

Exploring Short- and Long-Term Survival Mechanisms and Perception of Job Market by Zimbabwean Migrant Women in South Africa

Alice Neube

Disaster Management Training and Education Centre for Africa, University of the Free State

Yonas T. Bahta

Department of Agricultural Economics, University of the Free State

Andries J. Jordaan

Disaster Management Training and Education Centre for Africa, University of the Free State

Abstract

This article assesses the perception of the job market, initial, and long-term coping and adaptation mechanisms employed by Zimbabwe migrant women in South Africa using survey data and Kendall's coefficient of concordance. It concludes that women migrants perceived the job market as favorable. The demographic and socioeconomic characteristics and initial as well as long-term survival mechanisms of migrant women played significant roles in the coping and adaptation mechanisms. The study recommends that the government clarify policies on foreigners' business ownership to avert conflicts.

Keywords: perception of the job market, coping and adopting mechanisms, Kendall's coefficient of concordance, Zimbabwean migrant women, South Africa, migration

Introduction

The development and diversity of current international migration flow reveals that migration can no longer be detached from conventional population and development policy agendas (Hugo 2005). Globally, migrants are now part and parcel of modern day social, political, and economic life. Together with globalization, migration influences the speed and pace of modern-day developmental issues. The movements of people across continental, regional, and

national boundaries are routine daily events and in Sub-Saharan Africa especially, these movements test the artificiality of boundaries.

Traditionally, migration within and from Sub-Saharan Africa has been dominated by men, but it has become feminized since more and more women are also migrating—in contrast to women previously staying at home while men moved around in search of livelihoods to support their families. Since its first truly democratic election in 1994, South Africa has received an incursion of migrant women from Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries whose populations had been migrating since the advent of the mining era in the nineteenth century South Africa. The SADC migrants, particularly the Zimbabweans migrants, dominate South Africa.

Existing international and African migration studies—such as those by Hatton (2004), De Hass (2007), Khatiwada and Samaniego (2014), and Lafleur and Stanek (2017)—focus on South-North flows. The few studies on South-South migration—such as those by Andreopoulos et al. (2011), Facchini et al. (2013), and Melde et al. (2014)—concentrate on the effect of South-South migration on the economic development and security nexus, and tend to focus on South-South movements of migrants and South-South migration and remittances. None of them assess South-South migration in relation the perception of the job market, initial and long-term coping and adopting mechanisms employed by African migrant women, let alone Zimbabwean migrant women in South Africa. Our research attempts to fill this gap in knowledge and literature.

South-South Gendered Migration Pattern

Movements of people as international migrants has always been more notable from the Global South (Africa, Latin America, parts of Asia and the Middle East) to the Global North (North America, Western Europe and developed countries of East Asia) because the Global

South has poorer nations. Movement also happens within regions. South-South migration between developing countries has also gained momentum (Ratha and Shaw 2007; Castles 2008; Ncube 2017). Stimuli for South-South migration include seasonal patterns, flight from natural and man-induced disasters or armed, and socio-economic factors (Ratha and Shaw 2007). Almost 80 percent of South-South migration is estimated to take place between countries with contiguous borders, and most appear to occur between countries with relatively small differences in income (Ratha and Shaw 2007).

It is estimated that there are 73.9 million South-South migrants that represent 47 percent of the 155.8 million international migrants in 2005 (Ratha and Shaw 2007, Campillo-Carrete 2013). At the same time, there are approximately 73 million South-South migrants in 2010, corresponding to 34 percent of the 2010 figure of 214 million total (known) international migrants (UNDESA 2012; Campillo-Carrete 2013). There are no global estimates for the share of women in South-South international migrants in comparison with South-North movements. However, many sources agree that the share of women among international migrants was 49 percent in 2000 (WB, 2006), and 49.2 percent in 2005 (UNDESA 2009; UNDP 2009). Compared with South-North migration, South-South international migration involves the movement of poorer people with fewer skills and/or less education (Hujo and Piper 2007). South Africa hosts a significant number of South-South international migrants.

The gender relations of the migrants' countries of origin create challenges for women, which affects the ease of coping and adapting to conditions in the host country. According to a 2006 UN survey, unjust legislation made it difficult for women to migrate. The laws denied women the right to be accompanied by their spouses and children. In addition, they were subjected to pregnancy tests before being permitted to move and could not consent to anything

without the approval of their guardians, who in some cases, were their husbands (UNDESA 2006). Patriarchal arrangements hinder women's migration, as well as their coping and adaptation to migration destinations, because men may not be willing to join their wives as dependents in host countries.

According to Jolly, Reeves, and Piper (2005), migration opens up a window of opportunity for women to improve the quality of their lives and break the barriers imposed by gender norms that cause their marginalization. Migration can also empower women economically, increasing their independence and improving their self-esteem (Raimundo 2009). Certain forms of forced migration—for example, those resulting from conflict—can change existing gender roles and duties in ways that are advantageous to women (Wells et al. 2013). Conversely, migration can also embed and entrench traditional gender roles and disparities, which expose women to new vulnerabilities due to precarious legal status, exclusion, and segregation (Adepoju 2006).

Social Network Theory Application and Labor Markets

Social networks refer to social relations among a set of actors, such as a set of personal contacts through which an individual receives support and information (Walker et al. 1977; Jackline and Zenou 2005). Social networks are important informal channels through which information about job opportunities is transmitted to individuals (Giulietti et al. 2010). Datcher Loury (2006) reports that between 30 percent and 60 percent of jobs in the USA are found through social networks. It is well known that such networks are particularly important to immigrants because they often lack country-specific skills, such as language or knowledge of institutions, and as new arrivals, they are newcomers to the local labor market (Giulietti et al. 2011). It is also well known that network membership positively influences the migration

decision, and that typically, migrants prefer to settle in localities in the host country in which members of their network already reside (Giulietti et al. 2011). If the evolution of key labor market variables is uncertain, then the probability of migration also rises with better access to job information (Giulietti et al. 2011).

The mitigation of informational asymmetries implies that network characteristics, such as its size and quality, influence labor market outcomes of individuals who use social networks to look for employment, as theorized by Jackson (2001), Calvò-Armengol (2004), and Jackson (2007). Networks, as represented by relatives, friends and acquaintances, are particularly important for migrants, who typically lack information about the host local labor market and the characteristics of the jobs offered (Giulietti et al. 2010). As Ryan argues (2011), analyzing the “social” aspects of networks requires consideration not only of the relative social location of others and the flow of resources, but also the meaning and impact of these personal relations (Ryan and D’Angelo 2018). Migrants’ networks shape and are shaped by cultural identities. They affect, and are affected by broader social and economic dynamics in the countries of origin, destination, and transit (Curran and Saguy 2001; McKeown 2001; Conway and Potter 2007; Koser Akcapar 2010).

There are several conceptual models that explain how social networks operate. The first is the social capital model, which assumes that actors migrate to maximize returns on their investments in human capital and, in doing so, draw upon the social capital embedded in their interpersonal networks (Spittel 1998). With the use of social capital, the costs and risks associated with the act of migrating are reduced (i.e., access to safe transportation, housing, employment, and social interaction) and thus the probability of migrating is increased (Spittel 1998). Additionally, the social capital theory assumes that access to social connections, in the

form of migrant networks, reduces the cost of movement—either monetarily, psychologically, or socially, and favors the act of migration to places where there exist some social ties (Massey and Palloni 1992).

According to Castles et al. (2014), migrant networks tend to decrease the economic, social, and psychological costs of migration. Migrant networks can be defined as sets of interpersonal ties that connect migrants, former migrants and non-migrants in origin and destination areas through bonds of kinship, friendship, and shared community origin (Massey et al. 1993; De Haas 2010). Migrant network theory tries to explain the migration flows that cannot be explained by other theories, and tries to show why migration continues even when there are higher wages elsewhere, or there are no migration pull factors, or migrant-friendly policies, in the receiving country. Network theory tries to explain why migrants' settlement patterns are not always evenly distributed over countries. It focuses on diaspora or different networks and is based on the assumption that the diaspora or migrant network influences the decision of migrants when they are choosing their destination (Castles et al. 2014, p. 43).

The risk diversification model posits that households are the decision-making units. This model draws its inspiration from what has been called the “new economics of migration,” which argues that determinants and the decision-making process of international migration must be studied at the household level, not the individual level (Stark and Levhari 1982, Stark 1984a, Stark and Bloom 1985, Katz and Stark 1986). Some argue that social networks are even more important for migrants without proper documentation to help them obtain information for safe passage (e.g., identification, jobs, housing, etc.) (Spittel 1998).

Sampling Procedure

This study sampled 187 Zimbabwean migrant women who were surveyed over three months (February-April 2016). The sample was drawn from the migrant women in the six metropolitan cities. A multiple stage sampling technique was employed in this study. Firstly, four of the nine provinces of South Africa were selected, namely: Free State, Gauteng, Kwa-Zulu Natal, and Western Cape provinces. Gauteng, Kwa-Zulu Natal, and Western Cape provinces were selected as economic hubs of the country. On the other hand, the Free State province was selected because of its proximity and the availability of respondents to the researcher. The second stage was the ballot selection of the metropolitan cities, resulting in six metropolitan cities including: Bloemfontein from the Free State, Johannesburg, Pretoria, and Ekurhuleni from Gauteng, Durban from Kwa Zulu Natal, and Cape Town from the Western Cape Province. A questionnaire was used to collect data on demographics, socioeconomic characteristics, and socioeconomic coping and adaptation mechanisms.

Validity of the Questionnaire

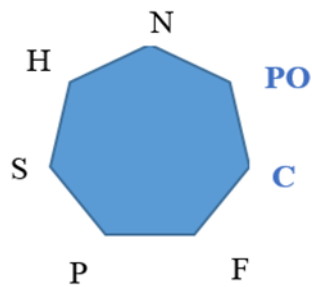
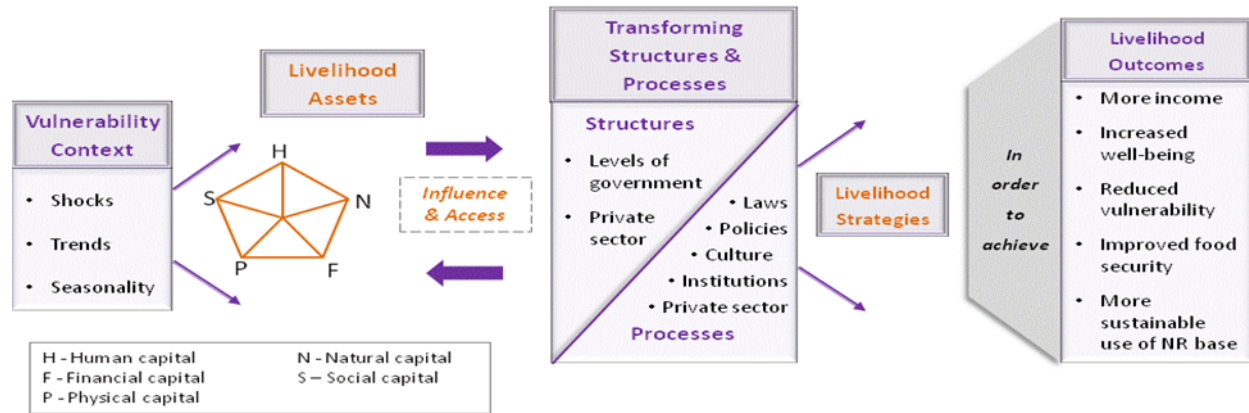
In order to validate the questionnaire, we first pre-tested the survey instrument in a pilot study with fifteen respondents. In addition, for this study, validity on the trustworthiness of the research was supported by triangulation through utilizing the questionnaire, the informal interviews, and observations while in the field. Prior knowledge of the areas and understanding of the nuances of the migrant women made it easy to approach the participants. Furthermore, the personal experiences of the researchers were relied upon to ensure validity. Being a migrant woman, the researcher had knowledge and information on the dynamics and issues affecting the migrants in South Africa.

A Sustainable Livelihood Framework (SLF)

The Sustainable Livelihood Framework (SLF) of the Department for International Development (DFID) (1999) was used to identify various coping mechanisms (Figure 1). The SLF portrays how the vulnerability context influences people's ability to survive and earn a living, which may result in them migrating. Livelihood capitals such as the human, natural, social, financial and physical capitals can also influence the vulnerability context. People may lack certain capitals and—together with how they are exposed to hazards—be more or less able to survive in their current situation, or they may be forced to migrate. Similarly, the policies and processes in the form of government and other structures in place, laws, regulations, and the culture of the specific community influence the survival and overall well-being of the people. These policies and institutional processes affect the coping and adaptation strategies devised, and they have an influence on the ultimate livelihood outcomes of a community (Hugo 2005). The SLF relies on the strategies for poverty reduction, survival, and prosperity that are dependent on the ability of individuals or a community to capitalize on the opportunities and resources at their disposal. These livelihood activities may be in the form of socioeconomic goods and services (Adato et al. 2002). Scoones (1998) and Majale (2002) stated that the SLF is versatile, as it can be applied at the individual, household, community, and region or even the country level.

The socioeconomic coping and adaptation mechanisms used by migrant women were categorized into four themes: family support, entrepreneurial support, employment, and humanitarian support. Kendall's coefficient of concordance was utilized to determine the most prominent perception of the job market, as well as the initial and long-term coping and adopting mechanisms employed by African migrant women in South Africa. An evaluation of the job market in South Africa was done using Kendall's coefficient of concordance.

Figure 1: Sustainable Livelihood Framework



Source: DFID (1999) with Authors' inclusion of Political and cultural capital

Empirical Specification

Kendall's evaluation uses the means from the individual responses to rank the various indicators considered under the South African job market. The total rank score calculated was used to compute Kendall's coefficient of concordance (W), which estimates the degree of respondents in the ranking. The equation for the Kendall's coefficient of concordance, according to Anang et al. (2013), is given as:

$$\frac{12[\sum T^2 - (\sum T)^2 / n]}{nm^2(n^2 - 1)} \quad (1)$$

Where, = Kendall's Coefficient of Concordance, T = Sum of ranks for the job

Where, = Kendall's Coefficient of Concordance, T = Sum of ranks for the job market, m = Total number of respondents, and n = Total number of the job market in South Africa being ranked.

The coefficient of concordance (W) will be tested for significance in terms of the F-distribution.

The F-distribution is given by Anang et al. (2013):

$$F = [(m-1)W / (1-W)] \quad (2)$$

The numerator degrees of freedom is given as:

$$(n - 1) - (2 / m) \quad (3)$$

In the same way, the denominator degrees of freedom is given as:

$$m-1 [(n-1)-2 / m] \quad (4)$$

Perception of the Job Market by Zimbabwean Migrant Women

Table 1 indicates the job market perception of Zimbabwean migrant women in South Africa. The Zimbabwean migrant women ranked job availability the highest, followed by skills transfer in the workplace, ethnic preferences, policies on getting jobs, as well as the chances and availability of getting a job. According to the respondents, jobs were readily available in South Africa. However, necessary skills, qualifications, and the correct or legal documentation required for foreigners to be employed in South Africa pose challenges. Some migrant women indicated that they possessed the requisite qualifications and skills but were struggling to get employment in South Africa due to, among other reasons, being on their spouses' permits. Such a permit does not allow a woman to work in South Africa. Moreover, migrant women indicated that jobs were available in South Africa, unlike in Zimbabwe, where unemployment levels are as high as 95 percent (World Fact Book 2016). Some of them were even creating employment in South Africa

because the atmosphere was conducive to job creation. When asked about discrimination in the job market, migrant women indicated that they faced a discriminatory job market, mainly because they were foreigners, and had stopped looking for jobs.

Table 1: Kendall's evaluation of the job market in South Africa

	Mean Rank	Order of Ranking
Job availability	3.98	1st
Skills transfer in work places	3.95	2nd
Ethnic preferences in work places	3.73	3rd
Policies on getting job	3.47	4th
Chances of getting job	3.19	5th
Getting you a specific job	2.69	6th

Source: Survey results (2016)

The chances of getting jobs in South Africa are high only if one meets all legal requirements. Some of the respondents in South Africa did not have the proper residence permits— and were unable to apply for jobs that matched with their qualifications. The policies on the employment of foreigners in South Africa required preference in hiring for jobs to be given to South African citizens, and only jobs requiring skills for which South Africans could not be found, to be given to foreigners. The respondents noted that such laws and policies were too strict, preventing them from securing employment. A number of Zimbabwean women who were selling vegetables and other wares in the shopping centers and other places within the metropolitan cities indicated that they were making more money than what the jobs they could find would pay them.

Using a scale of 1 to 10 to provide insight on the policies on securing jobs in South Africa, the migrant women had varying views: 43 (23 percent) respondents evaluated the job policies in South Africa as lowest thereby giving it a score of 1; 29 (15.51 percent) respondents also evaluated the South African job policies as very low, giving it a score of 2; and 12 migrant (6.42 percent) women indicated a score of 3 for job policies in South Africa. Lastly, 84 (44.9 percent) of migrant women evaluated the job policies 1-3, highlighting their negative opinion about the policies in South Africa on job acquisition by migrants.

On evaluating the likelihood of migrant women getting jobs, 89 (47.6 percent) of the respondents scored the lowest—between 1 and 3 out of 10. Only 17.1 percent scored the chances of getting jobs in South Africa 8-10 out of 10. It is clear that the migrant women viewed their chances of getting jobs in South Africa as very unlikely. Hence, many of them became entrepreneurs and worked for fellow compatriots. Furthermore, they faced underemployment due to challenges in getting jobs commensurate with their training, skills, and experience. This was true of those who indicated that they were trained nurses, accountants, biologists, business management professionals, and those who gave prior indication that they were not doing the jobs that they were trained to do. A total of 122 (65.24 percent) respondents indicated that they considered chances of getting jobs commensurate with their skills, training, and experience very low, that is: between 1 and 3 out of 10.

Initial and Long-Term Coping and Adaptation Mechanisms of Migrant Women in South Africa

Socioeconomic, multi-attribute variables formed the basis of respondents' coping and adaptation mechanisms. The four multi-attribute themes are: family support, entrepreneurial support, employment, and humanitarian support. The family support involves factors such as

migrant women being looked after by one's husband, sisters, brothers, cousins, and/or parents on arrival in South Africa (Hungwe 2015). These networks were part of the social capital identified as coping and adaptation mechanisms utilized by migrants in host societies.

Employment is defined as the formal jobs and occupations secured by migrant women in government, private sector, as well as from other African migrants and fellow compatriots (Kalitanyi and Visser 2010). They managed to cope and adapt in South Africa through getting jobs and earning wages or salaries.

Entrepreneurial support means that the migrant women engage in some form of work in order to survive more immediately, whilst looking for means to guarantee long term livelihood (Kalitanyi and Visser 2010). The migrant women engaged in trade basketry and sales of artifacts brought from their country of origin, flier distribution on street corners, and by sandwich board advertising on behalf of local companies. In addition, they ordered goods that they re-sold in Zimbabwe, and upon return to South Africa, sold doilies, plaited hair by the street corners, worked as a maid, and in the farms as general laborers.

Humanitarian support is support received from friends, fellow compatriots, neighbors, strangers, locals, and NGOs or faith-based organizations in order to survive in South Africa. Those various migration survival mechanisms played a role in short-term survival—before migrant women were able to access long-term livelihoods. Humanitarian support meant that the migrant women had to rely on others outside their family for survival (Tati 2008). Those were local and international NGOs, fellow citizens, friends, and strangers. Those migrant women who had their requisite permits ready started looking for long-term means of survival and others had to go to Home Affairs to register as refugees and asylum seekers; some were in the country illegally until the South African government introduced the Special Dispensation Program (SDP)

in 2009. The government of South Africa in 2009 introduced the Zimbabwe Dispensation Permit to regularize Zimbabweans residing in South Africa illegally, to curb the deportation of Zimbabweans who were in SA illegally, to reduce pressure on the asylum seeker and refugee regime, and to provide amnesty to Zimbabweans who obtained SA documents fraudulently. The permit was also a positive move for the migrant women as they were also benefiting from the regulation.

Short-Term Option of Initial Coping and Adaptation Mechanisms

The survey respondents were asked to evaluate their short-term coping and adaptation mechanisms on arrival in South Africa according to their priorities. They had options among employment, entrepreneurial support, family support, and humanitarian support as first choices of the initial coping and adaptation mechanisms they employed in South Africa. 103 (55.08 percent) respondents indicated that they used family support as the first option of an initial coping mechanism. Forty-three (22.99 percent) used employment as the first option of an initial coping mechanism. Those who indicated that they relied on entrepreneurial and humanitarian support as the first option were 21 (11.23 percent) and 20 (10.70 percent) respectively. A total of 31 (16.58 percent) respondents indicated that they relied on employment as a second option of initial coping and adaptation mechanism when they arrived in South Africa. Only 12 (6.42 percent) utilized entrepreneurial support. Eighteen (9.63 percent) used family support as the second option to cope and adapt on arrival in South Africa. A total of 34 (18.18 percent) respondents indicated that they utilized humanitarian support in the short-term when they arrived in South Africa. Ninety-two (42.20 percent) respondents had no second choices of coping on arrival, relying on the first option.

The third option of initial coping and adaptation was available to a few of them. The majority or 146 out of 187 (78.10 percent) respondents indicated that they relied only on two options. Four (2.14 percent) respondents indicated that they utilized employment as a third option of coping and adaptation in South Africa. Ten (5.35 percent) respondents utilized family support as a coping and adaptation mechanisms on arrival in South Africa. Only one (0.53 percent) respondent used entrepreneurial support as a third choice to cope and adapt on arrival in South Africa. Twenty- six (13.90 percent) respondents indicated that they were relying on humanitarian support as a third option of coping and adaptation on arrival in South Africa. Only 19 (10.16 percent) had fourth options of initial coping and adaptation mechanisms they used in South Africa. Eight (4.28 percent) were entrepreneurs. Finally, 14 (7.49 percent) relied on humanitarian support. Family support and humanitarian support dominated the initial coping and adaptation mechanisms soon after the migrants arrived in South Africa.

Long-Term Coping and Adaptation Mechanisms

Coping and adapting as a short-term strategy differed from long-term aims as the migrant women changed some of their resident statuses or established themselves in the country (Bhugra and Becker 2005). Long-term mechanisms were also categorized as employment, family support, entrepreneurial and humanitarian support. Among these were various jobs in which they were engaged, formal and informal businesses, assistance from family members like husbands, brothers, sisters, and children, as well as humanitarian help from relatives, fellow compatriots, locals and from various organizations.

A majority (53.50 percent) of the respondents indicated that they were employed in various places, especially the private sector and foreign-owned enterprises in South Africa. This was a significant increase from the initial employment rate of 23.0 percent on arrival. Those who

indicated that they used family support as the first option of long-term coping and adaptation in South Africa were 26 (13.90 percent). Only 2 (1.07 percent) respondents utilized humanitarian support as the first option of long-term coping and adaptation. Fifty-six (29.95 percent) respondents used entrepreneurial support as the first option of coping and adapting in the long term in South Africa. More and more of the migrant women got employment in South Africa in the long term. Adepoju (2006) emphasized that many African migrants came to South Africa for employment. South Africa was perceived as a rich country that is full of opportunities.

Considering the respondents' employment statistics of 53.5 percent, their perceptions were made into a reality as they migrated and got the jobs, which meant that their economic lives were better than in their home countries. Entrepreneurial means of survival also dominated the long-term survival mechanisms after employment, which translated to the fact that migrant women devised means to adapt in the host country.

A few respondents utilized employment and entrepreneurial support as their second options for long-term coping and adaptation mechanisms since those two were already first options. Only 14 (7.49 percent) utilized employment as the second choice. Fourteen (7.49 percent) also used entrepreneurial support as the second option. Eight (7.49 percent) respondents used entrepreneurial support as the third option for coping and adaptation. One respondent (0.54 percent) used employment as the fourth long-term coping and adaptation mechanism. Three (1.60 percent) respondents used entrepreneurial support as fourth options for coping and adaptation mechanisms. From the results, it is clear that the main long-term coping and adaptation mechanisms employed by migrant women in South Africa were employment and entrepreneurial support. Family and humanitarian support were not used much in the long-term as it was in the short-term by migrant women. As stated by Bhugra and Becker (2005) the

presence of family and friends in host countries assist migrants cope and adapt on arrival. Erel (2002) and Hugo (2005) also confirmed that the family, friends, and relatives in host countries offer immediate relief for migrants when they arrive in the host countries. In the long-term, the migrants integrated into the host communities due to their education, residence statuses and language proficiencies that facilitate employment (Berry et al. 2006).

Evaluating Policy Implications

The policy implications from this study focus on two main factors: firstly, while working on preventing conflicts, it is imperative to have household-centered strategies and approaches (integrating gender into development and migration) in international migration to South Africa. Secondly, empowering women migrants by providing them with more opportunities, and allowing them to become development agents will enhance the growth and productivity of South Africa and their home country. Lastly, gender-sensitive migration policies not only contribute to empowering women migrants, but also strengthen regional development and integration.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Due to its history of apartheid, South Africa has challenges such as skills shortages, unemployment, shortage of basic services like housing, water, and sanitation, and uneven wealth distribution. The country is inundated with international migrants and African migrants. Zimbabweans in particular continue to enter the country on a daily basis. Migrants compete with the locals for the scarce resources that are insufficient for the locals alone, resulting in tensions that spiral into sporadic xenophobic attacks on foreigners.

Innovation (multi-tasking, entrepreneurial capabilities, and social cohesion) is critical for coping and adaptation in the global system that has limited employment opportunities. Strong entrepreneurial capabilities were observed in the Zimbabwean migrant women. Compatriotism

was also exercised by the migrant women as reflected in their businesses, work environments, and even residential locales. Zimbabwean migrant women showed that a favorable economic atmosphere can become a window of opportunity for prosperity through enterprise development. This study recommends that in order to avoid conflicts, government clarify policies on businesses ownership, especially small businesses owned by foreigners. Moreover, the government must become proactive and capitalize on innovative ideas brought into the country by migrants. This could be done through providing more opportunities through good and relevant education systems and proactivity in drawing lessons from other countries that have managed to create valuable human capital bases in a manner that embraces migration while simultaneously developing the human capital and expanding the opportunities available to citizens.

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Dr. Alice Ncube is a lecturer and a coordinator of short learning programs in the Disaster Management Training and Education Centre for Africa (DiMTEC) at the University of the Free State. Dr. Ncube published manuscripts in accredited journals related to disaster management, resilience, international migration, gender and women and coping and adaption mechanism.

Dr. Yonas T. Bahta is a senior researcher in the Department of Agricultural Economics at the University of the Free State. Dr. Bahta published manuscripts in accredited journals related to development studies. He also received an award of the second best-published article in Agrekon, in the 53rd annual conference of Agricultural Economics Association of South Africa (AEASA). As an experienced researcher, recently he collaborated with the University of Pretoria and Disaster Management Training and Education Centre for Africa (DiMTEC) on project of KZN agro-processing and Vulnerability, Adaptation to and coping with drought respectively.

Professor Andries J. Jordaan is currently the Director of the Disaster Management Training and Education Centre for Africa (DiMTEC) at the University of the Free State. He holds a Ph.D. in Agricultural Economics and specializes on agriculturally related disasters such as drought, floods, wildfires and animal diseases. Professor Jordaan is a registered professional natural scientist and member of several professional associations. He is internationally recognized as an expert in disaster risk reduction and rural development and is regularly invited as an expert to international workshops and conferences.