

INFORMAL CROSS-BORDER TRADERS IN BOTSWANA

By

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for the
Southern African Migration Project

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1. Introduction

Commercial movements into and out of Botswana date back to the pre-independence period when Botswana depended on neighbouring countries for food security and they in turn benefited from the peaceful environment in Botswana at a time of considerable political turmoil in southern Africa. The informal sector was however limited in the country due to regulation of informal trade in the country (Silitshena, 1980). But largely due to changes made since independence and global economic and political processes, the number of people entering the informal sector in the country has increased considerably since 1989. Botswana's rapid economic development and subsequent economic decline in neighbouring countries, such as Zambia and Zimbabwe, have led to substantial increase in cross-border movements for commercial purposes. Much of these movements involve people whose intentions are primarily to maintain a healthy standard of living from the informal commercial sector.

The purpose of the survey was to monitor the movements of small scale or informal sector cross border traders entering Botswana. Such information can say a lot about the stock of goods that go through the borders, and the interactions between competing demands for the goods in countries between which small scale cross border trade takes place. It also provides information about the role small scale cross border traders may play in intra-regional cross border trade in the SADC, as well as their experiences of, and contributions to border traffic at selected border posts.

The three borders included in this study are Tlokweng (bordering South Africa in the east), Kazungula (bordering Zambia in the north-west) and Ramokgwebana (bordering Zimbabwe in the north). Only one other border, Ramatlabama in the south, compares to these three in terms of usage. It was excluded because of financial constraints. Ramokgwebana is the busiest border post in Botswana partly because Zimbabwe has historically been this country's biggest trading partner and more recently because of Zimbabwe's spiralling economic decline. The large volume of people crossing the land border posts has become increasingly difficult to manage. In an attempt to minimize this

problem, the Department of Customs and Excise has successfully got the government of Botswana to resume rail transport to and from Zimbabwe.

The movement of people through the border posts is managed by the Department of Immigration. Table 1 confirms that the highest volume of human movement occurs at the Ramokgwebana border. The statistics of people coming into Botswana or going out through the Tlokweng border was not available for 2005. But figures for January to March 2006 show that this is the second busiest border post of the three that have been studied. The Appendix reveals that there is seasonality of movement across the Ramokgwebana and Kazungula borders. The volume of human traffic is highest between July and January and lowest between February and June. The busiest time for border officials at these border posts is December. This is when many people (Zambians and Zimbabweans) who work in Botswana and South Africa travel to spend Christmas holidays at home. Their return from the holidays is reflected in the marked increase of in-bound travellers over the out-bound ones in January.

Table 1 Monthly volume of human movement in and out of Botswana, selected border posts, 2005/2006

Month & Year	Moving into Botswana		Moving out of Botswana	
	Ramokgwebana	Kazungula	Ramokgwebana	Kazungula
April 2005	39705	13654	43811	14960
May 2005	33270	13816	39292	15335
June 2005	32422	13367	36002	15689
July 2005	53181	18015	53807	18024
August 2005	48317	17316	38552	19240
September '05	54623	19204	40989	2145
October '05	50956	17579	45652	18140
November '05	58294	14259	51132	15932
December '05	81136	20438	94180	23231
January 2006	73581	18332	42161	17855
February 2006	40887	14408	38747	17959
March 2006	47710	16857	49606	18587

Source: Department of Customs and Excise, Gaborone.

1.1 Trade and Trade Agreements

The movement of goods through the borders of Botswana is governed by the Department of Customs and Excise which is in the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning and is currently in the process of becoming a parastatal. The regulations permit each traveller to bring goods worth P500.00 or less duty-free into the country (P = pula, Botswana's currency). Goods worth more than P500.00 are taxed. Where the goods are worth more than P14,000.00 they are classified as commercial items and therefore excluded from the "small scale" category of goods.

Officers at the borders have been frequently criticized for rigidly applying the border regulations. But the regulations which affect, among other things, types of goods imported and exported are not the sole domain of the Department of Customs and Excise. Movement of vegetable and animal products across the borders is controlled by the Ministry of Agriculture while the Ministry of Health control the movement of pharmaceutical drugs. The Department of Customs and Excise operates on the basis of instructions received about what should and should not be allowed to enter or leave the country. All prohibited goods are confiscated.

Botswana has ratified the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Protocol on Trade (see Botswana, 2006). This protocol commenced implementation in 2000 and was designed to foster trade between SADC states through trade liberalization. Botswana also has a bi-lateral trade agreement between Botswana and Zimbabwe which provides for duty-free trade between these countries (Zimbabwe, 2006).

The possible effect of these agreements may be seen in trade in petrol. At the Ramokgwebana border numerous trucks enter Botswana daily with containers of various sizes for storing petrol. The petrol is bought at filling stations on the border (or further away) and exported to Zimbabwe where most of it is reportedly sold. No duty is charged on this item regardless of the amount purchased. The buyers are treated like Botswana residents who purchase large amounts of petrol for use in their farms. This expression of

tolerance by the Botswana government may be linked to the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Protocol on Trade (see Botswana, 2006) but more specifically is the possible effect of the bi-lateral trade agreement with Zimbabwe.

1.2 The Informal Sector and Cross Border Trade

The informal economic sector in Africa has attained huge proportions to the extent that it accounted “for over 60 per cent of all urban jobs and over 90 per cent of all new urban jobs in 2000 (Lyons and Snoxell, 2005a). Due largely to the effects of globalization and desires to maximize profits by utilizing available national and international markets, the informal sector is now seen not only as a national issue, but also an international one. Increasing economic gaps between states has contributed to the entrance of many people in trade activities which require crossing international borders. Hence there has been growing need for appropriate regulatory policies to be developed to address the requirements of states and humans. But the processes and regulation of traders crossing state borders are very complex and mystifying (Cunningham and Heyman, 2004). It therefore requires close scrutiny of what goes on at borders to fully comprehend the intricacies involved in the relationship between border officials and traders.

While many informal cross-border traders are attempting to get out of poverty by pursuing self-employment, others are trying to maintain a healthy standard of living. In this regard, some studies have been carried out in Southern Africa to examine the characteristics and behaviour of cross-border traders (Peberdy, 2000; Muzvidziwa, 2001; Pauw and Petrus, 2003).

Muzvidziwa (2001) observed that when crossing borders, women traders tend to contravene the national regulations and seemly undermine the credibility of the law by collaborating with staff at the border. But Chalfin (2001) questions this perception of corruption at the borders. In line with Cunningham and Heyman (2004) she contends that the social interactions between these two groups reflect the wider contexts of maintaining favourable economic conditions between countries and at the level of individuals. There are competing demands for goods by neighbouring countries and

informal cross-border traders make significant contributions towards food security and satisfying other demands for goods that are scarce in the countries in which they operate. In this respect, cloth traders in north-east Ghana “collude with state agents to generate a *de facto* free-trade zone”(Chalfin, 2001: 219).

Muzvidziwa (2001) calls attention to the complex nature of identity where it is actually much more than citizenship. Cross-border traders may see themselves in several capacities depending on the prevailing circumstance and may use these identities in the pursuit of their business. Networking within the informal and formal marketing system is considered a priority by Lyons and Snoxell (2005b). It assists in the maximization of social capital within the framework of a trade sector that necessitates international movements. Zimbabwean women cross-border traders usually ensure that they develop networks of friends in South Africa who assist with the trade and especially feeding and housing during their stay in the country (REF?). Cross-border traders frequently encounter behaviours which appear to be influenced by xenophobia and in South Africa, intermittent violent attacks on street traders have given cause for concern about the welfare of non-citizens engaged in the informal sector (Peberdy, 2000; Pauw and Petrus, 2003). For this and other reasons, trade unions in several countries are assisting informal migrant workers to develop solidarity and to have access to crucial services in the host country (Selcuk, 2005).

2. Methodology

The Botswana survey was undertaken at the country’s borders with South Africa (Tlokweg), Zimbabwe (Ramokgwebana) and Zambia (Kazungula). The survey was in three parts: an origin and destination questionnaire (O&D), a border monitors form and a counters form. Research assistants (RAs), all University of Botswana students, were recruited and trained on the administration of the research instruments. Thereafter the RAs were divided into three teams and sent to the border posts. However, due to differing distances and other factors, they left Gaborone and started work on different dates. The team sent to the Tloweng border post conducted the survey for 15 days between the 19th

June and 3rd July, the Ramokgwebana team worked for 13 days between 20th June and 2nd July and the Kazungula team spent 10 days in the field between 24th June and 3rd July.

The origin and destination questionnaire was designed to enable longer interviews with traders to gather more information from them. After the initially proposed approach of interviewing traders using the O&D instrument while they were in queues awaiting immigration and customs service proved problematic, a different approach was adopted by all the three teams of RAs. This involved administering the O&D questionnaire after the traders had gone through customs and were at the last exit point of the border post. Customs officials at all the three border posts assisted border monitors by ensuring that all baggage was opened so that the RAs could actually see what the traders were carrying. At the end of the survey, a total of 681 O&D questionnaires had been administered. Of these 416 were administered at the Zimbabwean border, 155 at the Zambian border and 100 at the South African border. At Tlokweng and Ramokgwebana it was observed that most traders prefer to cross the borders in the evening. It is believed that this reduces the risk of conflict with custom and immigration officers. Consequently, many of the interviews were done at night, especially at Ramokgwebana.

The trader monitors instrument aimed at monitoring trade recorded by customs officials and it sought to obtain information of the traders' sex, race and nationality. It also recorded information on the type of goods traded, their declared quantity and value as well as the total amount of duties the traders paid. Overall 781 traders were monitored during the survey: 415 were monitored in Ramokgwebana-Plumtree, 204 in Kazungula and 162 in Tlokweng.

The main objective of the counters form, on the other hand, was to basically count the number of traders and non-traders passing through each border post into Botswana and recording their sex. A total of 4121 traders and non-traders were recorded at Ramokgwebana-Plumtree, 2299 at Kazungula and 4223 at Tlokweng (a total of 10643 over the survey period).

3. Counting at the border posts

Over the period of the survey, a total of 10643 people were recorded by RAs as they crossed the three borders into Botswana. The highest volume of the border crossers were at the Tlokweng and Ramokgwebana border-posts, which accounted for 39.7% and 38.7% of the total crossers, respectively (Table 2). The majority of the crossers had Botswana as their final destination although some did use the country as a transit route to other countries, especially South Africa.

Table 2: Border Crossers by Trading Status and Sex Entering Botswana June 2006

	Border Post			
	Ramokgwebana- Plumtree	Kazungula	Tlokweng	Total
Proportion of Border Crossers				
Proportion	38.7	21.6	39.7	100
<i>Total Number</i>	<i>4121</i>	<i>2299</i>	<i>4223</i>	<i>10643</i>
Destination country				
Botswana	97.2	96.7	98.3	97.5
Namibia	1.0	0.3	0.0	0.4
South Africa	1.9	3.0	0.0	1.4
Zambia	0.0	0.0	1.1	0.4
Zimbabwe	0.0	0.0	0.6	0.2
<i>Total Number</i>	<i>4121</i>	<i>2299</i>	<i>4223</i>	<i>10643</i>
Trading Status				
Trader	8.6	13.7	8.9	9.8
Non-Trader	91.4	86.3	91.1	90.2
<i>Total Number</i>	<i>4121</i>	<i>2299</i>	<i>4223</i>	<i>10643</i>
Sex of Trader				
Female	57.9	89.8	48.0	63.9
Male	42.1	10.2	52.0	36.1
<i>Total Number</i>	<i>356</i>	<i>315</i>	<i>377</i>	<i>1048</i>
Sex of Non-Trader				
Female	58.4	52.9	42.0	50.7
Male	41.6	47.1	58.0	49.3
<i>Total Number</i>	<i>3765</i>	<i>1984</i>	<i>3846</i>	<i>9595</i>

Table 1 shows that the majority (90.2%) of the people entering Botswana were non-traders, as traders comprised only 9.8% of the people counted crossing the border. Analysing these results by sex reveals that, overall, females made the highest proportion of traders and, to a lesser extent, of non-traders as well. Only at the Tlokweng border post was the proportion of females (traders and non-traders) lower than that of men. Conversely, the overwhelming majority of traders entering Botswana from Zambia were women.

4. Border Monitors

4.1 Traders' Profile

Of the 781 small scale traders that were interviewed during the survey, the majority (53.1%) entered Botswana at the Ramokgwebana border post while the lowest number of interviews using the border monitoring instrument were conducted at the Tlokweng border post (Table 3). Almost invariably the traders were Black Africans and, consistent with the results of the counters, the majority were female.

Table 3: Characteristics of Traders

	Frequency	Percent
Border Post of Entry		
Ramokgwebana	415	53.1
Kazungula	204	26.1
Tlokweng	162	20.7
<i>Total</i>	<i>781</i>	<i>100.0</i>
Sex of Trader		
Female	519	66.7
Male	259	33.3
<i>Total</i>	<i>778</i>	<i>100.0</i>
Race of Trader		
Black African	779	99.7
White	1	0.1
Asian	1	0.1
<i>Total</i>	<i>781</i>	<i>100.0</i>

4.2 Goods Carried into Botswana

Most goods carried into Botswana recorded by border monitors were fresh fruit and vegetables followed by household goods and ‘other’. As Table 3 shows, furniture and perishables such as meat, fish and eggs were the least traded.

Table 4: Goods Carried by Traders Recorded by Border Monitors

Goods	Border Post			Total	
	Ramokgwebana-Plumtree	Kazungula	Tlokweng	%	n
Groceries	3.4	29.4	5.0	10.5	82
Fresh Fruit & Veg.	21.0	50.0	26.5	29.7	231
Meat/Fish/Eggs	0.2	1.0	0.6	0.5	4
Electrical Goods	0.5	0.0	6.9	1.7	13
Furniture	1.0	0.0	1.2	0.8	6
Household Goods	28.7	7.8	11.7	19.7	154
New clothes/shoes	8.7	2.9	16.7	8.8	69
Old clothes/shoes	0.7	3.9	2.5	1.9	15
Handicrafts/curios	13.7	1.5	0.0	7.7	60
Fabric/textiles	0.7	1.5	3.7	1.5	12
Cosmetics	0.7	0.0	5.6	1.5	12
Other	21.3	5.9	17.9	16.5	129

The Ramokgwebana border post had the highest proportion of traders carrying household goods, handicrafts and curios and ‘other’ goods. The traders who entered Botswana at the Kazungula border post were trading mainly in groceries, fresh fruit and vegetables as well as old/used clothes and shoes. The Tlokweng border post, on the other hand, had the highest proportions of traders in electrical goods, new clothes and shoes, fabric and textiles and in cosmetics.

All in all, more females than males traded in groceries, fresh fruit and vegetables, new clothes and shoes and cosmetics (Table 5). Males dominated trade in all the other goods shown in the table.

Table 5: Type of Goods Carried by Sex of Trader

Goods	Sex of Trader		Total
	Female	Male	
Groceries	91.5	8.5	82
Fresh Fruit & Veg.	76.6	23.4	231
Meat/Fish/Eggs	50.0	50.0	4
Electrical Goods	30.8	69.2	13
Furniture	50.0	50.0	6
Household Goods	60.5	39.5	154
New clothes/shoes	71.0	29.0	69
Old clothes/shoes	53.3	46.7	15
Handicrafts/curios	35.0	65.0	60
Fabric/textiles	66.7	33.3	12
Cosmetics	75.0	25.0	12
Other	63.3	36.7	129

4.3 Declared Goods and Duties Paid

The majority of goods declared at the Ramokgwebana and Kazungula border posts were worth less than P100 while at the Tlokweng border posts goods worth between P200 and P299 were mostly declared. Overall, the goods declared at all the three border posts cost less than P100 (Table 6). In the same vein, the total amount of duties paid, were in the P1.00-P99 range. It is, however, noteworthy that a slightly over one-fifth of the traders did not pay any duties. This was particularly the case at the Kazungula border post where close to 72% of the traders paid nothing.

Table 6: Declared Value of goods and Duties paid by Border Post of Entry

	Border Post			
	Ramokgwebana-Plumtree	Kazungula	Tlokweng	Total
Declared Value of Goods (Pula)				
0-99	29.8	67.6	4.9	34.6
100-199	28.4	10.3	8.0	19.4
200-299	14.7	5.9	24.7	14.5
300-399	10.3	2.9	8.6	8.0
400-499	7.1	3.4	8.0	6.3
500-999	6.4	3.9	21.6	8.9
1000-1999	3.2	2.9	13.6	5.3
2000+	0.2	2.9	10.5	3.1
Total Duties Paid (Pula)				
None	2.7	71.6	1.9	20.5
1-99	79.0	20.1	77.8	63.4
100-199	15.9	1.5	11.1	11.1
200-299	1.2	1.0	3.7	1.7
300-399	0.5	1.0	3.1	1.2
400-499	0.5	0.0	0.6	0.4
500+	0.2	4.9	1.9	1.8

5. Origin and Destination Survey

As the border monitors form was limited in extent and was administered in the presence of a customs official, the Origin & Destination Survey (O&D) was developed to expand the scope of information gathered, including gathering information about the movement and activities of traders when leaving Botswana. A total of 681 cross border traders were interviewed during the survey, 61% were interviewed at Ramokgwebana. The rest were captured at the Kazungula (23%) and Tlokweng (16%).

Two-thirds of the traders interviewed were female and almost all (99%) were coming to buy and/or sell goods in Botswana. The rest were *en route* to Namibia; and all of them were from Zimbabwe. Almost all traders were citizens of the country of origin. Few of the traders began their journeys outside the three countries of origin. One started in Tanzania and two started in Namibia

5.1 Mode of transport to enter Botswana and origin and destination of journey

The most popular mode of transport to the border used was a bus or taxi, 78% of traders use this transport system while 15% walked to the border. Only 8% used cars, while others usually proceeded from the border in cars. But almost all of those who walked to the border joined those in buses, or taxis to proceed to their destinations.

Table 7 shows that overall, Harare was the main origin of the business journey. But the majority of traders from Zambia do not originate their journeys in Lusaka. They come from much smaller towns. Probably due to its position as Africa's greatest trading centre, Johannesburg is just about the most popular origin for traders traveling from South Africa. Still, a few others began their journeys as far away as Dar es Salaam and Blantyre.

Table 7: City/Town where Trader began this journey for business

City/town	Frequency	Percentage
Johannesburg	55	8.1
Other South African town	55	8.1
Harare	142	20.9
Bulawayo	62	9.1
Gweru	45	6.6
Mutare	16	2.4
Chitungwiza	7	1.0
Kwekwe	17	2.5
Plumtree	8	1.2
Masvingo	43	6.4
Other Zimbabwean town	72	10.6
Lusaka	15	2.2
Livingstone	53	7.8
Other Zambian town	84	12.4
Blantyre	2	0.3
Mbeya	2	0.3
Dar es Salaam	1	0.1
Total	679	100.0

The principal destination of traders was Francistown (24%) while 19% went to Gaborone and Kasane, respectively.

5.2 Purpose of journey for trade

Two-thirds of traders interviewed were bringing goods to sell in Botswana. A quarter were entering to shop for goods and 7% came to do both (buy and sell goods).

5.3 Frequency of travel and duration of stay

The peak frequency of travel for traders was once a month (54%). Fourteen percent traveled twice a month while 13% did so a couple of times a week. The peak (41%) duration of stay in Botswana on business was one to two weeks while the majority stayed for a maximum of seven days, some (6%) said they stayed for three months and over. This latter may be considered de jure migrants outside of their countries of citizenship.

Table 8: Frequency of travel, duration of stay in country for business and value of goods, by sex of trader.

Frequency of Travel for Business	Female	Male	X ²
Everyday	3.5	2.7	
Every week	25.3	11.0	21.773
Every month	63.7	74.0	p<.001
Every year	7.5	12.3	
Total	100.0	100.0	
N	454	227	
Duration of Stay			
One day	32.7	16.8	
2 to 7 days	23.8	28.8	19.145
1 – 4 weeks	40.4	50.9	p<.001
1 month and over	3.1	3.5	
Total	100.0	100.0	
N	453	226	
Value of Goods			
Less than P100	32.9	19.3	
100 – 199	21.9	22.4	15.311
200 – 299	12.8	17.1	

300 – 499	16.1	18.8	p< .01
P500+	16.3	22.4	
Total	100.0	100.0	
N	447	225	

Table 16 shows that women traders tend to travel more frequently than their male counterparts ($X^2 = 21.77, p<.001$). Women also stay for shorter times in the country than men ($X^2 = 19.15, p<.001$). It is therefore expected that women would want to dispose of their goods as quickly as possible. The frequency of travel and duration of stay of women may also be influenced by the value of goods they carry. Women tend to carry goods valued less than P100 much more often than men do (see Table 8).

5.4 Types of goods carried recorded in O&D survey

Fruits and vegetables are by far the most common products that traders cross the border with. In this case, they are to sell in Botswana. Next in importance are household goods as well as new clothes and shoes. About one quarter of the goods carried across the border were not classified within the products in Table 9.

Table 9: Type of Goods carried on this trip

Goods	Male	female
Groceries	2.1	10.8
Fresh fruits and vegetables	16.5	30.1
Meat/fish/Eggs	0.8	1.3
Electric goods	1.7	0.6
Furniture	0	0.8
Household goods	16.5	14.6
New clothes/shoes	14.3	15.5
Old clothes/shoes	4.2	2.8
Handicraft	19.4	5.1
Other goods	24.5	18.4
Total	100.0	100.0
Total	237	472

$X^2 = 66.793 \quad p<.001$

Table 8 indicates that there was significant association between the sex of traders and the types of goods they brought into Botswana ($X^2 = 66.79, p<.001$). In other words, males carried more of certain goods than females while females carried more of others.

Relatively, more females than males carried groceries, fresh fruits and vegetables, meat/fish/eggs, furniture and new clothes/shoes. Males carried more of electric, household and other goods, old clothes/shoes and handicraft. Table 10 shows that in relative terms, groceries, fresh fruits, meat, electric goods and old clothes came predominantly from Zambia. Zimbabweans were dominant in importing household and other goods as well as handicraft. While a lot of fresh fruit was imported from Southern Africa, new clothes were predominantly imported via the Tlokweng border post. The table indicates that different borders specialized in importing certain goods ($X^2 = 66.79$, $p < .001$).

Table 10: Type of Goods carried on this trip by border post crossed

Goods	Border Post		
	Ramokgwebana	Kazungula	Tlokweng
Groceries	4.0	19.4	4.5
Fresh fruits	19.7	36.6	30.3
Meat etc.	0.2	4.0	0.0
Electric goods	0.7	1.7	0.9
Furniture	0.7	0.6	0.0
Household goods	22.0	6.8	2.7
New clothes	9.0	8.0	49.1
Old clothes	1.7	7.4	2.7
Handicraft	15.4	2.9	0
Other goods	26.6	12.6	9.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	422	175	112
	$X^2 = 260.360$ $p < .001$		

5.5 Value of goods carried into Botswana recorded in O&D survey

The value of goods brought into the country recorded in the O&D survey ranged from less than P100 to more than P6,000. The average (mean) value of all goods imported during the survey period (June/July) was P305. Table 10 reveals a significant association between value of goods and the sex of traders ($X^2 = 15.311$, $p < .01$). Women carried goods of much less value than men. Relatively many more women than men had goods with total value of less than P100. Meanwhile relatively more men than women had

goods valued at P100 and over, and this was more so where goods value was P500 and over.

Table 11: Estimated value of goods by sex of trader

Estimated Value of Goods	Sex of Trader	
	Female	Male
Less than P100	32.9	19.3
P100 to P199	21.9	22.4
P200 to P299	12.8	22.1
P300 to P499	16.1	17.0
P500 and over	16.3	22.4
Total	100.0	100.0
N	447	223

$$X^2 = 15.311, p < 0.01$$

Similarly, there were significant differences in the value of goods carried through the three border posts ($X^2 = 97.13, p < .001$). Table 12 shows that traders crossing the Kazungula border generally carried goods whose total value was less than P100. Meanwhile relatively more of those who crossed at Tlokweng border than the other borders brought in goods that were P500 and over. The traders who crossed the Ramokgwebana border tended to carry goods that were worth P100 to P299.

Table 12: Estimated value of goods by border post crossed

Estimated Value of Goods	Border Post		
	Ramokgwebana	Kazungula	Tlokweng
Less than P100	29.6	41.9	4.6
P100 to P199	27.6	9.7	22.1
P200 to P299	15.8	9.0	14.2
P300 to P499	16.7	12.3	17.0
P500 and over	10.3	27.1	35.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	406	155	109

$$X^2 = 97.127, p < .001$$

5.6 Sources of goods carried

Overall, the highest proportion (23%) of goods were bought in Harare, Zimbabwe. Almost 40% of those entering from Zimbabwe bought their goods in Harare. The other two popular purchasing centers in Zimbabwe were Bulawayo and Gweru. Half of those who used the Tlokweng border purchased goods in Johannesburg. Almost everyone else got their goods in much smaller South African towns. Almost three quarters of those using the Kazungula border bought their goods in small Zambia towns. Only 8% got theirs in Lusaka (the capital city).

Traders were also asked what kind of outlets they had bought their goods from. Table 13 shows that there is significant association between sex of trader and where the goods were bought ($X^2 = 17.348, p < .01$). Relatively more women than men purchased goods at wholesalers, retailers or small- holder forms. Meanwhile, men tended to purchase more from manufacturers and other unclassified places. Only three traders bought goods from marketing boards.

Table 13: Where Goods were bought by sex of trader

Where Goods were Bought	Female	Male
Wholesaler	20.2	16.1
Retailer	13.7	9.4
Informer market	24.0	25.0
Commercial farm	4.2	4.9
Small holder form	18.4	12.5
Manufacturer/factory	8.3	12.0
Other	11.2	20.1
Total	100.0	100.0
N	446	224

$$X^2 = 17.348, p < .01$$

Relationships appear to exist between the border post crossed and the where the goods carried had been sourced. This may relate to the kinds of goods carried from the different countries into Botswana as well as the sex of traders. So, over half of those who came through Kazungula border preferred to buy goods at wholesalers and small holder farms. While 75% of Tlokweng border users preferred the same sources, over half of those

coming through Ramokgwebana preferred informal or “other” markets. Table 14 indicates a significant association between borders crossed and where traders buy goods ($X^2 = 203.77$, $p < .001$). Tlokweng border users are relatively dominant among wholesale purchasers while Ramokgwebana users dominate among those who purchase goods from informal and “other” markets as well as manufacturers.

Table 14: Where goods were bought by border post crossed

Goods Bought	Ramokgwebana	Kazungula	Tlokweng
Wholesaler	7.5	26.5	50.9
Retailer	12.4	17.2	4.6
Informal market	31.2	17.9	7.4
Commercial farm	4.6	3.3	5.6
Small holder farm	10.0	27.8	25.01
Manufacturer/factory	13.1	2.7	5.6
Other	21.2	4.6	0.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	411	151	108

$X^2 = 203.765$, $p < .001$

5.7 Where traders sell goods in Botswana

Table 15: Outlets for goods in Botswana by sex of trader

Place Sell Goods	Male	Female
In own shop	1.8	3.2
In informal market	19.6	21.3
To retailers/shops/restaurants	4.0	2.3
To sellers in informal market	8.0	14.6
Door to door	6.2	27.6
To friends/family/network	22.8	26.5
Other	7.6	3.6
Total	100.0	100.0
N	224	442

$X^2 = 16.314$, $p < 0.05$

From Table 15 there appears to be an association between men and women’s choices of where to sell their goods ($X^2 = 16.31$, $p < .05$). Relatively more women than men chose to sell their goods at the door of people’s homes. This is perhaps not surprising

considering the physical energy required to take such an approach. Both men and women (more so women) showed a fairly strong preference for maintaining a network of relatives, friends, etc. to whom they usually sell their goods. Meanwhile women were more inclined than men to sell goods to other sellers in informal markets. The choice of outlets may be partly explained by the different frequency of travel to other countries and duration of stay by men and women.

To ensure that expected frequencies of less than 5 in each cell were below 20% , the following categories were grouped – own shop and informal market, retailers/shops and sellers in informal market and friends/family/network and other. The computed chi square revealed an association between border used and where goods were sold ($X^2 = 244.64$, $p < .001$). Table 16 shows that traders who used the Tlokweng border sell mostly to networks of friends/families, etc. whereas those using Ramokgwebana border prefer mostly to sell from door to door. A major difference between the two is partly due to the nationality of the traders. Whereas 99.5% of those who use Ramokgwebana border are Zimbabweans, the same proportion of those using Tlokweng border are Batswana (citizens of Botswana). While some 93% of those using Kazungula border are Zambians. It would therefore be much easier for Batswana to form a network of clients in the country than it would be for Zimbabweans. Zambians’ greatest preference is to trade within informal markets, especially with other sellers in this sector.

Table 16: Where traders sell goods in Botswana by border post used

Place Sell Goods	Ramokgwebana	Kazungula	Tlokweng
Own shop	0.2	10.4	1.0
Informal market	18.9	29.9	14.4
To retailers/shops	3.9	2.0	3.8
To sellers in informal markets	7.6	31.8	2.9
Door to door	45.6	11.0	0
To friends/family/network	22.8	13.6	51.9
Other	1.0	1.3	26.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	408	154	104
	$X^2 = 244.636$	$p < .001$	

The study also reveals that, while the majority of traders sell goods in Botswana, a considerable proportion sell outside Botswana. Also, within and outside the country, 5% of traders from South Africa and Zimbabwe have multiple trading centers.

The two main trading centers of those who crossed the Tlokweng border from South Africa were Gaborone (56%) and Francistown (7%). About 14% sold in small urban centers (not towns) and 16% in multiple centers. Those from Zimbabwe had more diverse trading centers, including Francistown (30%), Gaborone (18%), Selibe Phikwe and Palapye/Mahalapye (4% each) and 28% sold in small urban areas. Kasane was the main trading center of those who crossed at Kazungula (45%). Only about 5% of these traders sold in Gaborone while 3% sold in Francistown. The apparent reluctance of Zambians to sell elsewhere in Botswana owes much to the distance between Kazungula and the major cities in the country. While Kasane adjoins Kazungula, Francistown and Gaborone are about 250 kilometres and 780 kilometres away respectively. Road transport facilities between Kazungula and Francistown are quite limited compared to the situation between Francistown and Gaborone. Meanwhile Ramokgwebana is less than 150 kilometres from Francistown. For those crossing at Tlokweng, Gaborone is just 15 kilometres from the border and regular bus transport to Francistown exists throughout the day. At night there is rail transport between Francistown and Gaborone.

5.8 Source of goods by country of manufacture/production

Sixty-four percent of the goods that traders brought into Botswana were produced in other SADC countries. South African products comprised 19% of these goods. Only 3% were reportedly made in China while 13% did not know where their goods were made. While significantly more males than females ((72%, 60%) carried goods made in other SADC countries, more females than males (17%, and 4%, respectively) had no knowledge about where their goods were made. Zambians were the most ignorant about where their goods were produced. Half of them did not know this while the comparable proportion for Botswana and Zimbabweans was 2% each. Almost all Zimbabweans (96%) carried goods that were produced in other SADC countries while a similarly large proportion of Botswana (94%) bought goods produced in South Africa. Chinese products

were patronized by Zambians (6%) and Batswana (5%), but not so much by Zimbabweans (1%).

6. Goods Taken out of Botswana

As with goods sold in Botswana, Table 17 indicates a significant association between goods sold outside Botswana and the sex of the traders ($X^2 = 17.33$, $p < .01$). Similarly women were relatively dominant in the carrying groceries and to a lesser extent, fresh fruit/vegetables to sell while men dominated in the carrying of electric goods for sale. However, contrary to the activities bringing goods for sale in Botswana, relatively more men than women carried new clothes and shoes to sell outside Botswana.

None of the Batswana interviewed traded outside Botswana. What they do is buy goods especially in South Africa to sell mostly in Botswana. The data also reveals that Zambian traders were more likely to take groceries and fresh fruits out of Botswana to sell than Zimbabweans. Some 49% of Zimbabweans said they carried new clothes and shoes (bought in Botswana) to sell in Zimbabwe. This is very much more than the 7% of Zambian traders who take the same items from Botswana to sell in Zambia. Relatively more Zambians than Zimbabweans took “other” goods to sell in their countries (16% and 4%, respectively). Meanwhile about 10% of these traders took electric and household goods bought in Botswana to sell in Zimbabwe and Zambia.

Table 17: Type of Goods taken out of Botswana to sell

Type of Goods	Male	Female
Groceries	16.7	36.6
Fresh fruit & vegetable	3.3	6.5
Electric goods	20.0	4.9
Household goods	8.3	10.6
New clothes/shoes	38.4	26.0
Old clothes/shoes	5.0	5.7
Other	8.3	9.7
Total	100.0	100.0
N	60	123
	$X^2 = 17.334$	$p < .01$

6.1 Value of Goods taken out of Botswana to sell

The average value of goods that traders said they carried from Botswana to sell in other countries was P670 (which is over a hundred percent more than the value of goods which they brought in. However, the net value of all goods that go through the borders reflects a net gain for Botswana because the number of in-bound traders is over one hundred percent more than those who buy goods in Botswana to sell elsewhere. This difference is partly due to the relatively stronger pula which contributes to goods becoming increasingly more expensive in Botswana.

There was no significant difference between the value of goods that men and women take to sell elsewhere ($X^2 = 0.44, p > .05$). But there was association between the value of such goods and the border posts traders used to cross into Botswana – ($X^2 = 17.38, p > .001$), and those who crossed at Tlokweng made the difference. While less than half of traders from Zimbabwe and Zambia took goods worth P400 or more out of Botswana, the corresponding proportion among those from South Africa was 77%.

6.2 Where goods are taken to sell outside Botswana

The centers of trade for (71%) females who sold goods bought in Botswana in other countries were Karasburg and Keetmanshoop in Namibia and Kalulushi and Mpika in Zambia. Indeed, the main trade centers of Zimbabweans who sell outside Botswana are not in Zimbabwe. Forty-four percent of those who entered Botswana at Ramokgwebana sold goods taken out of Botswana at Karasburg while 13% sell in Keetmanshoop and 8% sell in Oshakati (all in Namibia). The only main trading center cited in Zimbabwe was Bindura where 8% sold their goods. Kalulushi and Mpika in Zambia were the selling centers of 76% of those who used the Kazungula border. While 21% sold in Livingstone and 14% sell in other Zambian urban centers.

6.3 Where goods are bought in Botswana

Traders use a variety of outlets to source goods to take out of Botswana. Table 18 shows that sex of trader is mutually independent of where goods sold elsewhere were bought

($X^2 = 0.709$, $p > .05$). However, there is significant association between where traders crossed into Botswana and where goods sold elsewhere were bought ($X^2 = 29.710$, $p < .001$). Relatively more Zambians than Zimbabweans bought such goods at wholesalers. Relatively more Zimbabweans preferred to buy them at retailers.

Table 18: Where goods were bought in Botswana to be sold elsewhere by sex of trader

Where Goods Bought	Male	Female
Wholesaler	31.2	36.1
Retailer	55.7	52.9
Informal market/commercial farm/ Manufacturer	8.2	5.9
Other	4.9	5.1
Total	100.0	100.0
N	61	119
	$X^2 = 0.709$, $p > 0.05$	

7. Negotiating Border Posts

7.1 Claiming VAT

Relatively more females (11%) than males (6%) claimed Vat regularly ($X^2 = 6.18$, $p < .01$). While relatively more males intended to do so occasionally, one quarter of Tlokweng border users claimed VAT regularly. The corresponding proportion for users of Kazungula (14%) and Ramokgwebana (2%) borders is much lower ($X^2 = 60.00$, $p < .001$). Much of the difference is due to the application of VAT which is much more efficient in South Africa than elsewhere. To most (87%) traders who did not claim VAT, VAT did not apply. Or, as in the case of 48% of all traders who did not claim VAT, they did not know about it. There was significant difference between men and women's reasons for not claiming VAT. The few reasons offered especially by Kazungula crossers, were that it takes too long to get refund or they could not cash cheques.

7.2 Sources of information about customs duties

Close to half (45%) of traders said they regularly got information about the customs duties that they had to pay before going through customs. While 11% had some idea of it occasionally, 38% had no idea how much they would have to pay at customs. On this issue men's experiences were similar to women's ($X^2 = 3.511$, $p > .05$). Traders who came through Kazungula border were most inclined (62%) to be informed about the amount of duty they would have to pay at customs. Almost half (49%) of those crossing at Ramokgwebana were informed while the least informed (5%) were those who crossed at Tlokweng. The majority (70%) of those who get such information obtain it at customs while 29% get it from other traders. One percent received it from traders' associations while the majority of traders who use Ramokgwebana (70%) and Kazungula (93%) obtain information about duties from customs, 65% of those using Tlokweng border get their information from other traders and 5% from traders association.

7.3 Permits

About 68% of all trades did not require visas to enter the country they went to for business (i.e., a country other than their own) while 18% had permanent residence in those countries. Only a few (4%) used visitor's visa to do business in the country. Eight percent used local permits or a border pass to enter the country. The association between type of travel permit and sex of trader was significant ($X^2 = 18.19$, $p < .01$). Relatively more males than females (76% and 64%, respectively) needed no permit to enter the country where they did business. Meanwhile many more females (22%) than males (9%) held permanent residence in a country and this increased their opportunities for entering a neighbouring country for business without difficulty. About the same proportion of males as females (8%) traveled on local permits or border passes. Most traders who used Ramokgwebana (88%) and Tlokweng (86%) borders needed no visa to visit other countries they do business in. About 76% of those crossing the Kazungula border are similarly favoured because they are permanent residents of those countries. However 21% of those crossing at Kazungula used local permits or border passes to cross to the other country.

7.4 Experiences at the border post

When entering Botswana, the majority said they usually (58%) spent 10 minutes to one hour getting through the border. While about 11% said it took less than 10 minutes at this stage, it took more than two hours for about 10% to go through immigration and customs. Table 19 shows that it takes significantly less time for traders to cross into Botswana than it takes to cross into Zimbabwe, Zambia and South Africa. IS THIS

Table 19: Time spent crossing border on Botswana and Other side

Time spent crossing border	Botswana side	Other side	
<10 minutes	76	106	
10 – 30 minutes	177	300	
30 -60 minutes	219	135	
1 – 2 hours	124	85	
2 hours	69	33	
Total	665	659	$X^2 = 76.839, p < 0.001$

Generally, the delays occur within the Botswana customs area rather than at the customs of in the other countries. Indeed it takes relatively less time to go through customs than immigration in the other countries. This implies stricter checks on what are been imported into and exported from Botswana by small traders.

7.5 Opinion of Treatment Received at Border

Only 12% felt that they were treated well by customs and immigration on the Botswana side of the border. The majority (52%) did not consider the treatment they received as good. Indeed 9% felt it was bad, but only 1% had apparently been treated very badly. The data revealed no significant difference in the way men and women are treated at the borders ($X^2 = 0.959, p > .05$). However, there is a significant difference between the treatment of traders on the Botswana side of the three border posts ($X^2 = 128.64, p < .001$). While 41% of Tlokweng border crossers considered their treatment to be good, only 5% and 8% of those who crossed at Ramokgwebana and Kazungula, respectively, shared this

view. The majority of them (56% and 52%, respectively) felt it was not good and 14% of those using Ramokgwebana border felt that they were treated badly or very badly. On the other side of the border the treatment that traders receive from officers is not significantly different from their opinions of the Botswana side of the borders ($X^2 = 2.193$, $df = 4$, $p > .05$). When controlling for the effects of sex of trader and border used to enter Botswana, the responses and statistics were similar to what was observed about the Botswana side of the borders.

7.6 Problems Encountered when Crossing Border

About one-third (35%) of traders do not seem to encountered any problems when crossing the border. But 22% are unhappy with the long queues that build up at the border while 17% feel that the duties they have to pay are too high. To about 4%, the border officers are unfriendly, rude and/or impatient. The percentage of those who reportedly experience no problem is consistent with those who received good or average (i.e. satisfactory) treatment from staff at the borders. This adds credibility to the quality of the data. There is no significant difference between the experiences of men and women of problems at the border ($X^2 = 10.24$, $p > .05$). But there is association between problems encountered and the border post used by traders ($X^2 = 249.32$, $p < .001$). Tlokweng border users had the least experience of problems. So, 46% of those interviewed at Tlokweng had no problem compared with 40% and 30% of the Kazungula and Ramokgwebana users, respectively. Ramokgwebana users reported much more about long queues and high duties (31% and 22%, respectively) than those who used the other borders. This may be partly explained by the very high volume of cross border traders at Ramokgwebana and the type of goods they carry.

Traders who traveled more frequently (every day or week) were apparently more tolerant of the long queues and congestion at the borders than those who travel less frequently (see Table 20). Less frequent travelers also complained more about the duties being too high. This may partly be due to limited familiarity with methods of assessing current charges because of the wider gap between travels in a year. While less frequent travelers would be accustomed to the occasional changes in duties charged on the goods they cross

with. Meanwhile, while less frequent travelers had relatively more to complain about, they were much more specific about the problems than those who crossed the borders more frequently. Those who traveled less frequently tended to stay in the country longer than those who travel more frequently. Probably because of this, their differences over problems at the borders are similar to those associated with frequency of travel.

Further analysis indicated that those who walk to borders do not have the same problems at the borders as those who came by bus/taxi or car. About 41% of them had no problem at all and where there were problems 43% mentioned areas other than those classified. On the contrary, while 33% of those who came by bus/taxi encountered no problem at the

Table 20: Major Problems at Border by Frequency of Business

Problem	Every day or week	Every month or year
Long queues/congestion	11.2	27.7
Staff unfriendly/rude/impatient	4.3	4.1
Duties too high	6.8	19.5
Language barrier with officer/border		
Unsafe/days allowed in country too few	1.9	4.3
Computer breakdown/lack of		
Information about customs	0.6	2.7
No problem	38.5	33.8
Other	36.7	7.9
Total	100.0	100.0
N	161	517

border, 45% were unhappy with the long queues and high duties charged at customs. About 25% of those who traveled by car also shared this concern.

7.7 Measures to Improve Efficiency at the Border

When asked what should be done to improve efficiency in border movement, 31% of those who had experienced problems suggested an increase of existing staff and 23% preferred reduction of customs duties. It appears that lack of preparedness to pay the required duty frequently leads to delayed completion of the customs process. Personal

observation revealed that some traders have had to leave their goods at the border to seek additional funds elsewhere to pay the duties for the goods carried. Seven percent of the traders who were not satisfied with the performance of staff at the border would like to experience better customer care at the border. Table 21 shows that there is a significant association between sex of trader and the type of improvement they would want to be implemented at the borders ($X^2 = 17.82, p < .01$). It appears that female traders are treated better by the officers. So, relatively more males would like to see an improvement customer services. More females than males want improvement in other non classified areas.

Table 21: Suggested ways to Improves Efficiency at the Border by Sex

Improvement Type	Male	Female
Better Customer Care	9.8	5.4
Reduces Customs Duties	23.6	23.2
Employ more staff to expedite Service	35.0	28.7
Improve security/extend opening hours/ Make separate queue for traders	10.9	6.0
Other	20.7	36.7
Total	100.0	100.0
N	174	349

$X^2 = 17.822, p < .01$

Table 22: Suggested ways to Improve Border Efficiency by Border Entry Point

Type of Improvement	Ramokgwebana	Kazungula	Tlokweg
Better Customer Care	9.7	0.7	7.4
Reduced Custom duties	30.5	6.2	27.2
More staff to expedite service	41.6	6.9	33.3
Improve security	10.1	5.6	2.5
Other	8.1	80.6	29.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	298	144	81

$X^2 = 243.597, p < .001$

Table 22 also reveals significant association between the border where traders entered Botswana and the type of improvement they desired ($\chi^2 = 243.60$, $p < .001$). While the majority (81%) of those using Kazungula border would like to see improvement in other non-classified areas, 72% of those who use the Ramokgwebana border would prefer a reduction in custom duties and more staff to expedite service. The same is preferred by 62% of those using Tlokweng border. But an additional 30% wanted to see improvement in other non classified areas.

8. Conclusion

This study reveals that there is considerable informal commercial movement between Botswana and its neighbours. Given that several of the traders hold permanent residence in the countries they do business in, it may be concluded that these movements translate into commercial migration. The results of this study reflect the willingness of citizens of Botswana, Zambia and Zimbabwe to invest in other countries. It would be good to know if these traders invest as much in other countries as they do at home. If not, why would they participate in international informal trade when investing at home would be more cost-effective? The observation that many Zambians trade between Namibia and Botswana (two countries with strong and reliable currencies) raises questions about possible flight of capital, legally or otherwise, from Zambia. However, the scope of this study informs only about basic activities related to stock of goods and characteristics of the traders. It therefore leaves much room for further studies that would help in understanding the intricacies of this profession, especially the development of international networks. In effect, there is still much to be done in order to realize the determinants, processes and consequences of cross-border movements in Botswana.

Several policy considerations are brought out by this study. Many traders complained that the service at the borders is unsatisfactory. As observed earlier, the congestion is being addressed with Botswana Railways accepting to resume service of the “blue” passenger train between Botswana and Zimbabwe. There have been very rare reports of corruption among the border staff and whenever this occurred the perpetrators were

swiftly apprehended and replaced. Efficiency at the borders has also been improved through the introduction of computerization and staff training. At Ramokgwebana, operation times are extended whenever necessary to accommodate very high volume of human movement. It is encouraging that almost forty percent of traders having no problem with the border services because it reduces the overall effect of the negative perceptions of others. Due to economic factors, it may be very difficult to reduce custom duties. Those who would like to have the duties reduced should accept that they would be expected to share the financial cost of addressing their total grievances and this will be realized through increased duties.

9. References

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Table 1 Monthly volume of human movement in and out of Botswana in 2005/2006

Month & Year	Moving into Botswana		Moving out of Botswana	
	Ramokgwebana	Kazungula	Ramokgwebana	Kazungula
April 2005	39705	13654	43811	14960
May 2005	33270	13816	39292	15335
June 2005	32422	13367	36002	15689
July 2005	53181	18015	53807	18024
August 2005	48317	17316	38552	19240
September '05	54623	19204	40989	2145
October '05	50956	17579	45652	18140
November '05	58294	14259	51132	15932
December '05	81136	20438	94180	23231
January 2006	73581	18332	42161	17855
February 2006	40887	14408	38747	17959
March 2006	47710	16857	49606	18587

Source: Department of Customs and Excise, Gaborone.