

**WOMEN IN MINING: TOWARDS A GENDERED PARADIGM  
SHIFT TO  
PARTICIPATION IN THE EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRY IN  
ZIMBABWE  
BY**

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# Abstract

- Paradigm shift in mining is credited to the National Gender Policy (NGP) 2013-2017.
- Women's access and control of mineral resources is a new gendered economic phenomenon although male over representation is visible
- To understand the gender gap, narratives of women miners' lived experiences were examined.
- Sen 's (1999) Capabilitarian Approach provided understanding of mining opportunities and how women have manipulated these opportunities freedoms.
- We examined female miners links with women miners associations, and evidence shows minimal involvement of women miners from BVM and Wanderers.
- Theoretically, Longwe (1994) complemented by Sen (1999) capabilities approach guided the study.
- The study adopted a qualitative paradigm , enshrined in a phenomenological design.
- **Key words:** *capabilities, agency, access and control, masculinities, extractive mine, Zimbabwe.*

# Background to the study

- Although castigated by some , the FTLR paved the way for women's participation in EI.
- Arguing from Sen's 1999 capabilities approach , although un-intended, the FTLR offered women opportunity freedoms for mineral resource manipulation.
- However women continue to forage for alluvial gold and reef gold mining as a way of alleviating the ominous feminization of poverty. This was to us a denial of control of mining claims.

# Background cont...

- The idea of collectivism amongst women in mining has been impacted by a gender divide. Currently associationism is dominated by middle class females , while lower class female artisanal miners are excluded.
- We observe a new crop of urbanite female miners, exclusively involved I EI on individual basis or through group investments.
- In contrast grassroots women miners rely on mining as a source of primary livelihood.

# Background cont...

- Literature reviewed reveals diverse reasons for unequal male and female participation in EI.
- Jenkins, Jovia and Siop (2010) in Papua New Guinea, Ostby and Nordas (2016) in DRC, Geenen (2017) in Uganda and Alube (2018) in Kenya points to systematic discrimination of women in EI.
- Patriarchal tendencies, stringent legal parameters, limited mining knowledge contributes towards minimal female participation.
- The few that have broken the glass ceiling, entered the previously 'un-authorized' have done so to confront the eminent feminization of poverty.

# Theoretical framework—its applicability

- The chapter considered Sara Longwe's Women Empowerment Framework (1994) in relation to women miners in Shurugwi District :
  1. **Access** – linking the agrarian revolution to access to land , mineral resources.
  2. **Conscientization**- identifying how dissemination of mining knowledge on gold production has been availed to female miners at Wanderers and BVM. And what the role of Women Miners association is at this level.
  3. **Mobilization / Participation**- examining the extent to which women miners link with women's associations, analyzing their visibility in the mining fields.
  4. **Control** – questioning women's access to, ownership of mining claims and equipment and their decision making over gold production and produce
- The chapter links Longwe's framework to Amartya Sen's (1999) Capabilities Approach (CA) in bid to understand gender mainstreaming in EI.
- Basic tenets of the CA i.e. Opportunity freedoms, Functionings/ achievements, and Conversion factors (Sen 2000, Robynes 2003 Addabbo, Lanzi, Picchio 2008). Points to how women need to be strategically positioned to participate in this masculinized institution.

# Research Methodology

- A qualitative paradigm coupled with a phenomenological design –to understand lived experiences in Shurugwi District in the Midlands Province.
- The population - female and male miners at Wanderers and BVM.
- Sampling was purposive , sample size not predetermined we used the concept of data saturation.
- Interviews– gave personal narratives and lived experiences by female miners.
- Observations complemented by photography-.

# Methodology cont...

- Secondary data analysis from literature from the Ministry of Women, Gender and Community Development reports on Women in Mining, provided a synopsis of the applicability of crafted mining policies in Zimbabwe.
- The limiting factor -was that some participants were not ardent on answering interview questions.
- Analysis of data was done qualitatively using emerging themes for analytical and logical reasoning. (King and Horrocks 2010)



# Research findings

## The ministerial role in women's empowerment in EI.

- The Ministry of Women's Affairs, Gender and Community Development identified as a key driver towards gender equality. Ministry provides and defends Government standpoint on gender mainstreaming in EI.
- EI stands guided by the NGP sections 17, 56,80 and the founding values of section 3 of 2013 Constitution of Zimbabwe on gender equality and prohibition of gender discrimination.
- However, despite the above stipulations reality on the ground shows persistent discrimination characterized by masculinities in the EI.
- Lack of access is a violation of the vaunted position of the Ministry of Mines and Mining Development on the allocations and distribution of mining rights..
- Linked to Longwe's views on access and control, Wanderers and BVM exhibits systematic disempowerment and disenfranchisement of women through reduced claim access, decision making on gold production and produce.

# Findings cont...

## Women's associations

- Female miners' associations makes visible Longwe's concept of mobilization. Data reveals women's fervent individual and collaborated agency towards mining.
- However female miners have dearth of knowledge on the value of localized miners associations and formal institutions such as ZMF.
- Without protection from relevant organizations in the sector, female miners at Wanderers and BVM continue as victims of the crippling patriarchal control of the lucrative mining value chain and the profit nexus in the sector.
- Study also found out that a gender divide has marred associationism by creating classes amongst female miners


# Findings cont...

## Issues of consistent / permanent participation.

- Agency and capabilities are evident but conflicting gender expectations and ascribed roles impacts on participation.
- Secretive participation- It's a guarded secret for most women to be at Wanderers. Stereotypical perceptions about women in mining is exacerbated by fear to be associated with '*Chikorokoza*'
- Gender relations creates sustainability challenges in EI. Women are expected to 'win' the favor of male miners to obtain the Serengeti job.



## Survival strategy

- Female miners dissatisfaction emanating from manipulation, exploitation and disrespect from male miners translates to anger.
  - Contrary to perceptions of typical vulnerable women the study reveals emergence of a new masculinized and often violent group of female miners.
  - 'Dealing' with unruly male elements said to be a survival strategy by female miners. Findings are supported by Scheff (2006) on survival strategies in male domains.
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# Other factors impacting participation

## *The housing challenge*

- Failed satisfaction of Maslow's hierarchy of needs evident at Wanderers .
- Shelter and security are evidently lacking at the two sites.
- For a sector known for its financial profits, the working and living conditions for the women are unacceptable.
- Type of housing were to us problematic with regards to the safety of the women, especially considering the larger male population and the general fear surrounding the perceived uncouth behavior of the male *makorokoza*




# Health Hazards

- Women miners are at risk – lack of protective clothing during the process of Serengeti.
- Evidence of exposure to dangerous mercury a typical example of lack of shared information on risks and hazards in mining.

# conclusion

Conclusions drawn from the study were that :

- There is gender mainstreaming in the EI, although the sector continues to overrepresented by males.
- The sector has failed to adhere to Longwe's Women Empowerment Framework and to capitalize on women's agency and capabilities in mining.
- Financial and material incapacitation forces women into typical gender roles that creates huge disparities in earnings in EI.



The end  
Thank you