa requirements for South Africa.

Anne and Habiba are both in South Africa as asylum seekers. For Habiba, the acquisition of a visa sent her through a maze of bureaucracy. Cameroonians attempting to get South African visas have to go via either Gabon, Abidjan or Paris. The Consulates have to be faxed as there is no South African consulate in Cameroon.

For the Zimbabwean women, the process is far less tedious. Although it can take up to six months to get a Zimbabwean passport, once this is acquired Zimbabweans get multi-entry permits for one year. The visa is free and takes one day to process. Winfilda, however, points out that visa applications are becoming increasingly more regulated. "Now it's difficult to get a visa, they check your account. They think all foreigners come here and loiter in the streets."

For the Swazi women the situation is different. Whilst they don't need a pre-applied visa, they only get a two week permit at the border. This inhibits their business activities and makes it imperative that the women work in groups of more than one. Thandi says, "I can't get a long visa, I must respect the 14 days they are giving me." Rosemary points out that whilst a Kenyan passport is easy to acquire, for a visa one needs finance. Coming from Kenya one gets a South African visa on arrival. A tourist visa, is however, only one month long and because Rosemary has a registered company in Kenya, she is entitled to a business visa which lasts for one year. Although the extended time benefits her business activities, she points out that being a registered company means not having the benefits of other informal sector traders have in that she has to pay taxes.

It sounds incongruous that the above mentioned requirements are for women with the same destination who engage is similar economic activities. The terms, conditions, restrictions and regulations differ from one woman to another and from women from different countries who are

coming here. This inconsistency results in preferential treatment for some women whilst inhibiting economic opportunities for others.

Once the women have their travel documents, the next step of the journey is the uncharted terrain of South Africa. Only two of the women made their first trip to South Africa alone. Both of these women are Kenyan – Anne and Rose. All of the others came for the first time in groups or with relatives or in an organised tour such as Winfilda with the art gallery.

The distance determines the mode of transport used by the women. Three come by aeroplane. These are the women from Kenya and Cameroon. Three of the Zimbabwean women come to South Africa by train. Two come by bus and the three Swazi women all use the bus.

Upon arrival, the women are greeted by the South African welcome party called customs. Once again, different criteria seem to apply to different individual women as well as women from different countries. The Zimbabwean women point to discrepancies at the border. One woman says, "Sometimes they weigh the bag and sometimes they look at the bag say, give me such amount." This is confirmed by the other women, "I think the customs cheat me. Sometimes they charge R100, sometimes R200 Aaaah no!" Another woman says, "Different customs people charge different rates and refuse to give slips [receipts]. The money is not going to the right channels but we paid because of fear of being turned back if you refused." All of the women interviewed view customs as an obstacle, not

just because of the irregularities but because of the high prices that are charged. According to Rosemary, "We pay customs and VAT on top of that, so that's where we struggle."

Once getting through the border, the women arrive in a foreign country. Most of the women are assisted through pre-existing contacts who help them find a place to stay and orient them to their new environment. This is not, however, the case for all of the women. According to Anne,

> I had no contacts, I didn't have a friend. I just knew my history. I flew here, went to Jan Smuts. I had little money. I had to follow the women on the plane. I had to follow them and stayed in a dangerous place called Hillbrow.

For three other women, hotels were also their first destination. Winfilda had a pleasant entry into South Africa by staying in a hotel organised by the Johannesburg Art Gallery when she came to exhibit her work in 1994. Rumbi also headed for a hotel which was recommended to her mother by other Zimbabweans as a safe place to stay. Rosemary arrived with no contacts and booked herself into a hotel through a travel agent. Upon arriving in South Africa she realised how expensive it was.

Three of these women later found more permanent accommodation. Anne subsequently found a flat which she shares with a Zimbabwean trader. Winfilda now stays in a caravan outside of Krugersdorp and Rose rents a

flat in town. Rumbi and her mother still stay in the Rondebosch hotel which is in downtown Johannesburg.

Friends and family helped to secure accommodation in South Africa for four of the women. When Habiba arrived, her cousin was already in South Africa and had organised a house where she could stay. Constance came straight to a house that her mother-in-law owns in Soweto. For Delico, Zimbabwean friends in Pretoria found her a hotel where she could stay. She now stays permanently in a hotel in Johannesburg in Hillbrow. For Grace the situation was similar. She arrived with her sister and was met by a Zimbabwean friend who was staying in Germiston. Grace now also lives in the Rondebosch Hotel where she stays alone. She says that she stays there because it is cheap and most of the people are from Zimbabwe.

For three of the women, their introduction to South Africa was not as accommodating as the above-mentioned scenarios. Katherine, on arrival in South Africa, was not only pregnant, but had to spend her first month sleeping on the cement platforms of Park Station where there were no facilities for personal care. "Park Station was without water to wash yourself and clothing. We would open the top of the toilet lids and put washing powder to wash the clothes. We learned this from the other traders living there." She travelled with her sister every day to Fourways by Putco bus. For four years they continued to stay in Park Station during all of their trading expeditions to South Africa. It was only in 1990 that she found a place at Witkoppen School. The rent, however soon caught up



Beaded dolls made by women from Swaziland

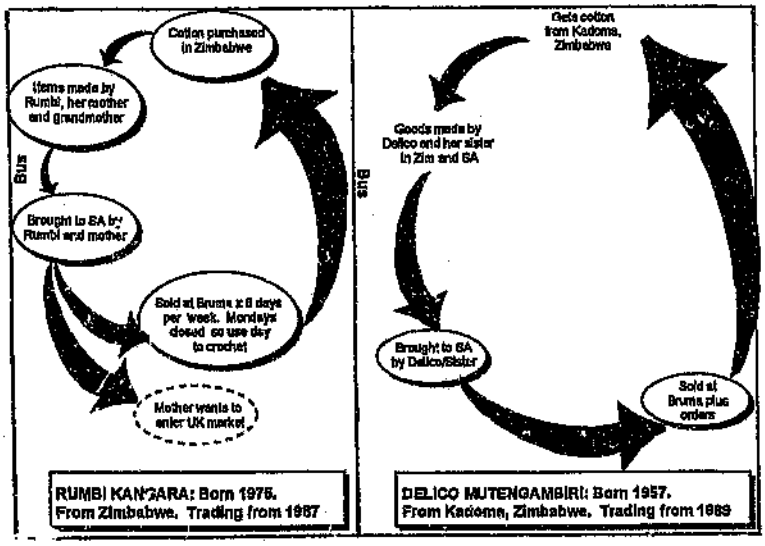
with her and in 1995 she found a place at Diepsloot which is an informal settlement north west of Johannesburg. It is in Diepsloot where she stays now and she lives alone. According to Katherine, "The place here, people are suffering, we don't have a nice place to stay. We pay a lot of money for a room – R220 without a toilet or water."

Katherine was not the only trader to be hosted by Park Station. Ruby, in her early trading years, stayed at Park Station until she was able to find accommodation in a women's hostel in Alexandra township. She says that Park Station was very difficult as every hour the police would come and ask for your ticket. Ruby stayed in Park Station until 1979 - six years of her

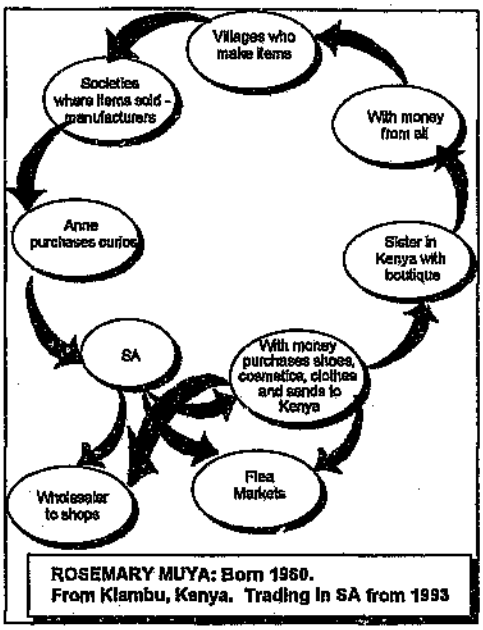
trading life. Thandi also began her trading career sleeping at Park Station. "The first time I slept at Park Station, later I got friends and then slept at their places (There were few women at Park Station then, now there are many."

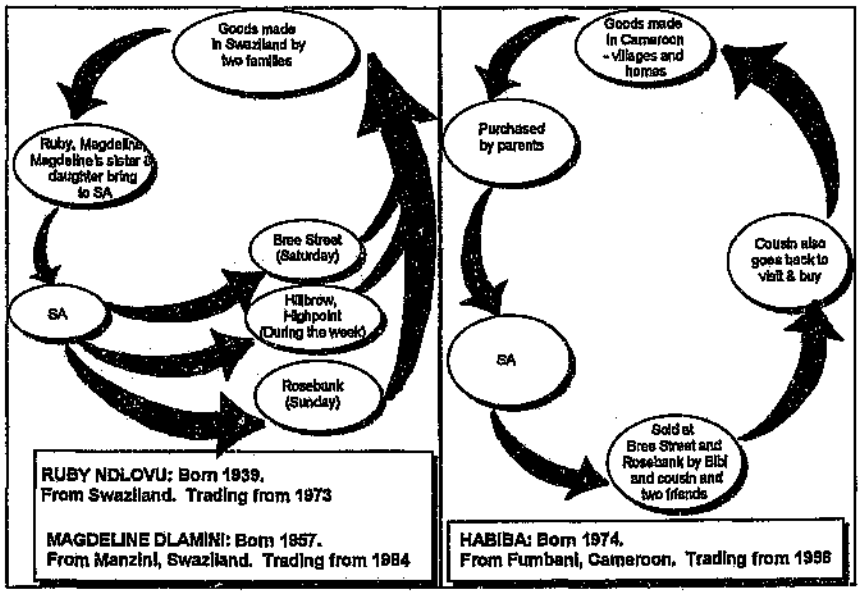
Magdeline was spared the initiation rites of Park Station. As Ruby introduced her to trading, she came and stayed at the hostel in Alexandra from the beginning. She now has a flat in Jeppe Street in Johannesburg where she pays R500 per month. "It [rent] is high because business is slow. Even for Christmas it's still slow."

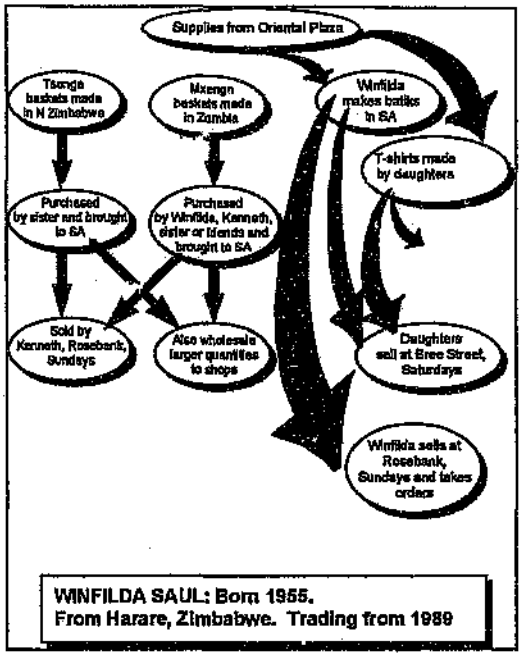
Once the women have a place to stay, they need to access markets for the sale of their goods.



Flow charts providing examples the linkages between supplies, production, distribution and sales


Villages who make items
With money from sil
Sister in Kenya with bottique
With money purchases shoes, cosmetics, clothes and sends to Kenya
Flea Markets
Wholesaler to shops
SA
Anne purchases curios
Societies where items sold - manufacturers
ROSEMARY MUYA: Born 1960.
From Klambu, Kenya. Trading in SA from 1993


Goods made in Swaziland by two families
Ruby, Magdeline, Magdeline's sister & daughter bring to SA
Bree Street (Saturday)
Hillbrow, Highpoint (During the week)
Rosebank (Sunday)
SA
RUBY NDLOVU: Born 1939.
From Swaziland. Trading from 1973
MAGDELINE DLAMINI: Born 1957.
From Manzini, Swaziland. Trading from 1984
Goods made in Cameroon - villages and homes
Purchased by parents
Cousin also goes back to visit & buy
Sold at Bree Street and Rosebank by Bibi and cousin and two friends
SA
HABIBA: Born 1974.
From Fumbani, Cameroon. Trading from 1998



Sales

The women acquire sales and market information through various means. According to Anne, she conducted market research by travelling from market to market based on posters that she saw. Two of the women were connected to South Africa through art exhibits. Habiba came over from Cameroon after her cousin had come to South Africa to exhibit at a show at the Johannesburg Art Gallery. Winfilda also came through an art exhibit in which she was exhibiting her batiks at the Johannesburg art gallery. Through the gallery she found out about the Village Walk Pavement Arts. By the time the Village Walk Pavement Arts ended, Winfilda had already found out about the Bree Street market and the Rosebank rooftop market through other traders and friends in Johannesburg. Three of the women found out about the various markets whilst trading door-to-door. "We started trading in Soweto," said Delico, " We were selling door-to-door.

Business was a little bit fine (sometimes they turn us away, sometimes they buy." Most of the women learned of the markets through word-of-mouth networks of friends, traders and family.

Once finding the market the women are faced with fierce competition as there are many other traders selling similar or the same items as their own. According to Anne, "When I first started trading it was good, it was not flooded. The wholesalers are causing flooding (every Kenyan here is doing the same thing. They mess the prices."

Pricing is a contentious issue amongst the traders, and the co-ordination is difficult. Only four of the women do co-ordinate pricing with other traders who are selling the same items at that same market. The Kenyan women co-ordinate their prices as their stalls are alongside each other. They recognise that trying to out-price each other will merely reduce their own incomes. The Cameroonians also co-ordinate in order to maintain their prices. Katherine's group of five women from Harare also co-ordinate as they are selling from the same stall as well as selling the same goods. The women crochet and sell together, co-ordinate pricing and share the profits.

The other women however prefer to work alone. According to Constance,

> I don't look at the other women, it's her business. Some people from other countries, so no-one wants to co-operate, we all do things on your own... The women who crochet talk and can be friendly but

some are not kind- hearted. Some think you are making a lot, that you have everything. It's tough.

The competition between traders has also been known to boil into jealousy. According to Winfilda, she referred a customer to another woman selling batiks:

> The other lady become jealous of me. I referred some customer who came back to me and says that the lady says my batiks are not made properly, the colours will run. I went to her, as soon as she saw me she walked away. Me, I'm not jealous of these people. I am an artist, I make my own designs.

Due to the competition and lack of trust between traders, most of the traders prefer to work or employ family, kin, someone from their own home town, or of their own language, religion, location or to work alone. The lack of trust extends beyond other traders to South Africans. Anne says,

> I only employ a Kenyan, Malawian, Zimbabwean or Mozambican, not South Africans because they'll want to take it over. Sometimes they run away with your money back to Kenya and you can't find them. That's why I brought my brother here so that when I go to Saudi in December he can look after the business.

Whilst the women prefer to work with people who are familiar, their major customers are those who aren't familiar: – tourists. The women do not appear to have communication problems with their customers. Most of the customers speak English although according to Constance, "You have to persuade them to buy, it's not easy for them just to stand and buy." Thandi says that her customers are, "the whites. I'm being supported by the whites especially placing orders."

Some of the women seem to feel that South Africans are philistines when it comes to art and hand-made items. According to Habiba, South Africans do not understand art. She does not bring older items which are of higher value to South Africa as they cannot sell them for what they consider as the appropriate price. According to Katherine, "Tourists like the stuff as it's art, hand-made."

Once the women have found their customers and made their sales, they must manage their earnings.

Finances

Now that the women have sold their items, what do they do with the money? For two of the women, cross-border trading is a form of survival in South Africa. These are Habiba and Anne who are political refugees and are trying to forge an existence to survive in South Africa. For the other ten women, the bulk of their earnings is spent on family expenses in their country of origin. Five of the women highlight the high cost of school fees.

An advantage for women cross-border traders is the level of autonomy that they have over the income that is generated. Two of the women, Winfilda and Constance, share financial decision-making with their husbands. For Rumbi, it is her mother who makes decisions as Rumbi is working for and with her mother. This will soon change, however, as her mother plans to trade in the United Kingdom and leave the South African leg of the business to Rumbi. For the rest of the women, they themselves decide what to do with the money.

In terms of managing the money, four of the women have bank accounts. These are Anne, Habiba, Rosemary and Rumbi. Winfilda and Constance share accounts with their husbands whilst the rest of the women use mostly cash. As the income generated appears to be variable, they spend the money as it comes in. Two of the traders have registered companies.

The keeping of financial records is variable. Four of the women do keep books. These are Anne, Rose, Winfilda and Habiba. According to Rose, "You have to work out profit and loss. If you do it blindly, you don't know where you are going with the business." Four of the women keep an unsystematic record of sales. These are all women who were given diaries by the management of Bruma Flea Market who advised the women to keep a record of their sales. For many of the women it appears that this is the first time that they have written down sales. These, however, are not converted into books or analysed in terms of financial progression. The

other four women do not keep books at all. According to Thandi, "No sometimes it puts you off because sometimes you sell and sometimes you don't."

The keeping of financial records is linked with the educational levels attained. Katherine, Ruby, Magdeline and Thandi have the lowest education amongst the women and do not keep records. Thus financial records-keeping skills are linked to class and education levels.

Homeward Bound

The interviews with the women provided a picture of regular and consistent travels back home. Three of the women return home once a year. Anne cannot return home, but once a year goes to visit her husband who is in exile in Saudi Arabia. Habiba, who is also a refugee, has been in South Africa for almost a full year and has no idea when she will be able to return home. Winfilda, who now lives in South Africa, returns to Zimbabwe once a year at Christmas time. She does, however, travel to Zambia every three to four months in order to purchase new baskets. Constance said that she returns to Venda "regularly", though she failed to clarify what regularly meant. Three of the women said that they returned home every three to four months. Grace said that she returns to Kadoma and stays at least one month after every three to four months. Rumbi also said that she returns every three months. Rosemary returns every three to four months to purchase new items as well as to visit her children and father. Katherine and Delico said that they return every one to two months. The Swazi

women by contrast are only given two week permits and are therefore obliged to return every two weeks.

Although it sounded systematic at first, these plans were often very different in practice. Although Constance says she returns home regularly, in the three months that I visited the market, she was there daily. My first visit with Rumbi was followed by her threatening departure; months later, however, she is still trading in South Africa. Katherine who said that she returns every one to two months has now decided to stay on for about six months to try and raise money for school uniforms for her children. Thus, what the women related as their plans are possibly more likely to be ideals rather than what is achievable in practice. The women are only able to return depending on finances and this is also influenced by their visa requirements.

When the women do eventually return, they were asked whether they take items back for resale in their home country. Of the twelve women interviewed, only three women do. Constance takes back clothing and blankets which she purchases from a wholesaler in Johannesburg and resells in Venda to friends and family. Katherine takes orders for items that people find difficult to buy in Zimbabwe. For Rosemary, the resale of items entails a whole new leg of her business. Her sister runs a store in Nairobi selling clothes, shoes and cosmetics from South Africa. For the other nine women, the only items taken back are consumption items for friends and family. Thus we see that whilst the migration is circular for the majority of

the women, trade is an activity undertaken in South Africa ending with the purchase of consumption items to take home.

Whilst a theme of differentiation emerges in the women's experiences as cross-border traders, certain commonalities begin to surface. The women engage in trading in order to ensure economic survival and opportunities in the face of structural constraints and family needs. Trading can however not take place without support from their families at home and thus interpersonal relationships are essential to ensure that their children are cared for. These interpersonal relationships extend to the sharing of information on travel, accommodation and markets. The following chapter explores these themes in more detail to enhance our understanding of how these networks are formed, why they are formed and in what ways structural factors and entrance into the market influence the women's conception of citizenship and gender relations.

CHAPTER FIVE: TRUST AND TRADING

In the previous chapter, we followed the women on their journey from their home country to South Africa. We explored how their trading networks operate, where they purchase their supplies, the production and sale of the goods and how the women manage to integrate into the South African market.

This chapter probes the debates of whether the activities of the women conform to the neoclassical theorists who stress that liberalisation frees the individual to pursue their own economic interests unencumbered by the state or Pre-market relations, or whether these activities are merely survival strategies undertaken to cope with the economic hardships that accompany either political or economic liberalisation. This chapter locates the economic activity in a social context and thus a more nuanced alternative is explored. Granovetter (1992) argues that the social and economic are interlinked through interpersonal relations as they invoke personal obligations which are better able to discourage dishonesty than are institutional arrangements or economic contracts. These are often based on kinship, clan or family ties. Granovetter's assertion is applied further to the women's conception of citizenship, their husbands and the state and to what extent the 'contract' between the state, their husbands and the women is perceived as assisting or hindering the women's activities.

This chapter provides an analytical exploration of the issues and themes raised in the previous chapter. The first are the effects of globalisation, the democratisation of South Afric and the subsequent incorporation of South Africa into the continent. The second section will look at how the activities of cross-border trading impact on social relations. The third section will be linked to the third and examine the women's conceptions of citizenship. The fourth section will explore to what extent borders are an obstacle or a hindrance, and whether the women operate within clearly demarcated territorial borders. The fifth section looks at the study's contribution to our understa of migration in the region. The sixth section will look at the networks within which these activities take place. It will look at the foundations of the network and the importance of trust.

1. THE EFFECTS OF GLOBALISATION

Whilst the women do not recognise economic liberalisation as being the driving force behind their entrance into cross-border trading, the causes which they do identify point to the associated economic and political effects of SAPs. Katherine from Zimbabwe, refers to the fact that she was compelled to continue trading once her husband had been retrenched from Cohn Textiles in Zimbabwe. Cohn Textiles was one of the companies forced into liquidation when economic liberalisation was imposed on Zimbabwe.

All of the women refer to their reasons for trading as caused by declining living standards and rising prices. According to Katherine, "In Zimbabwe

it's too hungry there... women do business because their children are hungry, but some just sit, they don't know what to do." Rumbi also points to rising prices, "But these days everything is becoming high, it's not like before." Ruby refers to the burgeoning of the informal sector in Swaziland resulting in the flooding of the informal sector market in Swaziland, "There is no money in Swaziland and many people are selling soft goods... [before] life was better, bread three cents a loaf. Everything is up now, can't afford to buy because of the value of the money. It's nothing now."

It is difficult to assess from the interviews whether the affects of the increasing living costs are due to changing personal circumstances or whether they are linked to economic and political changes. The fact that most of the women entered trading after 1984 points to the effects of liberalisation for it is from the early 1980s that the full effects of liberalisation were felt across the continent.

Cross-border trading can, however, reflect a contradictory outcome of liberalisation. In Brand et al (1995) study of Zimbabwean women traders, she describes cross-border trading as providing, "some women with enough resources to initiate successful trade have actually been able to benefit from the general atmosphere of liberalisation accompanying ESAP." (Ibid: 200).

The economic status of the women researched is differentiated. The evidence does suggest, however, that some women have benefited from

these activities. Thandi started trading with R35 and eight belts. During our interview, she was busy negotiating the sale of 10 000 masks to a North Korean trader. Rumbi Kangara's mother started as a door-to-door seller, walking the streets of Soweto. She is now planning on expanding her business to the United Kingdom with Rumbi taking over the South African leg of the enterprise. Winfilda Saul has also managed to expand her business. Beginning with small-scale trading of batiks at the Village Walk Pavement Arts, she now has three successful stalls operating from two different markets. She also acts as a wholesaler as well as taking orders for specialised batiks. These women have therefore moved from base-line survival to running successful business operations. This affirms Hansen's study of women who undertook shopping trips to neighbouring countries in order to sell in Zambia. She describes it as a risky business but a profitable one. This, however, does not apply to all of the women traders and for some of the women, such as Katherine, cross-border trading still reflects a hand-to-mouth existence.

Globalisation is evident in other spheres. The emergent mass media that is currently linking the world at the flick of a switch influenced two women in their choices to come to South Africa. Anne, from Kenya, had seen South Africa on television and knew of the changes. She says, "I had no contacts, I didn't have a friend, I just knew my history." The television was also an influence on Habiba from Cameroon. She says, "Before, South Africa was on TV with apartheid and all, so we were familiar with South Africa." Information and cultural links have extended beyond television.

Habiba first came here as her cousin had made contact with South Africans in a Cameroonian delegation which came over for an art exhibition. Contact was made with the Bree Street market which facilitated their entry in terms of selling their items there. Winfilda was also introduced to South Africa through a cultural exchange. She was an artist in residence at the National Gallery in Zimbabwe. She came over to South Africa to display her work and in the process met up with the Village Walk pavement arts and began to sell her items here in South Africa. These linkages reflect the reintegration of South Africa into the African and international economies, influences that began to be played out after 1990.

The impact of globalisation has therefore influenced cross-border women trading in various ways. Economic, political, cultural and social linkages have facilitated the women's journeys to South Africa. These changing global relations have also resulted in changing regional relations which in turn shape social relations.

2. CHANGING SOCIAL RELATIONS

Women and the state

The activities of women cross-border traders bring many existing relations into question. As these women are claiming economic autonomy to ensure their family's survival, cross-border trading represents a challenge to the ability of the state as a welfare provider. This increased assertion of women into a public realm could threaten patriarchal states. Stuart (1996)

argues that women should not give up on the state as the state will not give up on them, rather, they need to lobby the state to achieve greater justice and strengthen women's positions within existing contexts.

The women interviewed, however, do not heed her call. The majority of the women do not trust politics but see it as a power-hungry male realm that is characterised with lies, deception, false promises and little benefits to their interests. Winfilda says, "I don't know about politics. I don't want to crack my head with politics." For Katherine, the state and politics is a realm that she fears, "Politics, I don't trust it, you can die or have a shooting in the leg and there is no-one who can pay... I just close my mouth... Even here in South Africa, I close my mouth. I don't know what can happen to you." Rose is more vociferous in her criticisms, "Politicians are all liars. They promise nonsense, but at the end of the day they are identical. They're all money-hungry, just want to pocket the money..." Politics is seen as an arena of corruption and corruptibility, it is associated with male behaviour that the women experience in the household. According to Habiba, "The President, once elected, became rude, doesn't listen."

The women's perceptions on politics and the state are, however, somewhat differentiated. The women from Swaziland and Zimbabwe express a disinterest in politics. By contrast, the women from Kenya and Cameroon are actively engaged with the issues of the day and were forced to come to South Africa due to political circumstances in their country's.

Katherine's perception's of voting is ambivalent: she says that although she did vote in the Zimbabwean elections in 1980, she is not sure what the key issues were. She sees the key reason for voting being, "People were fighting, they didn't finish, that's all... The people don't want civil war, just want to be living nicely - people go to vote because they don't want civil war." Thandi, too, reflects her distance from politics, "I don't want to criticise my country."

Tribalism and regionalism are key issues to the women from Kenya and from Cameroon. According to Anne, "The President must quit. He gives everything to his tribe. He is Kalinjin and I am Kikuyu so we get nothing." Habiba spoke of regionalism and recruiting in the different areas. She highlights her distrust in the legitimacy of elections. She points out that the polls are obviously rigged for sometimes a candidate from a region will not be voted into their own region.

When asked whether the women engage with the state, participate in public holidays and political meetings, the responses were fairly uniform. The reasons for not participating varied, but were, however, linked to the responsibilities of motherhood as well as the distrust of the political realm. According to Constance, "I don't really participate because I don't have someone to look after my kids." Rose, by contrast, says, "I don't have time. It's not important anymore. On holidays, the President's speeches are all lies so it doesn't matter." Even Anne, who is here as a political refugee, did not attend political meetings. She says, "No, I was a

secretary, my husband was involved. I couldn't go because I was too much on my job." The majority of the other women did not attend and expressed no interest in attending or engaging with political issues.

The women's relationship with their state is, however, contradictory. Their conception of the state is generally negative, although most of them have a strong conception of national identity. This is reflected through their sense of home, belonging, familiarity, cultural ties, language, religion and ethnicity. Ten of the twelve women, when asked whether they prefer to socialise with people from home or from other countries, said that they prefer to socialise with people from their home country. Thandi said that most of her friends are from Swaziland, "They understand me and I can understand them." For Delico, family is the key magnet attracting her back to Zimbabwe. When asked whether she would like to relocate permanently to South Africa, she said, "No, I want to go back. My mother, she's alone. I need to look after her." Many of the other women refer to preferable living conditions in their home country. According to Katherine, "In Zimbabwe, we don't have money, but we live nicely otherwise." Winfilda affirms that, "finance is better in South Africa, but not living and conditions."

Whilst home is a place of family and the familiar, South Africa is seen as barbaric, isolating, alienating and a form of entrapment. Most of the women do not understand South Africans and feel that they are not understood in South Africa. The sense of national identity is linked with

ties to the land. According to Grace, "Zimbabwe is okay. I don't want to live here permanent, just to visit and go back. I don't like to stay here. There is no reason, but I don't like to stay here. I just like my motherland."

Home, therefore, provides a sense of nurturing and security. It is the "motherland" while South Africa is seen as a place to make money. The women remain essentially insulated from South Africa and South Africans, living in enclaves of people from their home country. For those who are here for extended periods of time, information filters in through travellers, traders and friends who bring news from home. Life in South Africa is unable to distract from the attachment that the women hold to the land, their families, language, custom, religion and ethnicity.

The women's relationship to their state is influenced by their individual situation. An example is Rose and Anne who are both from Kenya. Anne came to South Africa as a political refugee and got involved in trading as there was nothing else for her to do. Rose, by contrast, highlights the decline of the economy in that by coming to South Africa, there was an opportunity for making more money. Whilst both women came from the same country, their reasons for entering into cross-border trade differ. Thus, the reasons for women entering into cross-border trading is an interaction of individual experience located within the situation of their particular country.

Despite their increased assertiveness in the society, the women are still subordinate to patriarchal structures. Although the increased economic independence ensures certain degrees of freedom, the structures of the state and the evasion of family responsibility by men results in the burdens falling onto the shoulders of women. Whilst the views of the women on the state are differentiated, there is a common theme of the state being perceived as something "out there". For most of the women, the state is unable to contribute to their survival needs, for others the state is seen as hostile, alienating, coercive and unsupportive. It is associated with the male realm and is an area that the women choose not to negotiate with.

For the women, the immediate issues are those based on their role as mothers and the state is not seen as contributing or assisting in terms of the welfare of their families. The one area where the women could take on the state to ensure contributions to their families is the issue of maintenance. Yet only one of the women receives maintenance from the father of her child.

The outcome of these findings is that the women tend to be politically conservative. If we return to Stuart's call for women to continue engaging with the state and strengthening their position within existing contexts, this research finds that this option is constrained on many fronts. One of these is the lack of time that women have to engage in politics due to their economic and family responsibilities. The second is their distrust of

politics and in this sense, these women have given up on the state, which they do not see as serving their interests.

Women and Men

Cross-border trading influences relations within the household. For most of the women, households are sites of tension, where women are responsible for making ends meet without control over resources and the tensions this generates are ignored in SAPs. Most of the women entered cross-border trading due to these tensions and in an attempt to gain control over their own resources. Rose, whose husband abandoned her and her child, says, "There is nothing I have seen good in men. How can you give birth and not support your child?" Thandi, who is still married, says that, "The father of my children is no help. I just struggle myself." The state, in turn, is seen as a male agent. According to Rose, "The government of men wants all things for themselves." Thus the majority of the women support children without male or state support. They need to make it on their own and, in order to do so, need networks which they can rely upon.

A more robust assertion of the women in the household is evident in this study. All of the women interviewed control what they do with their finances. Those who are married either negotiate family expenditure with their partners or merely take the reins and steer for themselves. They are not subject to the whims of their husband and, where their husband has attempted to assert control, the woman either engages in evasion or

deception tactics. Thus, women cross-border traders are both unable, as well as refuse, to stay at home and rely on their husbands.

The literature suggests that the growing importance of female labour transforms the household division of labour. Men are more willing to accept women's increased control over their own wages but less willing to share in household labour (Tripp, 1992: Brand et al, 1995: Elson, 1992). This research affirms these findings. Many of the women have had to fight for their autonomy and the ability to work and migrate without their husband's approval. Once the husband got used to the increased income, however, he did not complain but also does not share in the gender division of household labour. Women cross-border traders' children are cared for by other women. There is inter-generational co-operation amongst women whereby mothers and mothers-in-law take care of the children. Control of the household sphere is thus feminised through matriarchal networks. The nature of production is, however, gendered e.g. crochet is seen as women's work whilst carving is seen as men's work.

It is not possible to ascertain from this research whether more women are entering the market through cross-border trading. Quite a number of the women, however, pointed out the limited opportunities for women. They did not see the formal sector as providing for their survival needs. By engaging in the informal sector, the women have a degree of control over their own welfare, their hours and their mobility. None of the women's mothers worked in the formal sector. Opportunities in the formal sector as

well as the informal sector are seen as limited. For example, in Swaziland, the women pointed out that the choice that they had was between sweeping the streets, street vending, limited factory opportunities or trading.

Cross-border trading ensures that their relationships with husbands and partners are long-distance. The women therefore face issues of whether they can trust their husbands' fidelity. Responses to this issue are differentiated. Katherine said she would not do anything if her husband had an affair as they have children together. Others feel that they can't trust their boyfriends or husbands. Rumbi, who is to be married early next year, says that she is hard on her boyfriend to stay with her. She said that sometimes she hears from friends that he is up to bad things but she said one must be careful of what friends say as they will be the first to get closer to him when you leave. Constance says that, "Living apart is terrible, but he would be phoning. He's found someone once, but now I'm no longer worried. Living apart is no good. You worry if you can trust, it's not easy." Habiba has also found the issue of long distance relationships difficult. When first coming here, she had a boyfriend in Cameroon, but this relationship did not survive the separation. She now has a new boyfriend who is also a trader here from Cameroon and despite her family's objections that he is Christian and she is Muslim, the relationship has flourished. Migration is therefore contradictory with reference to marital relations and control over sexuality. The long distances fundamentally warp marital relations. At the same time, however, the

situation of Bibi, for example, reflects her increased control over her sexuality as she has chosen her own partner here without her parents around to either approve or disapprove of the relationship.

Most of the women receive limited, if any, support from their male partners. Some have chosen not to marry despite family pressure to do so. Grace has chosen not to marry although it is not seen as good to be an unmarried woman in Zimbabwe. Habiba also chose not to marry. When she got pregnant, she discovered that her boyfriend had plans of taking another wife. She refused to go and stay with him and had to endure the wrath of her father who felt that she had shamed the family name. Her father now adores the child as he never had a son of his own.

South African men appear to fare equally badly in the women's negative perceptions of men. Katherine thinks that South African men are too forward, "They want too many women, they take you for a stupid." She also commented on their drinking habits and that there are too many shebeens in South Africa. Men from South Africa are associated with aggression and violence. Habiba said that she would like to marry, but would not marry in South Africa as she has heard that South African men beat up their wives.

Men are therefore not seen as performing the traditional tasks of providing for the family: they are seen as deserters who are not to be relied upon.

The women need to fight for economic autonomy or merely assume control from an absentee husband.

In some instances the activities of cross-border trading inverts the traditional subordination of women to men. Some of the women have gained positions whereby men are subordinate to them and thus the power structures are challenged. In the case of Ruby and Magdeline, the men make the masks but, it is the women who sell them, inform the men of their stock needs and control the finances. This raises the possibility of the women directing the men. Other instances refer to similar dynamics. Thandi purchases her goods from markets in Manzini. The items are made by old men but it is a woman who has the buying power to chose where and from whom to get her stock. Her order of 10 000 masks will undoubtedly place her in a powerful position in the market. Rose, too, purchases her items from a vast range of Kenyan producers. As she acts as a wholesaler and makes bulk purchases this places her in a powerful economic position whereby she can decide whether or not to purchase from any particular producer. In Rose's home in Kenya is another example of a woman gaining control over a man. Upon her mothers' death, she chose not to employ a female domestic worker to assist in the care of her child but chose to employ a 'houseboy'. The economic position of cross-border traders therefore has the ability to alter gender relations through the economic power that it affords some of the women to attain over men.

Women and other women

As this research was located in the different markets around Johannesburg, the key relationship between women and other women which Was observed and which was spoken about was that of the relationship between women and other women traders. Most of the women spoke of the immense competition between fellow traders.

The relationship between women traders is characterised by a lack of trust, a lack of co-operation and, at times, actively working against each other. None of the women who are engaged in crochet trading buy their cotton co-operatively, despite the benefits of bulk buying. All of them buy the cotton alone or with family members. In the selling of the crocheted items, competition, once again, reared its ugly head. Constance remarks, "I don't look at other women, it's her own business. Some people are from other countries, so no-one wants to co-operate, we all do things on your own." The women, however, recognise that by not co-operating on issues of pricing, the prices are forced down. According to Rumbi, "Some other sellers sell at very cheap prices." Thandi also highlights that, "There are many but we don't co-ordinate, charge own price. The other one may charge less to defeat you."

Some of the women do co-operate with each other. Anne and Rosemary are both traders from Kenya and attempt to co-ordinate pricing and selling. As Anne is a wholesaler, she has the ability to sell her items at cheaper prices. However, in order not to push Anne out of the market, they set base prices. Katherine's stall in Four Ways is also the collective effort of

five women. The five women work together, crochet together, sell for each other and co-ordinate pricing. This is facilitated through the lack of other crochet stalls at the Four Ways market.

The women do, however, co-operate and assist each other in areas where finances are not involved. The women will share information and accommodation and care for each other if they are ill. They will not, however, share customers, trust each other with money or other financial matters. Thus they will share when trust is not essential. This does not reflect a gendered solidarity for the women only co-operate with those who are familiar, in other words, from the same country, location, religion, ethnic group, language or family.

Women and children

Most of the women cross-border traders reflect the key reason for their trading in South Africa as being for the benefit of their children. Anne and Habiba trade here for their own individual survival needs. Anne's child is being cared for by her husband in Saudi Arabia and Habiba's child is being cared for by her parents. The others, however, are looking out for the needs of their children and especially prioritise education. The educational achievements of the children is higher than that of their parents. The mothers reflect their children's aspirations not to be cross-border traders but to be auto electricians, mechanics, nurses or teachers. There is an desire for upward mobility for their children.

Most of their children are left at home to be raised by mothers or mothers-in-law. Few have male primary care givers. Rosemary, whose mother passed away, has now left her child in the care of her father. She, however, recognises inadequacies in his child rearing abilities and has therefore employed a house boy to assist with domestic duties. Child raising is therefore seen as a female area of concern. It is a contradiction for whilst the women's main concern is for their children, the women are far away and unable to physically care for them. It is therefore essential for the women to have someone whom they trust looking after their children while they are away.

The changing gender relations are contradictory for a along with the increased economic burdens, there are also new opportunities. T[illegible] however, come at a price for the women who trade in South Af[illegible] of the women endured hardship through working seven days per week. The opportunity lies in the ability to generate an increased income. A common theme for all of the women, however, is their commitment to their children, and the desire to improve the circumstances for the next generation.

Women and the land

All of the women have attachment to the land in their country of origin either through owning or renting a house, or through farming. These links with the land therefore reflect part of the women's categorisation as petty commodity producers. Anne, Ruby, Magdalene, Katherine and Rosemary all have access to production from the land. If they do not make sufficient

money through trading, they can fall back onto subsistence production. Their attachment to the land therefore retains ties with the home country. These activities balance the risk of trading, it is a form of pooling of activities in order to overcome risk. The women are therefore not fully integrated into the capitalist market as some conditions of production are secured through non-market relations. By being petty commodity producers, the women are both capitalists and workers at the same time in that they own their means of production, but are also workers in that they use their own labour. According to Bernstein (1994), petty commodity producers are differentiated and unstable in that they have to produce their own means of production and labour with greater risk and less opportunity. They are affected by conditions of access to resources, nature, markets and government policies. Petty commodity producers are constituted by capitalist relations of production with internally contradictory social relations. In other words, they are self-exploitative.

The women in this research are differentiated in their access to land. Anne's family owns plantation where tea is produced for commercial sale. Grace's family retains access to the land as her mother is a farmer who sells her produce in the open market. Grace points out that farming is physically hard labour and that she has chosen crochet as an easier option. Her child, however, lives with her mother in the rural areas and therefore petty commodity production contributes to the sustenance of her family. For Rose, farming is conducted by her father who returned to farming after failures in commercial enterprises. Farming, therefore,

countered the risks and losses that he made through entering the commercial world. For Ruby and Magdalene, farming is essential to ensure the sustenance of themselves and their families. According to Ruby, "Life is better in Swaziland - can plough, eat sour milk, plant maize, eat mealie meal. Here you can't do that - it's a nice place." In Katherine's house farming is done in the urban areas where her family plants fruit and vegetables for domestic consumption. Access and attachment to the land is therefore essential to substitute the dangers and risks of entering into the uncertain world of cross-border trading.

Home ownership is prized by the women. These are women who have a base and are able to own land; they are women with resources. Where the women are married, land and housing is shared with their husband in that the woman would inherit the property upon his death. According to Anne, "If my husband dies, I would inherit the farm, it's our farm so I would inherit it." Thandi says that her husband owns the house, but that she ensured that she has shares in the house with her husband. She says that she and her children would get the house should her husband pass away. Constance confirms that she too would inherit their house in Venda should her husband pass away. Ruby and Magdalene also speak with pride of their thatch houses in Swaziland. They are proud of the fact that the houses were built by themselves and with their own resources. They highlight the benefits of a thatch house in that it is cool in summer and warm in winter. All of the women therefore have access to what they

consider to be decent housing and living conditions which reinforces their sense of South Africa as a temporary destination.

The women regard living conditions in South Africa as difficult in comparison with their living conditions at home. In South Africa, the women live in noisy and over-crowded hotels, flats in the city or informal settlements where they are unable to engage in petty commodity activities such as subsistence farming. Their lifestyle in South Africa therefore deteriorates and they do not generate a commitment to set down roots and settle in South Africa. Only Winfilda has purchased a caravan for accommodation here. Not even Constance, who is South African, has purchased a house in Johannesburg, "Venda is our really home, I will move back."

The findings of this research differ from those of Mbilinyi (1995). She argues that the position of women under SAPs is exacerbated in that most women have rights to land but not ownership thereof. This affects the ability of women to migrate. Women without ties to the land and in need of income may feel that the only option for accumulation/survival is to leave the land (Mbilinyi, 1995). Whilst this may be true for many women who do migrate, the findings of this research suggest that some of the women have strong links to the land and have ensured that they do have certain rights in terms of access to property. Thus, the concept of petty commodity production is more applicable to these women cross-border traders.

It is important to highlight that the experiences and outcomes of these women is differentiated. For some of the women, cross-border trading reflects an entrepreneurial opportunity, for others it is a mechanism of survival and a means to balance the risks of small-scale subsistence farming. A contradictory outcome, however, is that the independence generated through cross-border trading can increase the women's attachment to the home, the familiar. The women are free to forge independent relationships, but for most of the women, these relationships are forged with women from the same country. All of the women point to South Africa as an area of work, their focus is income generation and not the development of relationships and friendships. According to Katherine, "In South Africa I'm always busy, I don't have time to walk and find friends." Most of the women are therefore insulated from South Africans, they don't usually sell to South Africans and they prefer to work with people from home and thus retain relationships with their home country whilst they are here.

3. CITIZENSHIP

In simple terms, citizenship refers to the relationship between the individual and the state. Most of the women interviewed do not see their government as performing well. States are perceived by some of the women as elitist and serving the interests of a narrow group of citizens.

According to Anne, their President, Daniel Arap Moi, only serves the Kalinjin tribe. "The Kalinjin are with very good roads, they are nomads, they are lazy, they don't want to work." She stresses the need for political and economic reforms to address the structural and systematic problems of the Kenyan state. She sees the state as coercive and oppressive and has had to leave the country due to her husband's political involvement in the Safina party run by Dr Leakey. Habiba describes the Cameroonian state as in an extremely fragile position due to the lack of unity.

Yuval-Davis highlights that in order to construct a nation, there needs to be the construction of "symbolic order guards", the creation of boundaries dividing the world into "us and them". The "us and them" in Cameroon, however, are internal whereby, according to Habiba, the population does not support the President in power. She says that without changes, "there will be revolt. What happened in Congo can happen in Cameroon... it's not like here where people can understand they can lose - they [in Cameroon] want to stay, stay, stay." Even Constance, who is from Venda, does not see the government as serious about Venda, "It's a little bit better, but we're expecting more. People expecting changes of tarred roads... they are not renovating anything." The women from Zimbabwe are less critical of their state. According to Katherine, things have improved since independence, "Better, some improvement, but things are still very hard. We started to get hungry... food is very expensive." The Swazi women, by contrast, see the government as a unifier. The royal family is a symbol of old values while new progressive movements are seen as

subversive and middle class. The Swazi women recognise the subordination of women but their response is fatalistic. They appear to view women's rights as subversive of old values and yet at the same time they are independent women who quietly get on with autonomous economic activities.

There appears to be a generational difference in terms of attitudes to rights and the responsibilities of the state. [illegible] people are more focused on rights and entitlements, although [illegible] tation. Rumbi, one of the youngest women interviewed, [illegible] namely conventional and conservative gender perspectives. The women's perspectives on the rights and entitlements that citizenship should afford them is therefore differentiated. Most of the women, however, either see their government as not doing a good job or attempt to evade or express disinterest in the workings of the state. Most of the women lack the time to engage with the public sphere as they are committed to domestic responsibility and are therefore unable to engage with the events and symbols of the public, political sphere.

In Africa, the colonial and post colonial state lacks domestic capacity as well as legitimacy. This has resulted in [illegible] Bayart calls the "uncaptured citizen" who disengages from formal political and economic spheres, resulting in an intensified informalisation of economies and of governance (Bayart, 1993: Reitzes, 1996). The attitudes of the women interviewed affirm this assertion from the literature. The state is seen by most women

as lacking in capacity, unable to provide for its citizens in terms of basic needs such as food as well as infrastructure. According to Anne, "We don't have means of transport, dams and other things... healthcare is poor, no medicine, nothing. They've been ever like that." The promises made by politicians are seen as nonsense and empty.

The women's disengagement from the political realm is seen through their participation in the elections. Four of the twelve women voted in the last elections. According to Rosemary, "There is no point in voting, the same guy wins. It's a waste of time queuing A, B, C, I hate politics in Kenya. Politicians are liars." By queuing, Anne refers to a technique by Arap Moi whereby people formed into queues demarcating the party they supported. Any notion of a secret ballot is therefore eliminated as one's queue reflects one's party of choice. Voting is therefore seen not to provide any change while reliance on the state does not guarantee anything in terms of the delivery of welfare services or, as Ruby describes, "the needs of the mamas."

The informal sector becomes a means of taking control of one's own life and the destiny of one's children. The women focus on their own survival for they recognise that the state cannot be relied upon for delivery. Differentiation between the women does, however, exist. The Swazi women are the most apathetic, they do not challenge the system, although they recognise the younger generation are challenging the system through strikes and the demand for increased rights. Thandi sees the Swazi

government as doing a good job, "Swazi government doesn't allow strikes. Strikes are bad things. How can you ask for a job and then not speak to your boss and stand outside not working? You must negotiate if you want the job." For the Swazi women, the lifestyle aspect and attachment to the land outweigh the benefits that democratisation and the supposed ensuing rights and entitlements are supposed to bring along with it. Strikes are seen as middle class demands. For the women, survival and the preservation of the lifestyle in Swaziland is a priority. For these women, the undemocratic state represented through the royalty is a symbol of continuity with the past which the women cherish. They are prepared to make the sacrifices of the rights and entitlements and their legal status within the territory as they prioritise what the royalty stands for.

According to Yuval-Davis (1987), citizenship is both inclusive and exclusive and accords different status to those within and outside of the borders. Traditional conceptions of citizenship focus on individualistic terms/rights but fail to consider divisions of gender, ethnicity and class. Women cross-border traders are operating on both of these terrains. Within the borders of their own nation state, the women do not have equal status due to gender, ethnicity and class oppression. The state is seen as run by and for men. Women are thus subordinate. Outside of their nation state, they also have little or no rights. They are constructed as aliens, job stealers, illegals, drug dealers, street loiterers, a burden to the host country. Anne describes the difficulties of settling and trading in a new country:

> Leaving your country, you need to stabilise yourself. It's terrible to leave your country. Here, South Africans are lazy. This work, they don't want to do. South Africans say we're taking their jobs but they don't want to work. During apartheid, what would they do without African countries, but now they forget. We feel bad. Do you think you'll go to a host country and mess the place - it's not possible. South Africans are stupid upstairs. We're forced to be here by force. We don't understand the language and they say you must learn, but how if they're hostile: but if they want help, they speak very good English, but if you want help, you must talk my language.

The women perceive themselves as rightless in South Africa. They can be arrested for walking in the streets and do not see the South African justice system as assisting the victim, especially those who are not citizens. Habiba fears South Africa as she sees it as crime-ridden and full of thieves. She therefore does not carry her papers with her as she is afraid that they will be stolen. She describes one day how, "I went to Eskom to pay electricity, didn't have papers. I was arrested and [spent five days in jail]." Katherine also fears South Africa saying that, in South Africa, "there are too much thieves. I don't have friends from South Africa as too much thieves. I'm friends only with Zimbabweans, don't trust South Africans."

The women's fear of thieves is rooted in the inability to obtain legal recourse within South Africa. Habiba recounts a story. When first coming

to South Africa, she had a South African friend who lived with them for a while. Upon her moving out, she also stole all of Habiba's clothing. Habiba opened a case, and thinking it was like Cameroon, thought that all she could do was go to the woman and reclaim her clothes. The woman, however, was arrested and was made to pay a fine. Habiba points out to the lack of concern for compensating victims. She heard that South Africa is nice but she doesn't know how to judge people. In Cameroon, she would have got her clothes back, whereas here, she sees the government as more concerned about making money through a fine than restoring the claims of the victim. Habiba's inability to judge people also reflects her lack of understanding of how people here judge people. This story reflects Habiba's sense of alienation and lack of understanding of how things work in South Africa. It reflects her sense of dislocation from norms and behaviours which she understands.

As foreigners, the women are therefore vulnerable to con men and to being deceived. Rosemary has a similar case where the law failed to protect her in her business dealings. She described an experience of attempting to start craft trading in Germany. Her contacts there told her to come out of season. As she ran out of money, she returned to Kenya and left the people there to sell her items. She never saw or heard from them again. Thus, without legally binding contracts, the women are forced to work with people whom they can trust as both their own state as well as the state within which they trade are not seen as protecting their rights. One of the fundamental rights of modern citizenship, as described by

Somers (1993), is therefore violated: this is the right to sell one's labour, or, in the case of cross-border traders, the ability to trade in a free market, where protection is afforded through due process of the law.

There is also, however, differentiation amongst the women as to their sense of identity or affiliation with their government or state. For the women from Kenya and from Cameroon, the tensions against the state are overt. These are primarily based in regional and ethnic conflicts. The women within Zimbabwe also reflect differentiation. Both Delico and Grace, who are from Kadoma, an industrial town two hours from Harare, do not see the state as affecting their area. This also applies to Constance from Venda. Thus, the women see the proximity to the capital as translating into direct influence in the public sphere.

Some of the women are also aware that their treatment by the state differs based on their gender. Anne recognises that although women have certain opportunities in the economic sphere, "They don't have a big say in parliament." The Swazi women, although the most politically apathetic, recognise that, for women, burdens are increased. According to Ruby, "If you are a man, you've got too much complaints." Thandi points to the silencing of women in the public arena. She says that, "In Swaziland a woman can't speak, it's said by a man. Being a woman, you've no right to say anything - even with lobola, it is the men who speak." When asked what would happen if a woman started to speak out, she said that, "She'll be chased away from the country."

Whilst recognising that citizenship is gender defined, their responses are differentiated with respect to whether a woman in politics or in government would enhance or deter the ability of the government to provide for citizens. According to Anne, "A woman will do a better job because men have been in power for a long time and not doing well." Despite her husband's affiliation to Leakey's Safina party, she mentioned her support for a woman who is running with the Democratic Party. She said that if in Kenya, she would vote for her.

Habiba is more cynical of the political realm. She says that there are women in politics but that politics changes them. The party corrupts them by giving them money to talk about the President and campaign for him. Katherine also says that although there are women in government, she doesn't think it makes any difference. Rose, however, feels that more women in politics would allow for the ability to voice the concerns of women. She says that, "Men are mean, they think only about themselves." The Swazi women do not feel that a woman has the ability to rule. Both Ruby and Magdalene felt that a woman would not know how to rule and that it was better for a man. Women should only be in parliament as advisors speaking for the "mama's side". Thandi affirms the women's distance from the public realm, "It's not in our nerves to have a queen. I don't think we could be governed by a woman. She will sell us to other countries."

The women in this research therefore do not see the public realm as playing a major role in their lives nor that contestation and participation in this realm will alter their situation. The majority of the women either didn't know whether a woman should be involved in politics or felt that women's participation made no difference. Their commitment to their country is therefore based on bonds of family, culture, language and not based on the perceived benefits of belonging to a particular nation state. This links with the implementation of SAPs as the role of a state as welfare providers declines. State services are curbed and withdrawn and welfare costs rise. This burden falls onto women who see it as essential to take care of themselves, to provide money for their children's schooling, or to own a house, and basically to make a plan for their family's survival.

Traditional conceptions of citizenship are seen as determining the rights and entitlements of citizens of states as well as duties and obligations (Reitzes, 1996; Yuval-Davis, 1997). Somers (1993) refers to three kinds of rights which modern citizenship embraces: The right to sell one's labour, or, in the case of cross-border traders, the ability to trade in a free market whereby protection is afforded through due process of the law, the political right to vote and social rights which include the right to social justice.

If we return to the first with reference to cross-border traders, the women do not see the law as protecting them and their interests in the activities of trading. As for the second, the majority of women see the political right to vote as futile. The third right of social justice and entitlements ensured by

the state is absent. The women feel that they must work for their own benefit and not expect the state to assist. A number of the women commented that South Africans expect the government to provide everything for them. This reflects the perception of their limited expectations of states due to the lack of delivery.

As the women do not trust the state, they need to work and associate with people whom they trust for their survival activities to be viable, For most of the women, South Africans do not enter into this arena. Most of the women socialise and prefer to work with people from their home countries. Five of the women said that they did not have any friends who were not from their home country. There are, however, some connections with people outside of their own social world. Anne, who said that most of her friends are Kenyan, is linked internationally through her husband who lives in Saudi Arabia and her flat mate who is from Zimbabwe. Whilst interviewing Constance, a person came up to her stall whom I had assumed was a customer. She introduced him as a friend who is a preacher here from Korea. Winfilda also has close relationships with people from other countries. Her husband is Scottish and, through him, she has travelled to the United Kingdom, met his family and experienced the country. Rumbi, who ardently claims that she has not made friends with South African women due to "cultural differences", has a brother who is currently studying in the United Kingdom. Her mother's boyfriend is from Mozambique. She seems to approve of her mother's Mozambican boyfriend and says that he is now teaching her Portuguese. Rumbi

appears to have differentiated Africans into two different categories, "People from other countries like Mozambique, Malawi and even South Africa, they are more friendly and civilised and are welcome [in Zimbabwe], but the Nigerians, oo, oo, oo." It appears that the women try to mediate these connections on their own terms, in both their private as well as professional space. Habiba lives with a house of Cameroonians who are all from the same village, most of Anne's friends are from Kenya and are from her same ethnic group. Rumbi and Grace live in the Rondebosch Hotel which is a haven for Zimbabweans and many of the Swazi women rent flats here together. Whilst Winfilda is married to a Scot, he has been incorporated into her world and not the other way round.

The women, even when confronted with cultures and values that are unfamiliar to them, attempt to create an environment which they understand. They also attempt to retain what they understand at home. Rumbi is concerned about external influences that are slowly filtering in to Zimbabwe. She refers to the banning of kwasa kwasa music in Zimbabwe. As a young woman, I had expected her to be against this ban in that kwasa kwasa music was something new which she could dance to. She, however, has a very different perspective, "The way that people dance to that music makes me shy and when you are shy they dance even more like that." For Rumbi, kwasa kwasa music is a bad influence and should only be allowed to be played in the privacy of one's home and that this international influence should not become part of mainstream Zimbabwean culture.

The women attempt to recreate the familiar in an environment that is alienating. This extends, however, to attempts to retain the home space as unchanging and clinging to values which are seen to be absent in South Africa and essential to be fought for at home.

Most of the women prefer to work with people from home. Ruby and Magdalene recognise that, "People from different countries teach each other. There are people from Kenya, Ivory Coast, Ghana, from all over." This relationship, however, does not beyond the level of teaching each other. Most of the women prefer to work either alone, with sisters, with female relatives, other family members or with people from the same area, ethnic group, religion. This is not just due to issues of familiarity but also to sense that working with people who are closely related to you will allow for greater accountability. It is easy to track down a family member if there are any controversies with relation to the business. This thus relates again to the inability of the women to access due process of the law with reference to business contracts. Anne points out that her situation is particularly difficult. She can't even trust the Kenyans as they can go back to Kenya and, as she is unable to return, has no recourse to claim for any wrong-doings.

Living in South Africa is therefore only transitory. Most of the women reflect a sense of limbo. The women are in transit and do not make attempts to set down roots in South Africa. The women are not investing in

property, nor do many of them appear to be building strong friendship relationships with people in South Africa. Constance wants to go back to Venda, "our really home". Trading is therefore a mechanism of ensuring a future at home. This transitory nature is highlighted by Ruby who says,

> In two years I'll stay home and eat the government money. I'm 58 years old. I was planting long ago but not now. When I get my pension I will stay home and eat the government money.

For many of the women, neither the state nor the man can be depended on. Many, therefore, gain consolation through religious faith. Five of the women said that the only community organisation in which they participate in their home country is the church. Of the seven others, many made reference to God as a source of comfort and support. Delico says that when her husband did not pay maintenance she, "was praying to God to help me to do what I want." Magdalene affirms that, as she does not expect any support from either the father of her child or the state, "God will help." For Rosemary, God intervenes more practically, "You do your own thing - leave it to God to help to get customers." Constance sees preaching as the solution to declining social values. Thandi too sees her fate as determined by God. When asked what her plans were for the future, she said, "I don't know, only God knows." Winfilda, too, has turned to the spiritual, "I've been working so hard. If I get enough money to sit down and relax. If God is good to me." For Habiba, another reason to stay in close association with other Cameroonians is the connection of

being Muslim. Thus, whilst the women cannot depend on men or the state, they draw strength from their spiritual faith.

Their involvement in the church also reflects their perception of their activities in South Africa as transitory. For those engaged in petty commodity production, this affirms Bernstein's assertion about the precariousness of their existence; religion therefore becomes a source of strength and continuity in an otherwise unstable world. Many of the women spoke of church as fundamental to their social world at home. Here, however, "Because of my business, I work on Sundays so can't go to church." This reflects Thandi's construction of her involvement in South Africa. In Swaziland she is actively involved in the choir whereas in South Africa she does not even attend church. The other women who are church members all do not attend church in South Africa as they are working. Habiba also pointed out the disruption that trading has in what would be their normal flow of life in Cameroon. She refers to a joke whereby a Cameroonian trader was conducting one of his prayers for the day. Upon the arrival of a customer, another trader offered to negotiate for him. However, the lure of a sale outweighed his communication with his God. All of the Cameroonian traders laughed at the joke, saying that by trading here, they are playing with God.

The state is therefore not seen as providing the entitlements and rights nor able to provide welfare security to the women. Their limited participation is in elections which do, however, not address the issues of economic rights,

and with the advent of SAPs, the increasing burden on women. The balancing act of rights and entitlements, and duties and obligations on the part of the citizen is therefore over-turned. For women cross-border traders, they have turned away from their weakened governments and their useless husbands and focused on their own survival.

4. BORDERS

With the trend of economic liberalisation, states attempt to encourage the free flow of goods whilst simultaneously attempting to regulate the flow of people. For women cross-border traders, however, it would appear that liberalisation most benefits elites and those with larger enterprises. All of the women pay customs duties and the goods that they bring are therefore not brought here freely. Customs are seen by most of the women as an obstacle and they feel cheated by the system. Customs are seen as a drain on their limited resources. All of the women have to conform with visa requirements which limit the amount of time and the freedom of choice about when and where to trade. Customs and travel requirements such as visas, are experienced differently by the women, and state controls are not seen as systematic and applying equal criteria to all. These controls are therefore seen as an obstacle and it is at the border posts that the women confront the apparently random authority of the state. It is here that the women feel the coercive powers of the state, they feel cheated but also intimidated that the customs officials have the right to turn them away.

At this moment of confronting authority, the women have a sense of rightlessness. Whilst they can evade taxes, they cannot easily evade border controls. It seems likely that certain evasion tactics are utilised. These, however, were not shared with the researcher. A previous trip to Zambia in 1996 provided some insight into the activities at the border controls. Travelling on a bus from Zambia in 1996 through to Zimbabwe and then South Africa, I observed many women with large bags carrying goods to trade in neighbouring countries. At the border posts, all of their bags were thoroughly searched. Much negotiation appeared to be underway with the border officials to allow the entry of the goods. There appeared to be a form of solidarity amongst the women. One woman, following the bag search, appeared to remove items from under her dress and thus it is possible that numerous strategies of evasion are employed to avoid the surveillance and regulation of the state. This, however, was not confirmed in this research. Rosemary pointed to evasion techniques in terms of financial and monetary exchanges. She says that, "The bank changes R2000 for you so mostly we buy US dollars from Kenyans who come here [who are in need of Rands]. Or we buy for Kenyans and they pay us in Nairobi. You check that the money is in the account and send the goods. But you don't do this with everybody, only with friends." Thus we see that the women do not see the state as an ally but they have no choice but to engage at certain moments, for example travel documents, customs control, border posts and pensions. But the state is to be evaded on issues of tax and possibly other areas that are seen as draining their limited resources for services which they will never enjoy.

Whilst borders are seen as an economic obstacle, they are also seen as essential in encapsulating morals, customs, culture, language, religion and ethnicity. Borders are seen as positive in preserving access to land as well as demarcating their task here. In other words, borders encapsulate the familiar at home and separate it from the alienating experiences here which are characterised by hard work, making money, and dealing with hostility.

Cross-border women traders defy conventional boundaries of the household through assuming the role as the economic provider. This defiance is contradictory in that it also reinforces societal roles of women taking care of children and men not entering into this sphere of household labour. Thus we see that home is bordered as a moral place, there is a sense of South Africa as barbaric and hostile. Even Constance, who although she is from South Africa, constructs Venda as her moral home. When asked about the changes in South Africa, she said that,

> With us [in town], some taking it the wrong way. There's a losing of respect and children without parents. The lady will be saying, I am the boss, and the man, he leaves the kids which are very young and goes off with another lady.

She identifies strongly with Venda culture and custom. She demonstrated greetings which are still common in Venda but have been abandoned in

town. She said that ladies say, "Aah", with their hands together and their eyes lowered as a sign of respect, especially for elders whom they can't speak to whilst standing. Men do the same gesture but say, "Nda".

Thus, the women are thrown into unfamiliar territory and in attempts to order the world, cling tightly to values which they see as lacking in South Africa but which are constructed and valid at home. These values are not lost, despite the sense of alienation, entrapment and bewilderment at the way things are done in South Africa. This affirms Harries' (1994) study where he says that male migrants built their own society based on what was comprehensible and familiar. With reference to his study on Mozambican miners, he said that their gaze was constantly directed towards the rural home. This is affirmed in Buijs' study (1992) where she contends that women migrants attempt to create what is familiar as a coping mechanism to deal with forced separation and loss from their families. She says that they attempt to replicate the past and construct a meaningful identity within an alien context. She points out that the boundaries that women cross can provide hope and inspiration, especially when women are in pursuit of wage labour or other income generating activities whereby their power within the domestic sphere is strongly influenced.

The women have therefore claimed a level of autonomy by asserting the freedom to move or migrate, a freedom, accompanied by a lack of autonomy through their fear of moving freely in South Africa. Not only are

the women concerned with the high rate of crime in South Africa, but South Africans are also seen to have a bad attitude towards foreigners. According to Anne, "Nobody likes it here, it's terrible, especially crime." For Katherine, the issue of crime is also relevant for she said that whilst South Africans are friendly, there are too many thieves. Thandi says that, "I was afraid of South Africans. I was confused about which language so I addressed them in English. Some were interested, some were downcast." Rose highlights the fears that South Africans have of losing their jobs to foreigners, "The blacks feel you are a foreigner taking their jobs. I do my own thing. South Africans would not sit here and sell like I do."

It would appear that South African borders are more rigid than the permeable and fluid African borders referred to in the literature. South Africa's insulation from the continent could have generated a stronger construction of borders within the national psyche than in other African countries. Anti-crime operations in South Africa have become synonymous with the arresting of illegal aliens (SAPA, Pretoria, 09-10-97). This is affirmed by the women who say that South Africans feel that they are all illegal aliens, loiterers and criminals. With South African markets recently opened to international competition, South Africans fear that foreigners who are more experienced at managing trade and markets will not allow for them to benefit from these opportunities. This fear extends to the fear of foreigners stealing South African jobs.

The women who are trading in South Africa feel that they are confused with illegal immigrants and with the legitimacy of their claims to be here. South Africans, however, do not make this distinction. In October 1997, an organisation called the Unemployed People of South Africa threatened to take the law into their own hands and physically throw illegal immigrants out of the country if the government failed to respond to its demands. They affirmed the perception that foreigners in the country result in increasing crime. Their organisation said that black South Africans voted for democracy in 1994, but that it appeared democracy was for foreigners because the country had become ungovernable with the increase of crime involving foreigners (SAPA, 04-10-1997).

The South African authorities have long attempted to keep other Africans out of South Africa or admitted them on a controlled basis. This is evident in the electric fence which prohibits Mozambican migrants from entering into South Africa. These attempts at border control have been extended into the new regime where border patrol operations are consistently arresting people for entering the country illegally. As the South African economy is comparatively better than other economies in the region, it is likely that the stakes are higher, and therefore a greater determination to keep the borders sealed.

The intolerance of South Africans has not gone unnoticed. In a panel discussion at a World Bank conference in October 1997, these attitudes was high on the agenda. It was found that this intolerance was, "not

conducive to building stable, peaceful societies in the future. This was the case whether the intolerance came from host governments or from the country's own citizens." (SAPA, Cape Town, 09-10-1997). The flow of other Africans from Africa into South Africa has, however, not been curbed. Travellers visiting South Africa have increased by 50% within the last year. 75% of these arrivals were from African countries. These statistics only show documented arrivals and do not include "illegal" visitors. The total number of travellers arriving from mainland Africa during June 1997 was 297 516 The majority of these were from Lesotho (33%). Other travellers include those from Swaziland (19%), Zimbabwe (16%) as well as Botswana, Mozambique and Namibia. The main stated purpose of these visits was holiday, followed by business. (SAPA, Pretoria, 04/11/1997: Satour).

It would appear that South Africans homogenise all foreigners into one negative category. This would conform, therefore, with the traders' sense of dislocation, being destabilised and treated like 'slaves' (Interview with Habiba). South Africa is therefore not like home, it is a place to be ridiculed and humiliated. Winfilda, however, pointed out that South Africans are getting used to foreigners due to the opening of South Africa to more African travellers.

This sense of alienation is expressed by the women as that none of them disclosed a desire to relocate here permanently. Although Winfilda has moved here, she says that it is for financial reasons and not due to

improved living and conditions. Rose said that she wouldn't mind living here, but that she would always retain links with Kenya and would therefore have two homes. She says that, "Kenya is poor, but there are things I miss there. This sugar cane that we are eating is from Kenya." Anne is more vociferous. She says, "I'll go back, definitely." Thus, home provides a sense of belonging, meaning and through being here, the women have taken responsibility for ensuring the retention of this sphere. The women nostalgically refer to issues of culture, diet, the love for their motherland and the attachment to the land. Living conditions here, by contrast, are seen as temporary, a place to make money while their real location and identity is rooted at home. Even their role as mothers is suspended in South Africa. When Anne was asked whether she would bring her child here, she said, "You can't bring a kid here, you'd be mad!" For Rosemary, she would not bring her son with her as she says that, with him here, "I cannot do my work."

In the course of trying to survive some borders are upheld, preserved and protected, whilst others are discarded. The boundaries are blurred, some of the issues such as constructing home as a moral universe are retained whilst others such as traditional gender roles are discarded. Women's economic independence, their control of their labour, their movement as well as their sexuality challenges gender boundaries. The boundaries of the state are flexible, permeable and malleable but also reconstructed. South Africa is constructed as alien and barbaric whilst home is constructed as familiar and comfortable.

5. MIGRATION

Migrancy has been a phenomenon in southern Africa long predating the implementation of SAPs. Migration has been circular with migrants returning to their home destinations after periods of work or trade in another territory. The findings of this research affirm that the migration of women cross-border traders is circular. Except for Anne who is unable to return home due to her exile status, all of the women return home whenever they can in order to touch base with their families, restock supplies and benefit from the comfort and security that home provides.

Although the women try to return home regularly and at consistent intervals, their returns home are often determined by whether they have the finances available to do so. They are also mediated by the financial requirements of their families as well as their visa requirements. For Anne and Habiba, their return home depends on the stabilisation of the political situation in their country. Three of the women spend most of their time here in South Africa due to the above-mentioned reasons. Constance now lives in Soweto with her family, only one of her children remains in Venda with her mother. Winfilda has relocated to South Africa with her children and returns home at Christmas time to visit. Katherine tries to return home as often as she can but economic constraints often hinder her regular return. Whilst most of the women are here, they work seven days a week. If they are not busy producing their goods, they are busy selling their goods. South Africa is thus a place of work and home is a place of rest.

Many South Africans opposed to foreigners working in South Africa argue that they drain South Africa's resources. This, however, needs to be qualified, for most of the women do not bring their children here, and do not appear to rely on South Africa's health or education services. The assumption, therefore, that all foreigners are draining South Africa's resources fails to recognise that the women are also bringing resources into the country. The women do not settle here and do not appear to see the South African state as a welfare provider. For Winfilda, she regrets that her final daughter will complete schooling here as she feels that the Zimbabwean schooling system is better than the South African one.

Within the circular migration, it was assumed that many women would resell items from South Africa in their home countries. However, only three of the women purchase items from South Africa to resell in their home country. Of these women, only one of them regards it as a major economic activity. Constance buys clothing and blankets from a wholesaler which she sells to people in Venda. Katherine says that she sometimes buys things to sell in Zimbabwe but not that much. For Rosemary, by contrast, purchasing items here is another key area of her business activities. She purchases clothing, shoes and cosmetics which are sold by her sister who runs a boutique in Nairobi. She buys them from Woolworths, Makro, June Bowl and other wholesalers. She is therefore purchasing manufactured items which are resold in her home country. This contributes to the South African economy.

Peberdy (1997) affirms this assertion. She says that the income earning activities of the informal sector by non-South Africans are continually recycled back into the South African formal manufacturing sector. They provide a foreign market for South African produced goods. She therefore asserts that cross-border trading does not drain the South African economy, but that as the incomes earned are invested in educating their children at home, there is a possibility that cross-border trading may lessen new migrants coming into South Africa.

Cross-border trading comes with many obstacles. Migrants become integrated into underground geographies through networks of friends and family in order to mitigate some of the hardships and obstacles of trading in South Africa. The women interviewed in this research reflect differentiated experiences. Some entered South Africa under conditions of extreme hardship where they lacked accommodation, market outlets and support structures. Once established, however, with the market and with the network, it appears that cross-border trading is relatively easy. Information is acquired from friends and family and with South Africa opening up, information is also acquired through the media, the exchange of art and ideas through cultural exchanges.

Once the women have established a network here, they tend to remain trading in South Africa. This could be linked with reduced risk, for once the women know the place, it becomes, despite the alienation, another

realm of the familiar. Eleven of the women only sell in South Africa. Thandi, although she sells in South Africa only, also operates as a wholesaler and therefore has access to international markets without the risk of having to travel there herself. This is the same for Winfilda who also acts as a wholesaler. Rosemary trades in both South Africa and Kenya, she is now, however, familiar with both of these trading worlds.

These underground geographies are protected by the women. Rosemary and Winfilda both saw South Africans as lazy in that they would not do this kind of work and saw it as dirty work. This is, however, contradictory for the women fear competition and would rather work with other foreigners as they fear teaching South Africans the trade. It is therefore ironic that when they first arrive, they are in desperate need of information, support and resources. Once getting the above, they are reluctant to share these with South Africans due to their fear of competition.

In order to protect these underground geographies, it is important to examine the extent that ethnicity, religious and kinship networks play a role in facilitating women cross-border traders. SAPs claim that liberalisation will remove informal and unregulated networks. Lemarchand (1992) contests this by arguing that informal and unregulated networks will remain but in mutated forms. He identifies the important links that patronage creates between families, clans or ethno-regional regional groups.

The networks under study substantiates Lemarchand's contention. Anne entered into the trading world through a network based on ethnicity and nationality. The other women traders identified with her political cause and, as she was also Kikuyu, assisted her in entering the cross-border trading. Ethno-regional groups are evident in the trading networks of Katherine, Delico and Grace. The five women who work with Katherine are either family or from the same area in Harare. They are not only from Harare but from Seke township in Harare. Both Delico and Grace are from Kadoma in Zimbabwe and draw comfort from their close proximity in terms of trading next to each other. Ruby and Magdalene operate on family networks whereby the two families have for some time supported and worked together. Habiba's links are not only with Cameroonian people but the people with whom she lives and trades are all from Fumbani in Cameroon, they all speak the same dialect and are all Muslims. Rosemary is also a Kikuyu from Kenya and as most of the traders here are Kikuyu, draws on a network based on ethnicity.

The intimacy of these networks created through these links is, however, not entirely limiting. The women are affected by various aspects of globalisation which links and connects them to other parts of the world. All of the women rely on customers who are tourists from all over the world. Ruby and Magdalene get their beads from Johannesburg although they are produced in Taiwan and China. The Kenyan women got their information on South Africa from the television. Rosemary used to trade in London, Hong Kong, as well as Germany. Habiba's family extends from

Cameroon to France to South Africa. Swazi masks, through Thandi, are now going to be sold in North Korea. Rumbi's mother has sold many of her items to a woman who trades in the United Kingdom and has, upon recognising this woman's success, realised that she has an economic opportunity waiting for her in the United Kingdom. All of the women commented with pride on the thought of their goods being displayed or worn all around the world. Thus, despite the small scale of women cross-border traders' enterprises, they are connected globally and although attempting to retain strong cultural ties to their home, it is likely that the host of conflicting and blending of influences affects their consciousness, though this is not yet evident.

For many women, therefore, borders symbolise not only continuities and connections, but also exposure to new ways of thinking and new influences. Borders, however, are both constructed as well as torn down in the process of cross-border trading. The borders of South Africa are constructed to represent the activities of work and money-making. They therefore symbolise a break from family, a break from familiarity and a break from the land. But there is also continuity for, by crossing the borders into South Africa, survival and sustenance is being ensured at home. Borders, therefore, are not merely territorial borders but are borders which demarcate different life aspects in which the women engage.

Borders and barriers are altered with reference to household relations. These women are assuming autonomous and independent activities which challenge patriarchal structures and the ability of the state, as well as men, to control their mobility, their labour and their sexuality, although within limits as they do not contest these directly. Thus, whilst men since the turn of the century have been attempting to curb mobility of women, African women have continued to break these bonds. In this process, they construct new spaces, construct new boundaries, new borders within which these activities are conducted.

6. NETWORKS

The literature indicates that it is essential for migrants to have support networks of friends and family. (Brand et al, 1995; Reitzes, 1996; Gereffi, 1997). In the case of the women cross-border traders, the networks are mostly familial and based on female-based kinship ties, in other words, it is mostly a connection of sisters, mothers, mothers-in-law and female relatives. Friendship networks are important in terms of sharing information, helping the women get started in trading, telling women about markets, offering accommodation and a sense of helping women to get started up. The outcomes can often be contradictory in that women will help other women got into trading, but once they are trading there is little co-operation as a fellow trader is seen as a source of competition. Supplies are procured through friendship and word-of-mouth networks. The women in Zimbabwe all get their cotton from Zimbabwe but do not, however, buy co-operatively.

When exploring whether there is a more co-operative approach of women working together from different languages, religions, ethnic groups, etc., it is found in this research that women prefer to work with their own kind, with relatives, with family and with people who are familiar to them. In production, it is differentiated between those who make their own goods and those who purchase already-made items. Production and sales are also linked by family networks. None of the women employ South Africans to assist in selling here as there is a fear that they will take over the business. Most cannot afford to employ anyone but, more important is the issue of trust. Winfilda sums it up when she says, "In this business, you need someone you can trust and they can trust you. I just work with my kids and sisters, they help me a lot."

The findings of this research point to trust as fundamental in the construction of the women's networks. The networks are based on varying degrees of trust in a framework which I have termed, realms of trust. The inner realm is that of female-based kinship networks rooted in the responsibility of child rearing which men evade. It is here that the trust is strongest. Women who are family, sisters, mothers, mothers-in-law, can be trusted with child care, as friends, for information, but most importantly, they can be trusted with finance. The next realm is that of friendship. Friendship networks are utilised in information sharing, helping other women get started up, the sharing of information on markets, offering or providing information on accommodation, and at times assisting in the

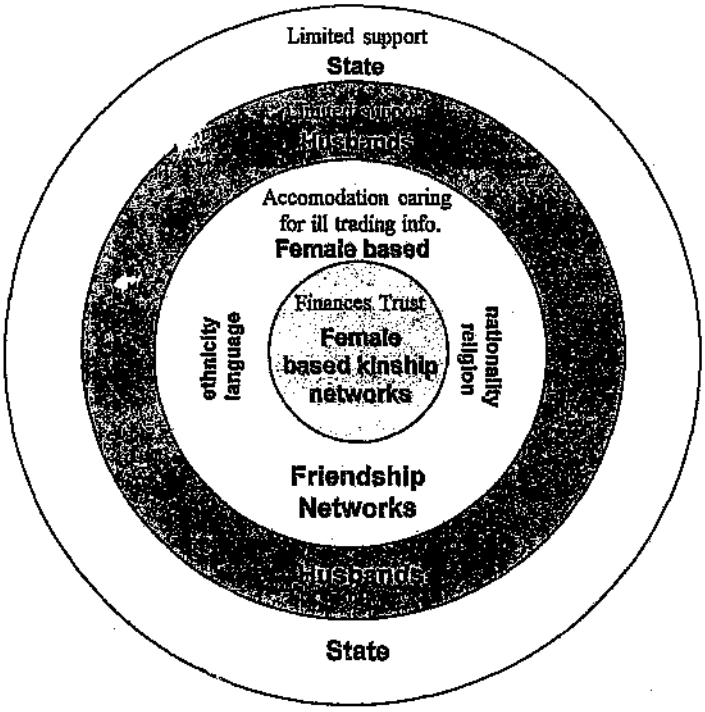


Diagram of layers to the realms of trust

production of goods. These friendship networks are generally based on ethnicity, religion, language and links with local communities. They thus conform with Gereffi's (1997) assertion that these links provide the strongest foundations for networks.

As we move out on the degrees and shades of trust, men are further away on the scale of reliability and taking responsibility and contributing to the family. Husbands, especially, are seen as unreliable. Only two of the women receive financial assistance from their husbands and only two of the women's husbands contribute in looking after the children whilst they are away.

The final realm of trust is the state and state institutions. Women's engagement with their own state on a political level is limited and filled with cynicism. They thus attempt to disengage with political workings of the state. The state, however, cannot be avoided and where engagement with the state does occur, it is seen as an obstacle. The state is viewed as attempting to limit the migration of women as well as eating chunks of their limited income through the imposition of customs and border expenses. Through these realms of trust, women, to the best of their ability, attempt to insulate themselves from the market, the state as well as men. The women are attempting to create their own map, limiting who is in and who is out. These maps are both inclusive and exclusive with varying layers to the relationships upon which the networks are based. Whilst cross-border trading breaks many boundaries, it concurrently constructs boundaries within which the women can operate relatively free from institutions seen to inhibit their activities. These new boundaries are not along progressive lines which some analysts may expect. In fact they are quite conservative women with little orientation to collective political strategies. These boundaries are constructed on an identity and the security that is derived from particularism: that is through family, locality, ethnicity, language and religion.

This study does not affirm the findings of Tripp's study of women in Tanzania and Uganda. Her study points to an arena where cross-cutting tendencies were found between women's groups who were more

concerned with common interests and fighting for greater inclusivity in the process of political liberalisation. This study reflects a more conservative political outcome. The women in this study prefer to disengage from the activities of the state. At the same time, there is not a sense of unity based on common oppression amongst the women. The women, by contrast, compete with each other and, despite limited co-operation, do not unite in a common cause to challenge oppressive structures. Tripp's (1994) study points out that opportunities exist for women to redefine themselves through a recognition of their own capabilities. This study affirms this. The women have redefined themselves as income earners, migrants, and thus it reflects a more robust assertion of women's power yet this power remains limited within the confines of their family and within the boundaries which they construct in order to undertake these income generating activities to ensure their families' survival.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

The current era of globalisation with the market apparently reigning supreme, was the backdrop under which this study was undertaken. Through tracing the experiences of twelve women cross-border traders, this research explored to what extent the women were entrepreneurs in search of their fortune, facilitated through liberalisation, or whether they were struggling to survive as a response to economic hardship and thus forced to enter into the world of the market to do so. The focus of this study was how these influences and activities affected on their conceptions of citizenship and gender relations.

The findings provide evidence of differentiated experiences, with some women able to expand their businesses and economic opportunities whilst for other women survival was at the core of their activities. The women's market venues differed, the items that they sold varied, their travel experiences varied and yet at the heart of their social and economic networks, overwhelmingly common themes emerged.

The women failed to conform to the neoclassical theorists' version of the entrepreneur entering into the market in pursuit of their individual interests. The relationships that facilitate the women ability to trade were deeply embedded in their non-market social worlds. Global influences do not, in this study, provide evidence of effacing the local or of removing previous networks based on religion, ethnicity, language, locality or nationality.

This research provides evidence that in order to survive the global influences, localised and familial relationships are strengthened rather than eroded. It is the social relationships rooted in the particular t! . assist these women in surviving in the global context. Local resources are harnessed by the women through female based kinship networks. Other family members assist in childcare, the production of goods and other pooling of resources to minimise risk and ensure the viability of the trader in South Africa. They also benefit from the profits of the economic activity.

The reason for the tightly-knit networks lies in the issue of trust and the ability to designate authority and resources to others whilst discouraging vice. Trust is not however maximised through women's solidarity in formal collective organisations but through interdepence within female based kinship networks. The migration of women cross-border traders is circular as they work to retain and nurture these networks.

The influences of globalisation become more apparent with reference to citizenship. The rising economic hardships and declining capacity of the state in many southern African countries have resulted in the women essentially giving up on the state which is viewed by most of the women as oppressive or an obstacle. The women chose not to engage in politics as the benefits are not evident. The state is not trustworthy.

Similar perceptions apply to men. The majority of the women in this study receive little or not support from their male partners or the fathers of their

children. Households are often sites of tension as the women are forced to assume the responsibility of childcare, domestic tasks as well as income generation. Cross-border trading therefore provides evidence of a more robust assertion of women in the household as their control increases. The family networks upon which women cross-border traders depend are overwhelmingly female in composition as women are considered to be more reliable and trustworthy than are men.

The networks of women cross-border traders are deeply rooted in the resources of the local and the particular. This is crucial due to the importance of maximising trust in the public and competitive world of the market where the women are afforded little state or legal protection or support. Thus in order to engage in the public world, the women utilise the resources from the private realm of the family.

The women are 'free' in the sense that they are able to travel and undertake autonomous economic activities yet they do not contest the larger structures of political and patriarchal domination and thus cross-border trading reflects a contradictory or bounded liberation. The women do not mount a campaign against patriarchy nor do they place increasing demands on the state.

Women cross-border traders challenge, break down and reconstruct borders. Through independent action and travel, they challenge the borders of patriarchy and nationality and yet in order to survive the

harshness of the public and market realm, they reconstitute borders based on what is familiar and local. The borders are reconstituted in what I have called the realms of trust. The women create a new terrain whereby existing relationships are harnessed and mutate in order to ensure that all in the inner realm of the network are able to benefit through cross-border trading.

Whilst recognising that these women do not pose an overt challenge to the state or to patriarchy, these relationships are dynamic and in time may influence the larger oppressive structures. The present project must leave this as a conjecture. It will be up to further research - perhaps along the lines of my initial proposal - to pursue this possibility. This would entail travelling back to their countries and witnessing their involvement in their households and in the public sphere. Perhaps then, the questions I developed during the train journey in 1996 can be more comprehensively answered.

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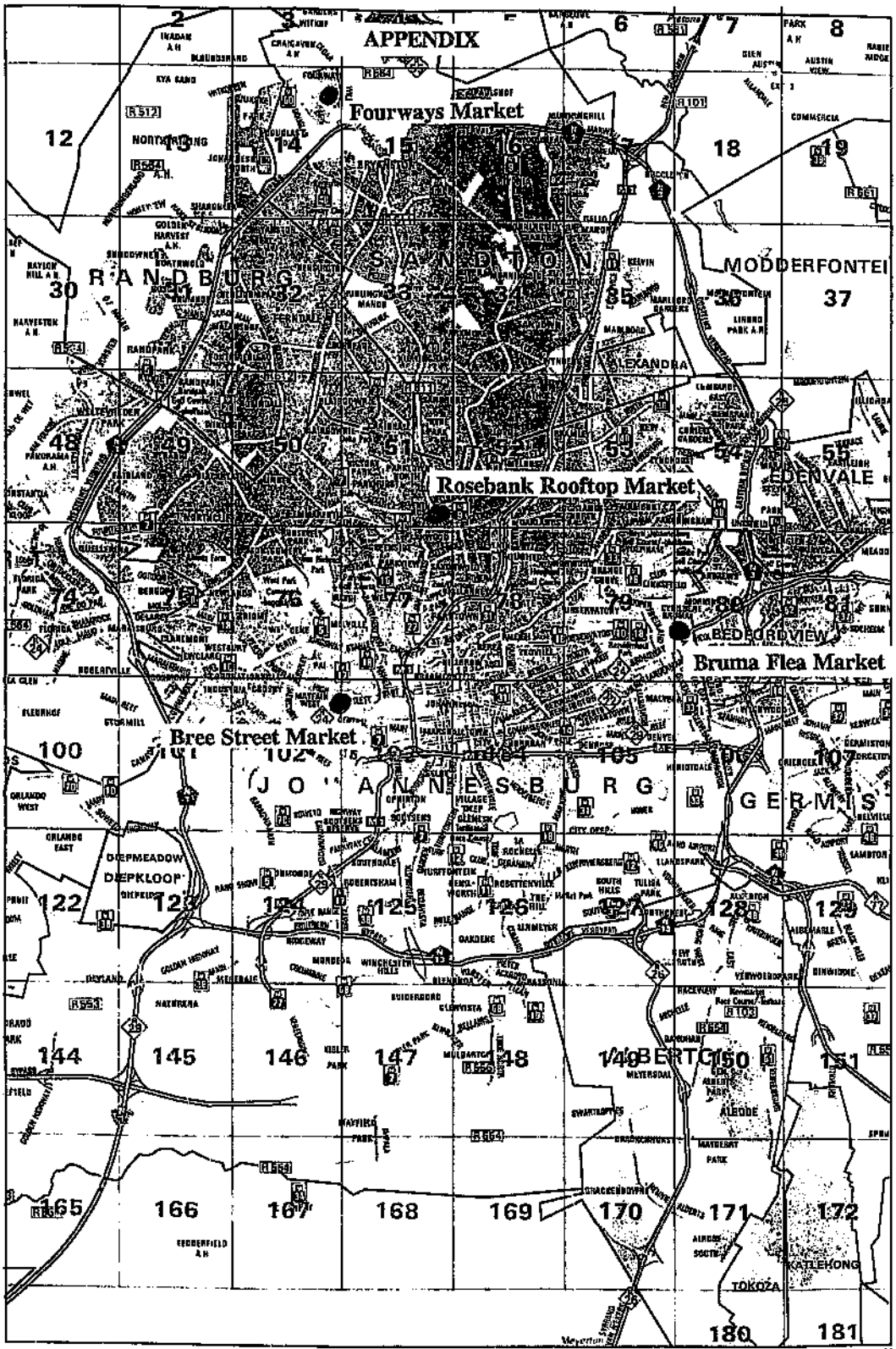
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Katherine Mooketsi:	15 August 1997 27 August 1997 4 September 1997
Constance Rambani:	22 August 1997 3 September 1997 30 September 1997
Delico Mutengambiri:	18 August 1997 2 September 1997
Winfilda Saul:	31 August 1997 14 September 1997 29 October (telephonic interview)
Rosemary Muya:	11 October 1997 8 November 1997
Anne Gidhere:	4 October 1997 18 October 1997
Habiba:	20 September 1997 27 September 1997 6 October 1997
Thandi Mthumzi:	4 September 1997 27 September 1997
Ruby Ndlovu:	23 August 1997 30 August 1997
Magdeline Dlaminin:	30 August 1997 7 September 1997

When going to the market to interview a specific woman, informal discussions were always conducted with each of the other women at the respective markets.



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