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THE RISE OF CASUALISATION OF LABOUR IN THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR A RETROGRESSIVE PRACTICE TO EMPLOYMENT SECURITY: THE ZIMBABWE EXPERIENCE



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BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Casualisation is very prevalent all over the world for routine jobs (Conradie, Piesse Thirtle & Vink, 2018; Fashoyin, 2000)

Seasonal and for short period of time (Makwavarara, 2004)

In Zimbabwe, deregulation of labour market, ESAP (1990) (Sachikonye, 2001, Makwavarara, 2004)



Zimbabwe since 2000, massive deindustrialisation and informal sector , 94,5% employed (2014, Labour force survey)

Currently serious economic challenges, liquidation of companies, outsourcing of jobs, high unemployment

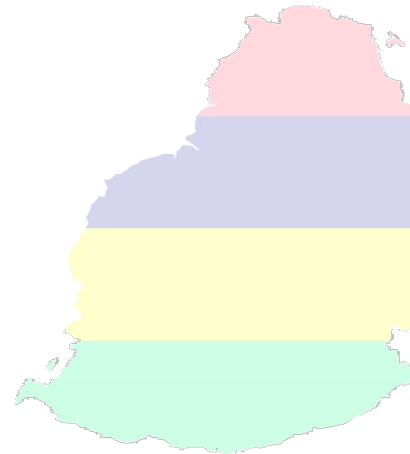
1980s Zimbabwe was “*bread basket of Africa*”

Land agrarian reform of 2000 (Fast track, chaotic takeover? 4 000 commercial white farmers removed, food insecurity, many farm workers redundant)



STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

There has been a sharp increase on the number of casual workers who are filling positions that are supposed to be permanent in nature, in what appears to be deliberate efforts by employers to cut wage bills and benefits of ***social security and protection*** in nature





RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- 1. What motivates the casualization of labour in the agricultural sector?**
 - 2. What is the level of awareness of relevant labour policies and laws on casualisation?**
 - 3. Which are the major challenges arising from casualization of labour in the agriculture sector?**
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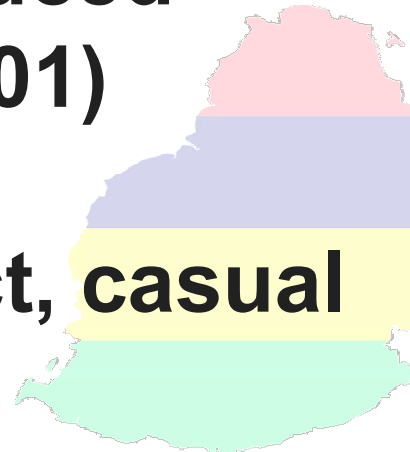
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

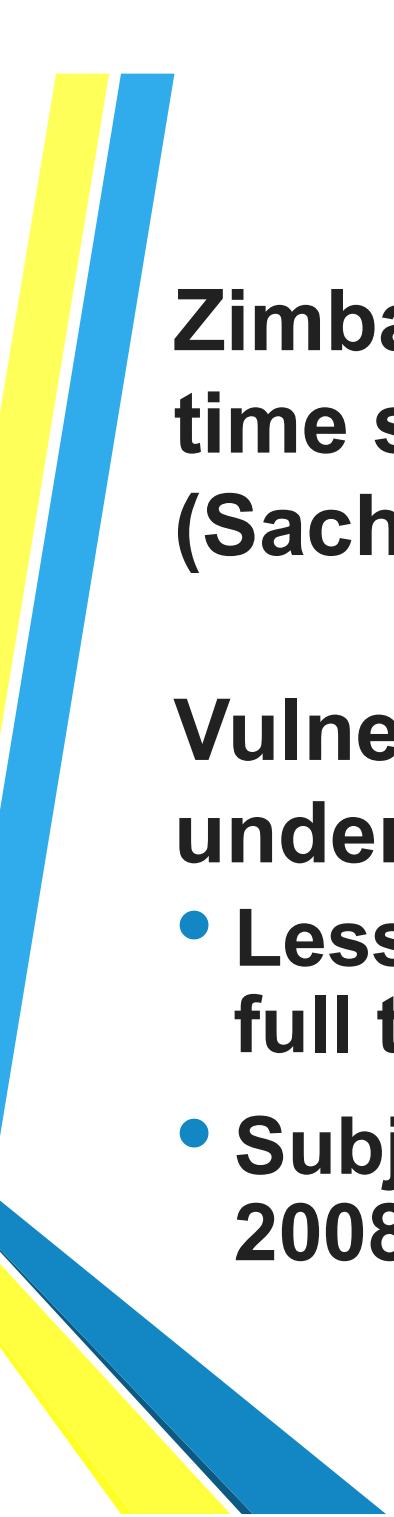
Theoretical framework

Numerical flexibility model of casualization (Atkinson, 1984)-employer discretion

Part time workers, during peak periods(seasonal), varying labour force on short notice, reduced labour costs (Mills, 2004, Sachikonye, 2001)

Employment pattern- permanent, contract, casual after ESAP in Zimbabwe (Kanyeze, 1993)





Zimbabwe casuals hired to compliment few full time staff, to do planting, weeding and harvesting (Sachikonye, 2001)

Vulnerable to sexual harassment, dismissal and underpayment (Mills, 2004, Thompson, 2003)

- **Less favourable working conditions compared to full time staff (Sambureni, 2010)**
- **Subject to unfair labour practices (Mudyawabikwa, 2008)**



METHODOLOGY

Approach-Qualitative (Kumar, 2011)

Survey (Babbie & Mouton, 2001; Berg, 2001)

Target population-Farm owners, Agric ministry officials, farm workers, labour officers, GAPWUZ
Quota sampling method (inclusivity, Neuman, 2003)

- **Unstructured interviews and focus group discussions**
- **Research ethics (Khothari, 2014)**
- **Content analysis (Berg, 2001)**



FINDINGS

Casuals needed for short period e.g. during peak season, for planting, applying fertiliser, herbicides, weeding, harvesting and shelling

High unemployment makes it cheaper to hire casual labour

Casual labour no longer seasonal but ongoing

A major cost cutting measure being aided by ineffective trade union (General Agriculture and Plantation Workers Union of Zimbabwe). Casual workers vulnerable to exploitation due to no vibrant voice





Simplicity of operations (ability to hire and fire easily)

Both workers and employers ignorant of laws and policies

Poor working conditions (no proper safety clothing, exposed to hazardous machines, not properly serviced, poor lighting e.g. during tobacco processing)



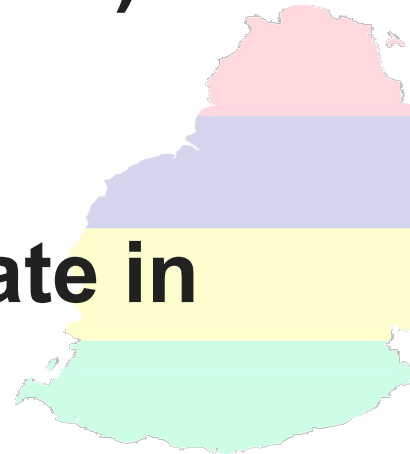


Provided with deplorable accommodation during the time they are hired (during rains some roofs collapse)

Work for very long time and remuneration not commensurate

Prostitution prominent (HIV cases prevalent) and child labour

Erratic payments and complaints culminate in victimisation



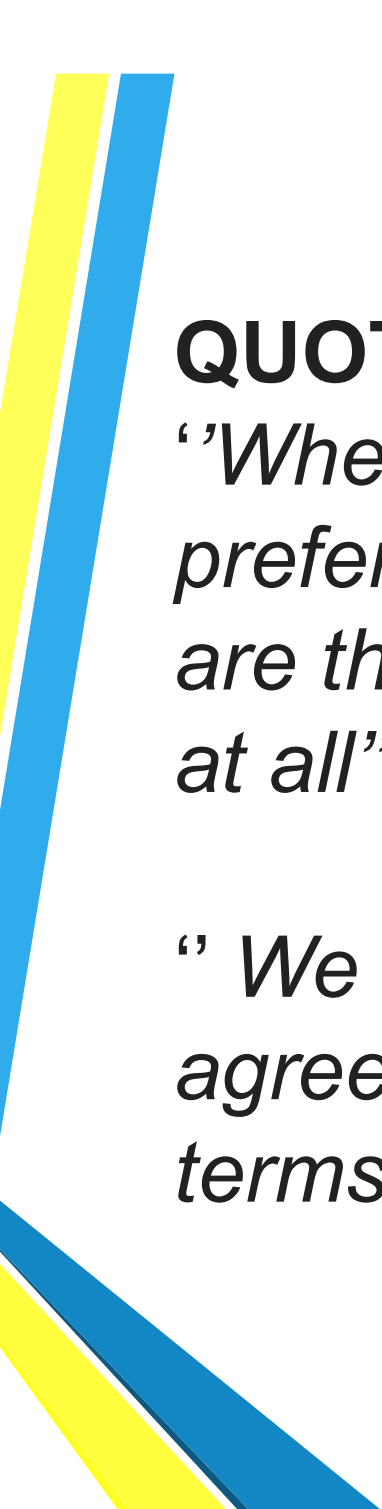


**No social security and protection
(no medical aid, insurance, risk allowance,
overtime and pension)**

**Chaotic agrarian reforms of 2000, has seen large
numbers of school drop outs (no schools, some
not affording fees, distance of up to 15 kms)**

**Exacerbated by lack of other ancillary services too
(no health facilities, business centres)**



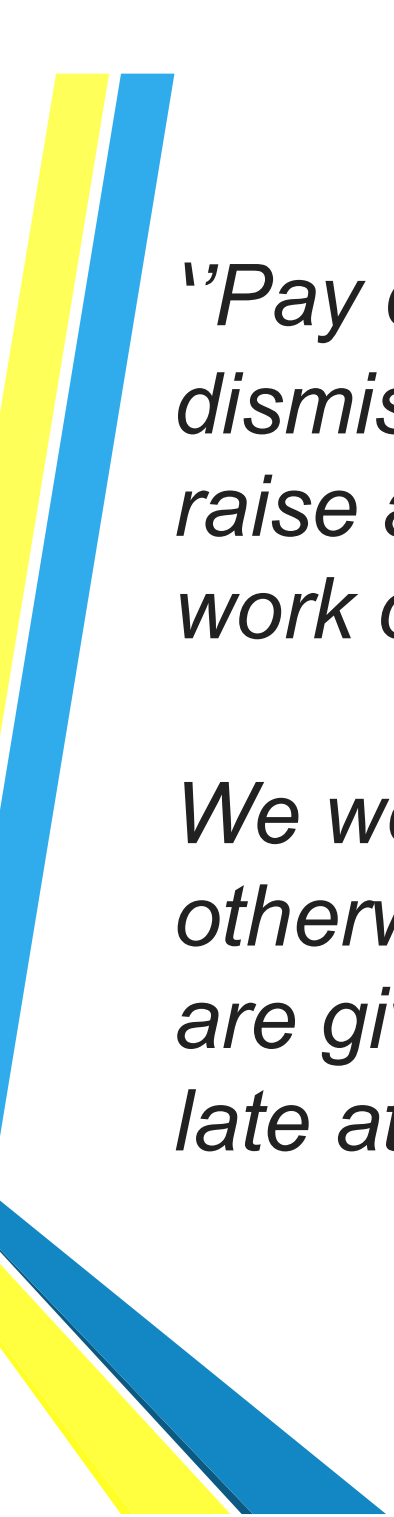


QUOTES

“When management distributes protective clothing, preference is given to permanent employees and we are then given those that they have been using or not at all”

“ We do not sign any contract, everything is verbal agreement and you can not negotiate or discuss the terms of working conditions”





'Pay days are not known and you risk being dismissed if you ask about the date or even if you raise a humanitarian concern such as issue of time off work or when one is ill or pregnant'

We work in order to get money for school fees, otherwise there is no other benefit and sometimes we are given targets to achieve and end up either being late at work or absconding





'We are better off because at least we have something that makes us survive since there is no employment in the country and majority of us are not originally Zimbabweans but due to our forefathers who sort greener pastures, that is why we are here '

"There are rampant/worrying cases of child abuse and sexual harassment perpetrated by foremen and yet management/owners do nothing about that



CONCLUSION

Casualisation of labour was the contemporary dominant form of employment in Zimbabwe's agricultural sector as farm owners and other key stakeholders use it to cut expenditure associated with remuneration, social protection, thereby becoming a retrogressive practice to employment security, yet the authorities were not taking any meaningful measures to combat that.

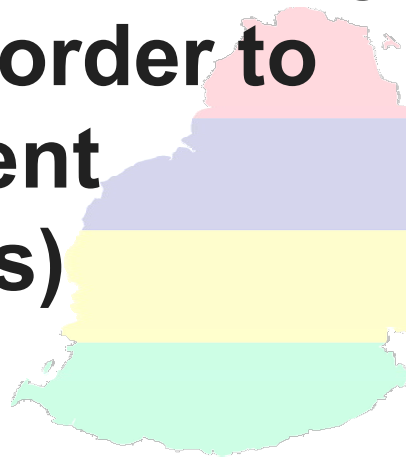




RECOMMENDATIONS

Labour law reforms (Labour amendment Act 28:01, Factories and Works Act, Pensions Act)

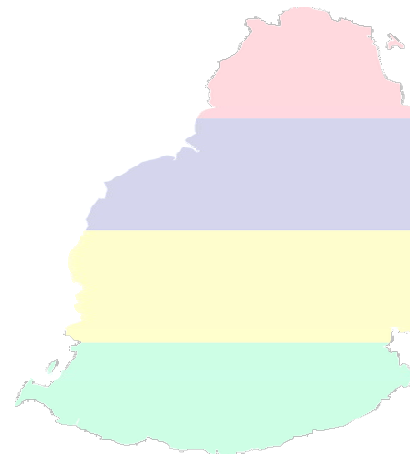
Empowering technocrats by redistributing land under the Command agriculture scheme especially taking from those with multiple farms, in order to promote entrepreneurship and employment
Right to association (joining trade unions)





Contracts of employment even negotiated by a third party

Government to gazette minimal remuneration or wages for casual farm workers like what happens with domestic workers



Thank
you
all!

