



*Kansai university and Faculty of Economics*



## ***International Symposium***

# **Africa and Asia Entanglements in Past and Present : Bridging History and Development Studies**

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**From Industrial Hub to a Predominantly Informal Economy : Over Two Decades of Economic Decline  
and De-industrialisation in Zimbabwe, 1990-2015**

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### **Abstract**

At independence in 1980, the incoming government under Robert Mugabe inherited a very thriving diversified economy underpinned by three key economic pillars, namely agriculture, mining and manufacturing. Zimbabwe was then the most industrialised country in Sub-Saharan Africa with the exception of South Africa and was a major exporter of manufactured products to its neighbours. By 2015, the country's industrial sector had all but collapsed following years of economic woes that resulted in unmitigated de-industrialisation as factories closed shop and relocated to neighbouring countries and thousands of workers were thrown out of employment. By the middle of 2015, Zimbabwe had become a nation of vendors, with an estimated 90% of its population unemployed and struggling to eke out a living in the mushrooming informal economy. This paper traces the decline of the country's manufacturing sector from 1990 to 2015 and attempts to account for this decline.