

---

THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN MIGRATION PROJECT

---

THE NEW BRAIN DRAIN  
FROM ZIMBABWE

---

MIGRATION POLICY SERIES NO. 29

---

THE NEW BRAIN DRAIN  
FROM ZIMBABWE

DANIEL S. TEVERA AND JONATHAN CRUSH

SERIES EDITOR:  
PROF. JONATHAN CRUSH

SOUTHERN AFRICAN MIGRATION PROJECT  
2003

Published by Idasa, 6 Spin Street, Church Square, Cape Town, 8001, and Queen's University, Canada.

Copyright Southern African Migration Project (SAMP) 2003  
ISBN 1-919798-48-X

First published 2003  
Design by Bronwen Dachs Müller  
Typeset in Goudy

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted, in any form or by any means, without prior permission from the publishers.  
Bound and printed by Creda Communications, Cape Town

CONTENTS	PAGE
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
INTRODUCTION	4
LEAVING ZIMBABWE	6
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	7
PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS	8
PREDICTING EMIGRATION	12
DESTINATION COUNTRIES OF EMIGRANTS FROM ZIMBABWE	19
DURATION OF EMIGRATION	20
THE QUALITY OF LIFE IN ZIMBABWE	23
SKILLED PERSONNEL AND POLITICS IN ZIMBABWE	25
CONDITIONS ABROAD	27
MIGRANT NETWORKS	28
CONCLUSION	30
ENDNOTES	33
MIGRATION POLICY SERIES	36

LIST OF TABLES	PAGE
TABLE 1: DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY RACE AND TOWN OF RESIDENCE	9
TABLE 2: DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY RACE AND GENDER	9
TABLE 3: AGE BREAKDOWN OF RESPONDENTS BY GENDER	10
TABLE 4: HOUSEHOLD INCOME OF RESPONDENTS	10
TABLE 5: EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS OF RESPONDENTS	11
TABLE 6: EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF RESPONDENTS	11
TABLE 7: EMPLOYMENT SECTORS OF RESPONDENTS	13
TABLE 8: CONSIDERATION OF EMIGRATION BY RACE	14

TABLE 9: CONSIDERATION OF EMIGRATION BY GENDER	14
TABLE 10: EXTENT OF DESIRE TO LEAVE ZIMBABWE	16
TABLE 11: COMMITMENT TO EMIGRATE	18
TABLE 12: APPLICATION FOR EMIGRATION DOCUMENTATION	19
TABLE 13: DESTINATIONS OF EMIGRANTS FROM ZIMBABWE	20
TABLE 14: DURATION OF EMIGRATION	21
TABLE 15: EXTENT OF DESIRE TO SETTLE IN MOST LIKELY DESTINATION	22
TABLE 16: MAINTENANCE OF LINKS WITH ZIMBABWE	23
TABLE 17: SATISFACTION WITH THE QUALITY OF LIFE IN ZIMBABWE	24
TABLE 18: PERCEPTIONS OF FUTURE CONDITIONS IN ZIMBABWE	25
TABLE 19: PERCEPTION OF GOVERNMENT	26
TABLE 20: ATTITUDES TOWARDS AFFIRMATIVE ACTION	27
TABLE 21: COMPARISON BETWEEN ZIMBABWE AND OVERSEAS DESTINATIONS	28
TABLE 22: EXPERIENCE OF REGULAR TRAVEL ABROAD	29
TABLE 23: SOURCES OF INFORMATION ABOUT JOB OPPORTUNITIES IN OTHER COUNTRIES	29
TABLE 24: KNOWLEDGE OF OTHER EMIGRANTS ABROAD	30
TABLE 25: EASE OF LEAVING ZIMBABWE	31
TABLE 26: EMIGRATION POLICY AND LIKELIHOOD TO EMIGRATE	32

LIST OF FIGURES	PAGE
FIGURE 1: CONSIDERATION OF EMIGRATION BY AGE	15

---

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

All the signs point to the existence of a growing exodus of skilled Zimbabweans from the country. Although the precise dimensions and impacts of this “brain drain” have yet to be determined, the Zimbabwean government has recently sought to stem the tide with various policy measures. The education and health sectors appear to be the hardest hit although professionals in other sectors have also been leaving in numbers.

The Southern African Migration Project (SAMP) has undertaken a multi-country study of the brain drain within and from the Southern African Development Community (SADC). SAMP’s primary contribution is to examine the skills base of a country and, on the basis of nationally-representative surveys, determine the future emigration potential of skilled people who remain. In other words, SAMP provides critical policy-relevant information on the likely course of the brain drain in the future and the effectiveness of policy measures that might be deployed to slow or reverse the brain drain.

The Zimbabwean survey was conducted in 2001. A representative sample of 900 skilled Zimbabweans was interviewed to obtain information on personal and household economic circumstances; attitudes towards current and future economic, social and political circumstances; likelihood of emigration in the future; and attitudes towards measures designed to keep them in the country. The majority of the respondents (844) were African. Thus, the survey results are focused primarily on the emigration potential of black Zimbabweans. The white sample was too small to say anything of significance about white intentions. The respondents were drawn from a wide variety of professions and sectors and therefore represent a broad cross-section of skilled Zimbabweans.

The first significant finding is that 57% of the sampled population have given a “great deal” of thought to emigrating from Zimbabwe (with another 29% having given the matter some thought). Only 13% have given it no consideration. A comparison with South Africa is germane since that country is widely believed to be undergoing a crippling brain drain. In South Africa, only 31% of the skilled population have given a great deal of thought to emigrating, with 31% having not thought about it at all.

In terms of gender breakdown, more women than men have given a great deal of thought to emigrating (62% versus 54%), which is the opposite of the South African scenario. In age terms, it is Zimbabweans in the 25-35 age group who have given most thought to emigrating. Nevertheless, levels of dissatisfaction are so high that the majority in each age group have given at least some thought to leaving.

As SAMP has demonstrated elsewhere, thinking about leaving and actually doing so are not the same thing. The survey therefore sought to establish the extent to which skilled Zimbabweans have made a mental commitment to leaving within a certain time frame. Respondents were therefore asked about the likelihood of their leaving within the next six months, two years, and five years. Over a quarter (27%) said it was likely or very likely that they would leave in six months. Fifty five percent were committed to emigrating within the next two years. And 67% said they were committed to emigrating within the next five years.

These are sobering statistics, unmatched in any other country in the region in which SAMP has done similar research. They suggest that the pool of future emigrants in Zimbabwe remains massive. The firmest indication of migration potential, however, is whether a person has acted on their desires by applying for emigration documentation. Many emigrants do not, of course, apply until they are already overseas. However, the survey found that nearly 20% of the resident skilled population had either applied for or were in the process of applying for a work permit in another country.

Another question addressed by the survey concerns the “permanence” of intended or likely emigration. This is an important issue. Are people so disillusioned that they wish to leave forever or would they return if conditions improved for them at home? The survey found that 51% expressed a strong desire to leave permanently (for longer than 2 years), compared with only 25% who have a strong wish to only leave temporarily. Again, 43% said they would prefer to stay in their most likely emigration destination for more than 5 years. This is not therefore a population that sees emigration as temporary exile.

Why are so many Zimbabweans thinking seriously about leaving? The reasons for this extraordinary state of affairs can be analysed at two levels. First, it is possible to point to economic and political events over the last decade as the primary cause of emigration and high future potential. These events are too well-known to be repeated here. Instead, this survey sought to obtain the opinions of skilled Zimbabweans themselves, to statistically measure levels and forms of dissatisfaction and disillusionment and relate these to high emigration potential.

The survey discovered extremely high levels of dissatisfaction with the cost of living, taxation, availability of goods, and salaries. But the dissatisfaction goes deeper than economic circumstances to include housing, medical services, education and a viable future for children. South Africans actually show similar levels of economic dissatisfaction but they are far more optimistic about the future than Zimbabweans. Asked about the future, there was deep pessimism amongst skilled

Zimbabweans, with the vast majority convinced that their personal economic circumstances would only get worse. They were also convinced that social and public services would decline further.

The respondents were also asked about their perceptions of political conditions in the country. Here, too, there was considerable negativity and pessimism. Ratings of government performance were extremely low.

Various measures have been mooted in Zimbabwe with a view to keeping skilled people in the country, including compulsory national service and bonding. A coercive approach to the brain drain has not worked particularly well elsewhere and often have the opposite effect to that intended. The survey showed that such measures would only add to the burden of discontent and for around 70% of respondents would make absolutely no difference to their emigration intentions.

Zimbabwe faces an immense challenge in stemming the exodus to other countries within Africa and overseas. The basic conclusion of this study is that coercive measures will not work and that the best way to curb the high rates of skilled labour migration lies in addressing the economic fundamentals of the country which will ultimately improve living standards. Regretably, most skilled Zimbabweans are very pessimistic that this will happen in the foreseeable future.

## INTRODUCTION

The brain drain has been labelled as one of the greatest development challenges facing African countries.<sup>1</sup> Whether the brain drain is a “curse” or “boon”, and for whom, is the subject of some debate.<sup>2</sup> Adepoju, for example, suggests that the impact on the countries which have trained, and lost, skills is severe:

Emigration of skilled professionals poses a critical problem of replacement of the skilled émigrés, the loss of transfer of experience to younger cohorts and creates a huge vacuum in tertiary educational institutions of poor countries, of experienced leaders in research for development and training of the manpower required for a variety of development activities. One immediate impact is the lack of capacity to undertake cutting edge research, or to adapt findings of such research for development. In many African countries today, students are being churned out without the requisite rigour of learning. This development has stalled development activities and accelerated a breakdown in institutions bereft of trained manpower to manage them in an era of globalised economies.<sup>3</sup>

He goes on to suggest that the primary reason for the brain drain is the demand for labour in the industrialized west which:

For economic and demographic imperatives, needs immigrants to make up for the demographic deficit occasioned by an ageing population. Rich countries need two categories of immigrants to cope with prevailing economic and demographic imperatives: one set to do poorly paid, dirty, and dangerous jobs which nationals scorn; and highly specialised professionals, especially software specialists, engineers, doctors and nurses.<sup>4</sup>

Another line of thinking tends to blame the developing world for its own misfortune. In other words, there would be no brain drain if conditions at home were more conducive for skilled people to stay. Harris, for example, argues that:

If we think of the world as no more than a set of countries which own their population, then this does look like theft by the developed countries. But that would be a foolish way to see it. The loss of skilled and professional workers on this scale is as much a vote of no confidence in the government concerned as a flight of capital. It becomes more

like a flight of refugees, a flight from spectacular misgovernment, from appalling working conditions and pay levels so low that they are below subsistence. The remedy is not to end the right to work in developed countries but to make an environment at home in which people want to stay and work.<sup>5</sup>

It is clear from these extracts, that the brain drain debate is highly polarized with accusations and counter-accusations, the apportioning of blame, and a great deal of moral indignation.

When analysing the Zimbabwean situation, it is important to acknowledge two things: (a) that the external environment acting on skilled Zimbabweans is very dynamic. In the last decade there have been unprecedented opportunities for skilled Zimbabweans to leave the country for other regional and international destinations;<sup>6</sup> and (b) the push-forces, in terms of domestic conditions, have intensified considerably over the last decade. In combination, these international pull and local push-forces are encouraging the skilled to leave in unprecedented numbers. This not only has immediate impacts on the country's public and private sectors but could also reduce the ability of the country to engage in a downstream process of reconstruction. In this context it is critically important to gauge the mood of the country's remaining skilled population. More concretely, it is necessary to try and predict what future skills losses are likely to be.

The research reported here aims to raise awareness within Zimbabwe and the SADC of the scope and impact of major international population movements out of the country. Particular emphasis is placed on the prediction of future emigration trends of skilled personnel as well as the assessment of the policy implications of this form of migration. Similar research has already been conducted by SAMP in three other countries of the region: Botswana, Lesotho and South Africa.<sup>7</sup> In many ways, the Lesotho and South African brain drain situations most closely approximate those of Zimbabwe, and comparisons will therefore be made with those countries in this paper. In this way, this paper also speaks to the broader issue of understanding and developing policy positions for the SADC region as a whole.

## LEAVING ZIMBABWE

Zimbabwe has experienced most of the major forms of migration patterns since the attainment of independence in 1980.<sup>8</sup> Most of the early work on migration in post-independence Zimbabwe focused on internal migration, largely because it has been the dominant form of population movement.<sup>9</sup> Research on international migration to and from Zimbabwe has not been as comprehensive, although it is now growing in scope and importance.<sup>10</sup> Cross-border trading with surrounding countries has also received some attention as the phenomenon has grown.<sup>11</sup> While many of the traders are highly skilled at what they do, many lack formal educational qualifications. Most traders are also not generally interested in residence outside the country; their whole *raison d'être* is to leave and return. In that sense, they cannot be considered part of a brain drain of skills from Zimbabwe.

Labour migrants comprise the largest group of international migrants both into and out of Zimbabwe. Historically, Zimbabwe has imported labour from neighbouring states such as Zambia and Malawi.<sup>12</sup> More recently, however, as the economic and political climate in the country has deteriorated, Zimbabwe has found itself exporting labour to other countries in the region and abroad. Perhaps the form of migration that has most consistently aroused emotions in the Southern African region is undocumented cross-border migration. Unauthorized migrants from Zimbabwe have increasingly found employment in Botswana and South Africa in marginal or undesirable jobs. By and large, the evidence seems to suggest that Zimbabweans who go to South Africa to look for work do so because they are unemployed and have few marketable skills in their own country.

While unskilled labour migration still constitutes the majority of labour movement from Zimbabwe, skilled out-migration has assumed increasing importance in recent years.<sup>13</sup> Overall, the past two decades in Zimbabwe have been characterised by annual net migration losses, especially in the years immediately following the attainment of independence in 1980. The country experienced net (legal) migration losses in 13 of the 18 years from 1980 to 1997. Between 1980 and 1984, 50 000 to 60 000 whites left the country because they could not adjust to the changed political circumstances and the net migration loss was over 10 000 per year.<sup>14</sup> The peak net migration loss was experienced in 1981 when 20 536 people left the country against 7 794 arrivals, giving a net loss of 12 742. The number of emigrants leaving the country each year declined to below 7 000 in the mid-1980s and to below 3 000 in the 1990s. The decline in emigration from the mid-1980s was in part because the population base for potential emigrants - mostly the white

community - had been greatly reduced in number and those who wanted to leave for political reasons had already gone.

In the last ten years, as domestic economic and political conditions have deteriorated, there has been growing concern about the size and impact of a renewed "brain drain" from Zimbabwe.<sup>15</sup> In the past, emigration was primarily undertaken by whites. Now there appears to be a sizeable black brain drain taking place. Education and health are the hardest hit sectors but many others have left as well. The Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP), which was adopted by the government in 1991, has been cited as one of the major causes for the emigration of skilled personnel.<sup>16</sup> Other possible incentives to leave for the skilled and unskilled, either temporarily or permanently, include political instability, industrial decline and growing unemployment. Zimbabwean land policy and the current famine may also have an impact on movement of people out of the country, not only of whites but also of black farmworkers.

At the same time, the openings for those considering departure have also shifted markedly. First, the political changes in South Africa after 1990 meant that the country became a newly-desirable destination for migrants from throughout the continent, not just Zimbabwe.<sup>17</sup> Zimbabweans possess a basket of desirable skills, and were very much in line to take advantage of the deracialization of the South African labour market. Second, an aggressive hunt for developing country skills by Europe and North America has begun as their own populations begin to grey.<sup>18</sup> Third, the globalization of skilled labour markets has new opportunities and mobility for skilled workers.<sup>19</sup> Together, these factors have transformed the "pull" side of the equation for skilled people from all of the SADC states.<sup>20</sup>

There is therefore an urgent need to move beyond the rhetoric to assess the extent, causes and likely future trends of this new brain drain. This paper, based on a national survey of Zimbabwe's resident skilled population, aims to contribute substantially to that task.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The SAMP survey sought to interview a wide range of professionals drawn from both the public and private sectors in Zimbabwe. Key towns were first selected based on their population size and the range of functions provided. The spatial distribution of the towns selected was considered with a view to covering as much of the country as possible. The exclusion of rural centres was based partly on resource limitations but also on the premise that skilled personnel are mostly found in urban centres which demand their services.

The definition of the “skilled” population was the same as that used by SAMP in its other surveys.<sup>21</sup>

We therefore define a “skilled” Zimbabwean as someone who: (a) is a Zimbabwean citizen; (b) is 16 years of age or older; (c) has completed high school and possessing a diploma or degree from a recognized college or university (or in the final year of studying for a diploma or degree; and (d) is currently economically active (employed or looking for employment). In addition, some high school leavers occupying accounting, managerial and clerical positions were included in the survey because of their experience.

The respondents were drawn from a wide range of professions such as engineering, finance, health, law, police/military and education. The research assistants were University of Zimbabwe students and the survey instrument was the same as that previously utilized in South Africa, Botswana and Lesotho. Two methods were used to administer the questionnaires. In some cases the research assistants left the questionnaires with the respondents and later collected them after they had been completed. Alternatively, the research assistants would assist the respondents to fill in the questionnaires. The method used in each case was determined by the time available to the respondents when the interviews occurred.

A total of 900 questionnaires were completed in selected urban centres, namely Harare, Bulawayo Mutare, Kadoma, Marondera, Rusape and Masvingo. Five hundred and twenty nine questionnaires were administered in Harare, the capital, 243 were administered in Bulawayo, 51 in Mutare, 10 in Rusape, 25 in Kadoma, 18 in Marondera and 23 in Masvingo (Table 1). The total number of respondents in each city was determined on the basis of the population sizes of these urban centres using the 1992 census results.

## PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

Table 1 shows the distribution of the respondents by race and area of residence. The majority of the respondents (58.8%) were drawn from Harare which has nearly half the urban population of Zimbabwe. Ninety four percent of the respondents were black or of African origin, 2% were white, 3% coloured and 1% of Indian or Asian origin. This distribution closely approximates the national population breakdown. The net result, however, is that the absolute numbers of Whites and Indian/Asians interviewed are too small to make definitive statements about their attitudes and emigration intentions.

Of the 900 respondents, 592 (66%) were male while only 308 were

	Race of Respondents				Total	
	Black/ African	White/ European	Coloured	Indian/ Asian	Number	%
Harare	502	9	14	4	529	58.8
Bulawayo	217	12	11	3	243	27.0
Mutare/Rusape	61	-	-	-	61	6.8
Kadoma	25	1	-	-	26	2.9
Marondera	16	-	2	-	18	2.0
Masvingo	23	-	-	-	23	2.6
Total	844	22	27	7	900	100.1*

*\* Percentages may not add up to 100 in this and subsequent tables due to rounding*

female (Table 2). The uneven gender distribution reflects the patriarchal nature of Zimbabwean society which has traditionally given males more access to the educational system than females. This “tradition” is slowly disintegrating but its legacy is still very evident in the distribution of the educated people in the country by gender.

	Gender		Total	
	Male	Female	Frequency	%
Black/African	565	279	844	93.8
White/European	14	8	22	2.4
Coloured	8	19	27	3.0
Indian/Asian	5	2	7	0.8
N=900				

The results also suggests that the skills base of Zimbabwe is quite youthful with 79% of the respondents aged below 35 years (Table 3) and only 0.023% over 50 years. Again, this is a reflection of a legacy, this time the colonial system which provided only limited opportunities for the black population. Eighty four percent of the females were less than 35 years old, indicative of the efforts of the post-colonial government to redress gender imbalances in the inherited educational system.

In terms of marital status, fifty percent of the respondents were married, 44% single, 2% divorced, 1% separated, and 2% co-habiting. The relatively high number of respondents who are not married can, again, be attributed to the generally youthful nature of the Zimbabwean skills base.

Forty-two percent of the respondents were household heads, 21% children of household heads and 17% spouses of household heads. In

Age	Gender		Total	
	Male	Female	Number	%
15-24	136	126	262	29.1
25-34	313	132	445	49.4
35-49	122	45	167	18.6
50-59	18	5	23	0.02
Above 60	3	-	3	0.003
Total	592	308	900	

addition, 46% of the respondents had no children, 21% had only one child and 17% had two children. Again this reflects the youthfulness of the skilled population in the country, but also the general inclination towards small families that comes along with education and middle-class lifestyles. Almost a quarter of the respondents (24%) had no-one who was economically dependent on them while 56% of the respondents had between 1 and 4 people who were totally economically dependent on them.

As might be expected, the skilled population generally earns higher salaries than other working groups. About 22% of the respondents said they earn below Z\$11 000, a further 18% earn between Z\$11 000 and Z\$17 000, while 23% earn above Z\$41 000 (Table 4). However, it is noteworthy that in absolute terms the skilled population is not very well off. In fact, as many as 40% of the respondents reported incomes below the country's poverty datum line which is currently pegged at about Z\$17 000 for a family of six .

Gross monthly income	Race of respondents				Total	
	Black/ African	White/ European	Coloured Asian	Indian/ Asian	Number	%
Less than Z\$11 000	187	3	8	2	200	22.2
Z\$11 001- Z\$ 17 000	155	2	6	-	163	18.1
Z\$17 001- Z\$ 23 000	94	1	4	1	100	11.1
Z\$23 001- Z\$ 29 000	81	1	1	1	84	9.3
Z\$29 001- Z\$ 35 000	76	5	2	-	83	9.2
Z\$35 001- Z\$41 000	54	-	2	-	56	6.2
Above \$41 000	187	10	4	3	204	22.7
Refused	1	-	-	-	1	0.1
None	6	-	-	-	6	0.7
N=900						

Generally, the surveyed population was highly qualified: 46% of the respondents had certificates or diplomas, 25% had bachelors' degrees, 5% had masters' degrees while 0.4% had doctorates (Table 5). Twenty four percent of the sample had only gone as far as high school but the majority of these people have been employed for a long time by their companies and have received in house training and become "skilled" through experience.

Educational Qualifications	Race of Respondents				% Total
	% Blacks	% Whites	% Coloureds	% Indians	
Bachelors Degree	25	22	4	43	25
Masters Degree	5	9	4	-	5
Doctorate Degree	0.5	-	-	-	0.4
Diploma/Certificate	47	32	37	29	46
High School Certificate	23	32	56	29	24
N= 900					

The majority of the respondents (74%) interviewed were employed full-time, 12% on a part-time basis and 3% in the informal sector (Table 6). Four percent of the respondents were final year students and another four percent were unemployed.

The respondents were drawn from a wide variety of professions and

	Race of respondents				Total
	Black/African	White/ European	Coloured	Indian/Asian	
Employed (Full-time)	624	13	19	6	662
Employed (Part-time)	102	1	4	-	107
Self-Employed in Formal Sector (Full-time)	22	5	1	1	29
Self-Employed in Formal Sector (Part-time)	1	2	-	-	3
Self-employed in Informal Sector	23	-	2	-	25
Pensioner	4	-	-	-	4
Unemployed	32	-	1	-	33
Final Year Student	36	1	-	-	37
N=900					

sectors (Table 7). The services industry and banking/finance together made up almost 50% of the sample. A large proportion of the respondents in the service industry were engaged in retail as well as transport and communication. Another 16% were employed in the education/research field and 14% in professional practice such as medicine, law, engineering and information technology. Other employers included heavy industry, government, the military and agriculture.

## PREDICTING EMIGRATION

The prediction of future emigration patterns of skilled personnel from a country is a challenging task. Firstly, the factors shaping and influencing the migration intentions of individuals are not static but change in response to dynamic variables such as the state of the country's economy and political conditions. Second, the measurement of intentions is not a definite indicator of the likely future plans of individuals since other factors may have an important role in determining the actual decisions. Thus economic and social factors may prevent the realisation of an individual's migration intentions. Nonetheless, an examination of the intentions of skilled personnel currently residing in a country gives an idea of the probable future trends. Such a study should seek to elicit the opinions of the skilled so as to determine their future emigration plans. Emigration potential is a measurement of the likelihood of the skilled population leaving a country. In essence, the emigration potential is a measure of the respondents' intentions to leave the country. Various parameters can be used to predict the emigration potential of skilled Zimbabweans, such as the extent to which they have considered emigrating from the country, the factors affecting their decision to move, their most likely destinations and the perceived length of their stay in their most likely destination.

Table 8 summarises answers to the question of whether respondents had given any thought to leaving Zimbabwe. It is apparent that the vast majority have given a great deal of thought to the option of emigrating. Fifty seven percent of the respondents have considered the possibility of emigrating from the country a great deal while 29% have given the possibility of leaving the country some consideration. Only 13% of the respondents indicated that they have never considered emigrating from the country and these are treated as having a low potential of leaving the country. Strikingly, black Zimbabweans have given more thought to leaving than white (although the white sample is too small to make any definitive comparison and the survey was undertaken before the recent seizures of white farms).

<b>Table 7: Employment Sectors of Respondents</b>		
	Frequency	Percentage
Service Industry	221	24.5
Finance/Banking	203	22.6
Education/Research	142	15.8
Professional Practice	127	14.1
Government/Military	97	10.8
Heavy Industry	97	10.8
Retail	93	10.3
Government/Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs)	88	9.8
Accounting	75	8.3
Other services	60	6.7
Tertiary education	57	6.3
Medical	55	6.1
Banking	51	5.7
Manufacturing	46	5.1
Engineering	46	5.1
Finance	41	4.6
Secondary education	39	4.3
Insurance	36	4.0
Research	25	2.8
Transport and Communication	23	2.6
Primary education	21	2.3
Construction	20	2.2
Food	17	1.9
Automotive	17	1.9
Law Firm	16	1.8
Real estate	15	1.7
Agriculture	13	1.4
Mining	10	1.1
Private Security	10	1.1
Information Technology	10	1.1
Military	9	1.0
Textile	4	0.4
Energy	3	0.3
N=900		

Consideration of emigration	Race of Skilled Zimbabweans				% Total	% SA	% Bot	% Les
	% Blacks	% Whites	% Coloureds	% Indians				
A great deal	56	50	85	43	57	31	13	33
Some	30	27	11	29	29	38	28	35
None at all	13	23	4	29	13	31	58	32
Don't know	1	-	-	-	1	-	1	-
N=					900	725	222	303

Table 8 also provides a comparison with data obtained in three other SADC countries. In comparison with the 57% of skilled Zimbabweans who have given a great deal of thought to leaving the country, the equivalent number was 33% in Lesotho, 31% in South Africa and only 13% in Botswana. Or again, only 13% of skilled Zimbabweans had given no thought to leaving, compared to 58% of Basotho and 31% of South Africans. These comparative figures certainly show that skilled Zimbabwean are far more likely to have considered leaving than their counterparts in the other countries surveyed.

Two parameters were employed to further probe the extent of desire to leave the country: gender and age. Table 9 shows the extent of consideration of emigration from the country by gender of the respondents. Perhaps surprisingly, the survey showed that more females (62%) have seriously considered emigrating from the country (54%) than males. In addition, slightly fewer females than males had not considered the possibility of leaving the country (12% compared to 14% for males). This result contrasts considerably with the findings in South Africa where it is clear that more men (37%) had given serious consideration to emigration than women (20%), a difference that requires further investigation and explanation.<sup>22</sup>

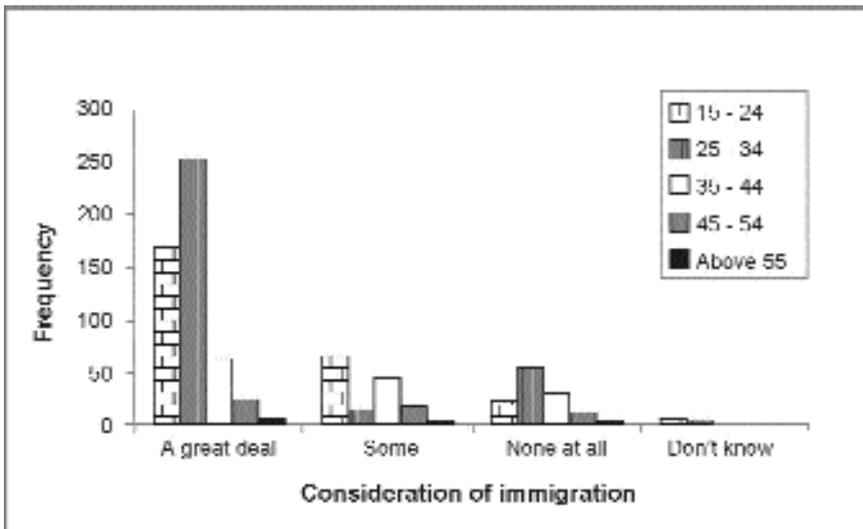
Disaggregated by age, the data shows that the population aged between 25 and 34 years had given the most consideration to the possibility of

Consideration of emigration	Gender of respondents		Total
	% Male	% Female	
A great deal	54	62	57
Some	32	24	29
None at all	14	12	13
Don't know	1	2	1
N=900			

leaving the country (Figure 1). In contrast, there is a general increase within the age groups of the proportion of people who have not considered leaving the country; for example, only 8% of the respondents aged between 15-24 had not considered leaving the country, and the proportion rises to 12.1% for the 25-34 age group, 21% for the 35-44 age group and to 22% for the 45-54 age group. Propensity to join the pool of potential emigrants therefore declines with age. This is largely attributable to the fact that the older people have more responsibilities, such as raising a family, which tend to reduce their chances of ever emigrating. Nevertheless, levels of dissatisfaction in Zimbabwe are so high that the vast majority of each age group have given serious thought to leaving.

Two other variables of significance also need to be mentioned. First, most of those who had given a great deal of consideration to leaving believed that it would be easy for them to get employment outside Zimbabwe. Second, migrant networks abroad tended to influence the consideration given to leaving Zimbabwe. Generally, the respondents with emigrant networks have the greatest likelihood of having considered leaving the country. About 70% of those who have considered emigration know of at least one emigrant in the desired country of destination.

**Figure 1: Consideration of Emigration by Age**



Emigration, at the simplest level, is either temporary or permanent. Most emigrants have an idea, when they leave, about what they intend

(although things may work out differently in practice: those who leave temporarily often end up staying, those who leave for good sometimes return if things don't work out). Nevertheless, it is important for the purposes of this study to determine whether Zimbabwe's potential emigration pool consists primarily of those who wish to leave for a short period (less than 2 years) or those who want to go away for longer (over 2 years).

Table 10 confirms once again that the potential emigration pool is massive with the vast majority of the population having given thought to leaving the country. Broken down by duration of desired stay outside the country, the data shows that some 68% of skilled Zimbabweans wish to a great or some extent to leave the country for up to two years. But just as many say they wish to leave for a longer period. In most migration studies this tends to be a marker of permanent emigration. What is even more remarkable, or worrying, is that 51% expressed a strong desire to leave "permanently", compared to only 25% who have a strong desire to leave for a short period. In other words, this is a population more interested in getting out of the country for good. In general, these respondents tend to be in the 15-39 age group, have fewer dependents and be mostly single.

<b>Table 10: Extent of Desire to Leave Zimbabwe</b>					
Extent of desire to leave Zimbabwe temporarily to another country to leave and work (less than two years)					
	% Blacks	% Whites	% Coloureds	% Indians	% Total
Great extent	25	9	26	14	25
Some extent	43	50	56	57	43
Hardly at all	13	14	7	-	13
Not at all	13	18	7	14	13
Don't know	6	9	4	14	6
Extent of desire to leave Zimbabwe temporarily to another country to leave and work (longer than two years)					
Great extent	51	50	63	57	51
Some extent	28	14	18	14	27
Hardly at all	8	14	4	14	8
Not at all	8	9	7	-	8
Don't know	5	14	7	14	6
N=900					

The potential pool of permanent and temporary emigrants in the skilled Zimbabwean population is therefore massive and unprecedented

by regional standards. However, this does not mean that all of these people will necessarily leave:

Thinking about leaving, and wanting to do it, are one thing. Actually doing so is quite another...Emigration is a formal and often lengthy process that involves obtaining official documentation, preparing applications and organizing employment opportunities, quite apart from the sheer logistics of the move. Thus people who have mentally set a specific date, or at least a time frame, for leaving are far more likely to act upon their desires than those who leave it as an open-ended question.<sup>23</sup>

The survey therefore sought to establish the extent to which skilled Zimbabweans have a mental commitment to emigrate within a specified time frame (Table 11). Specifying a time frame cuts the levels of potential emigration, but not nearly as dramatically as one might have expected (based on comparative data from other countries in the region). The respondents were first asked about the likelihood of emigrating within the next six months. Just over a quarter (27%) said it was likely or very likely that they would leave within 6 months (the equivalent South African figure was 7%). Slightly more than half (55%) considered it likely or very likely that they would emigrate within the next two years (South Africa: 25%). In all, 67% indicated that they were likely or very likely to leave the country within the next five years (South Africa: 42%). In other words, in South Africa there is a marked difference between the desire to leave and the likelihood of doing so. In Zimbabwe, this gap is extremely narrow.

To summarise, 86% of skilled Zimbabweans have given some thought to leaving and 51% have a strong desire to leave permanently. Twenty seven percent say that it is likely or very likely that they would leave within the next 6 months. As many as 67% say that it is likely or very likely that they would leave within the next 5 years. These are sobering statistics which send a clear message that the brain drain from Zimbabwe is not about to slow.

The firmest indicator of a person's emigration potential is whether they have actually begun applying for emigration documentation. Despite the very high emigration potential captured by other indicators, fewer respondents had, in fact, started the process of applying for emigration documents. Six percent of the respondents had actually applied for a work permit in another country while 13% were in the process of applying (Table 12). Thus, there is a potential loss of nearly 20% of the country's workforce to other countries in the short term. Fifty seven percent of the respondents who have applied for a work permit in another

Table 11: Commitment to Emigrate					
	Race of respondents				
	% Blacks	% Whites	% Coloureds	% Indians	% Total
(a) Commitment to emigrate in the next six months					
Very likely	13	14	22	29	14
Likely	13	14	22	29	13
Unlikely	33	23	19	29	32
Very unlikely	33	41	26	14	33
Do not know	9	9	11		8
(b) Commitment to emigrate in the next two years					
Very likely	19	14	37	57	19
Likely	37	27	19	0	36
Unlikely	19	27	7	29	19
Very unlikely	15	23	15	14	15
Do not know	11	9	22	0	11
(c) Commitment to emigrate in the next five years					
Very likely	37	27	41	57	37
Likely	30	32	22	0	30
Unlikely	9	23	4	14	10
Very unlikely	10	9	7	0	10
Do not know	13	9	26	29	14
N=900					

country are married while 89% are between 20 and 39 years and 84% have less than five dependents.

As might be expected, the proportion who had applied or were in the process of applying for permanent residence and citizenship in another country was much smaller (at 8%).

In sum, there is a decline in the indicators of likely emigration as the survey moves from consideration, to desire, to likelihood. In other words, as in South Africa, “as greater mental and physical commitments are required from the respondent, emigration potential declines.”<sup>24</sup> However, all of the indicators are higher than those for the other countries in which SAMP has conducted similar research (Botswana, Lesotho and South Africa). Particularly concerning is the fact that there is only a marginal decline in Zimbabwe between desire and likelihood. This suggests Zimbabweans are doing much more than simply thinking about leaving. If this is the case, then the numbers taking concrete measures to leave will quickly increase. The other factor of note, is the relatively high proportion who say it is likely they will leave

Table 12: Application for Emigration Documentation					
	Race of respondents				
	% of Blacks	% of Whites	% of Coloureds	% of Indians	% of Total
(a) Application for a work permit in another country					
Yes	6	5	15	14	6
No	81	82	74	57	81
In the process of applying	13	14	11	29	13
(b) Application for permanent residence in another country					
Yes	2	5	7	14	2
No	92	95	81	71	92
In the process of applying	6	0	11	14	6
(c) Application for citizenship in another country					
Yes	1	0	7	14	2
No	93	95	89	57	92
In the process of applying	6	5	4	29	6
N=900					

permanently. The literature suggests that these are people who have become so disillusioned that they are extremely pessimistic about the long-term prospects for the country and themselves. This point is explored further below when we discuss a series of questions relating to perceptions of the quality of life in Zimbabwe.

## DESTINATION COUNTRIES OF EMIGRANTS FROM ZIMBABWE

Table 13 shows that the top six preferred destinations of potential emigrants from Zimbabwe are the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Botswana, South Africa, Australia/New Zealand and Canada. The United States is both the most preferred and the most likely destination for around a quarter of all respondents. The United Kingdom is second, although we might have expected the UK to be preferable to the United States due to its historical ties with Zimbabwe. The reason could be the harassment and discrimination that nationals from Zimbabwe have been subjected to in the UK in recent years.<sup>25</sup>

In terms of other SADC countries, only Botswana and South Africa rate a mention. Interestingly, Botswana is preferred as a destination to South Africa. Yet Zimbabweans feel that it is more likely that they will actually end up in South Africa; testimony to the different employment possibilities and immigration policies of the two neighbouring countries.

Table 13: Destinations of Emigrants from Zimbabwe		
Country	Frequency	Percentage
<b>(a) The Preferred Destinations</b>		
United States of America	242	26.9
United Kingdom	181	20.1
Botswana	115	12.8
South Africa	91	10.1
Australia/ New Zealand	81	9.0
Canada	61	6.8
Other Europe	58	6.4
Other Africa	50	5.6
Other Asia	18	2.0
Other Americas	3	0.3
<b>(b) The Most Likely Destinations</b>		
United States of America	216	24.0
United Kingdom	164	18.2
South Africa	150	16.7
Botswana	128	14.2
Canada	65	7.2
Australia/ New Zealand	64	7.1
Other Africa	51	5.7
Other Europe	45	5.0
Other Asia	14	1.6
Other Americas	3	0.3
Total	900	100.0

## DURATION OF EMIGRATION

A brain drain implies the loss of a country's productive labour force to another one. However, emigrants do not necessarily move permanently or cut ties with their home areas. Indeed, in a globalizing world, transnational linkages between origin and destination country are becoming increasingly the norm.<sup>26</sup>

Table 14 reveals that 46% of the respondents would like to stay in their most likely destination (MLD) for a period not exceeding five years whereas 44% would like to stay for more than five years. This confirms the earlier finding that a significant proportion of skilled Zimbabweans are interested in long-term relocation from the country. Eighty seven percent of the respondents who are likely to stay out of the

Table 14: Duration of Emigration		
	Frequency	Percentage
Length of stay at the most likely destination		
Less than 6 months	37	4
6 months to 1 year	34	4
1 to 2 years	112	12
2 to 5 years	237	26
More than 5 years	394	44
Don't know	86	10
Frequency of return		
Weekly	11	1
Monthly	42	5
Once every few months	185	21
Yearly	404	45
Once every few years	175	19
Never	49	5
Don't know	34	4
N=900		

country for more than 5 years are between 20-39 years of age. There is little or no gender difference in terms of permanent emigration.

To assess potential transnational linkages, respondents were asked a simple set of questions about how often they would return home. Nineteen percent said they would return only occasionally but only 5% said they would never come back. Most clearly wanted to be able to return every year (45%) or every few months (21%).

In a bid to establish the exact length of likely stay in the MLD, several questions were asked. Respondents were first asked to indicate the extent of their desire to become permanent residents in their MLDs. Table 15 shows that 52% would like to become permanent residents in their MLDs. Eighty nine percent of the respondents who said they would like to become permanent residents in the MLD are between 20-39 years. Here there was a gender difference, with 49% of males and 58% of females expressing this preference. The figures for citizenship were very similar; 48% would like to become citizens of their MLD (54% female, 45% male). However, only 29% of the respondents indicated that they would want to retire in their MLD. Still fewer (16%) indicated that they would like to be buried in their MLD.

The picture that emerges is of emigrants from Zimbabwe going to work in another country but maintaining strong personal linkages with home. The reason why so many would choose citizenship and perma-

ment residence could be to guard against possible deportation. However, while many would countenance being away for a long time, they would want to come back to retire and pass away in their home country.

<b>Table 15: Extent of Desire to Settle in Most-Likely Destination</b>					
	Race of respondents				% Total
	% Blacks	% Whites	% Coloureds	% Indians	
Extent of desire to become a permanent resident in your MLD					
Great extent	28	54	37	71	29
Some extent	23	14	22	0	23
Total	51	68	59	71	52
Extent of desire to become a citizen of your MLD					
Great extent	24	45	44	57	25
Some extent	23	23	11	0	23
Total	47	68	55	57	48
Extent of desire to retire in your MLD					
Great extent	14	45	26	43	15
Some extent	14	14	15	0	14
Total	28	59	41	43	29
Extent of desire to be buried in your MLD					
Great extent	7	41	19	43	9
Some extent	7	14	4	0	7
Total	14	55	23	43	16
N=900					

Emigration also involves decisions about property, savings, investments, and remittances. Willingness to sever these links is a far better indicator of the intention to return.<sup>27</sup> A willingness to cut all ties indicates a strong likelihood of no return. Table 16 summarises the extent to which the potential emigrants say they would maintain links with Zimbabwe. Only 12% would be willing to sell their houses in Zimbabwe while 22% said they would take their savings from Zimbabwe. In addition, only 20% of the respondents indicated that they would be willing to take all their investments out of Zimbabwe. Seventeen percent would be willing to give up their Zimbabwean citizenship. These findings have several implications. First, they reveal that emigrants from Zimbabwe are likely to maintain property and financial links with their home country. Second, they are not prepared to give up everything they have in the country, which could be a reflection of their desire to eventually return to the country. Third, most migrants would like to maintain their

Table 16: Maintenance of Links with Zimbabwe		
	Frequency	Percentage
Willingness to sell house in Zimbabwe		
Very willing	61	7
Willing	44	5
Total	105	12
Willingness to take savings out of Zimbabwe		
Very willing	95	11
Willing	103	11
Total	198	22
Willingness to take all investments out of Zimbabwe		
Very willing	84	9
Willing	103	11
Total	187	20
Willingness to give up Zimbabwean citizenship		
Very willing	81	9
Willing	74	8
Total	155	17
N=900		

Zimbabwean citizenship, which indicates that while conditions in the country are not to their liking, they still have a strong sense of Zimbabwean identity which would not be destroyed by emigrating.

## THE QUALITY OF LIFE IN ZIMBABWE

The abnormally high emigration potential of Zimbabwe's skilled population is clearly apparent. However, the reasons for this situation need to be probed in relation to domestic social, economic and political conditions. Why are so many Zimbabweans thinking seriously about emigration? Beyond the obvious explanation of economic decline and political turmoil, it is useful to see what the people themselves feel about the quality of life in Zimbabwe. The year 1991 saw the ushering in of the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) which was aimed at liberalising the economy, reducing the government budget deficit and reducing public expenditure. The removal of price controls and subsidies resulted in a price escalation of most basic goods. Zimbabwe's more recent economic travails have led to rampant inflation and shortages of consumer goods. Table 17 reveals extremely high levels of dissatisfaction with the cost of

living (89%), level of taxation (83%), availability of quality affordable products (75%), and level of income (72%). These results are a reflection of the difficulties that have been associated with the country's decline in the 1990s; including high inflation coupled with low salaries.

But the dissatisfaction goes much deeper than economic circumstances. The upkeep of public amenities was a source of dissatisfaction for 74%, as was the perceived future for children (71%), housing availability (69%), medical services (61%) and education (57%).

Zimbabwean dissatisfaction is pervasive and deep. A comparison with South Africans on this point is instructive. South Africans show similar levels of dissatisfaction with their personal economic circumstances but are far more optimistic about the future, and the quality of social services such as health, education and housing.<sup>28</sup>

**Table 17: Satisfaction with the Quality of Life in Zimbabwe**

Dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with:	Zimbabwe %	South Africa %
Cost of living	89	71
Your job	46	23
Prospects for professional advancement	46	30
The security of your job	45	26
Your level of income	72	37
Ability to find a house you want to live in	69	21
Ability to find a good school for your children	57	27
Ability to find medical services for family and children	61	21
Your level of taxation	83	74
Relative share of taxes paid in comparison to others	64	59
Your personal safety	56	66
Your family's safety	56	68
The future of your children in Zimbabwe	71	55
Upkeep of public amenities	74	70
Availability of quality affordable products	75	28
Customer service	53	56
N=	900	725

The deep pessimism shown by many respondents was confirmed in questions asking whether they thought that conditions would improve in the country in the next five years. Table 18 shows that skilled Zimbabweans think that conditions in the country will only get worse. Seventy two percent felt the cost of living would increase and 71% thought that the level of taxation would increase, while 67% thought

that the upkeep of public amenities would decline and 66% were worried about the uncertain future of their children in Zimbabwe. The pessimism about the future emanates from the present economic hardships currently facing the country and the respondents do not see an immediate end to these difficulties. They predict that the high inflation levels currently being experienced by the country will persist and the level of taxation will also remain high. In fact, Zimbabweans are among the most taxed people in the world and the respondents do not see an end to the high tax regime experienced in the country.

<b>Table 18: Perceptions of Future Conditions in Zimbabwe</b>		
	Frequency	Percentage
Do you expect the following to get worse or much worse in the next 5 years		
Cost of living	654	73
Your job	395	44
Prospects for professional advancement	367	41
The security of your job	422	47
Your level of income	521	58
Ability to find a house you want to live in	558	62
Ability to find a good school for your children	497	55
Ability to find medical services for family and children	562	62
Your level of taxation	637	71
Relative share of taxes paid in comparison to others	511	57
Your personal safety	464	52
Your family's safety	479	53
The future of your children in Zimbabwe	593	66
Upkeep of public amenities	600	67
Availability of quality affordable products	602	67
Customer service	455	51
N=900		

## SKILLED PERSONNEL AND POLITICS IN ZIMBABWE

International migration can never be divorced from the political situation in a country. Since the government of the day has a major input into the way the economy is run, the level of dissatisfaction in the country's labour force is heavily dependent on government policy. Unlike unskilled migrants, skilled personnel are highly mobile and may express their disappointment or disagreement with government by emigrating to other countries. Hence skilled labour may 'vote with

its feet' in stating its dissatisfaction with the economic and political climate prevailing in a country.

Several political issues were therefore raised in the survey to determine the impact of government upon their lives. Table 19 shows that only 11% of the respondents approved/strongly approved of the way the government had performed its job in the previous year. None of the white respondents (but only 12% of blacks) approved of the government's actions over the previous year. Only 12% said they could always trust the government to do what is right while a mere 15% believe that the people in government are interested in hearing what they have to say. Over 80% of skilled Zimbabweans believe that they are unfairly

<b>Table 19: Perception of Government</b>		
	Frequency	Percentage
Approval Rating:		
Do you approve of the way the national government has performed its job over the last year? (% approve/strongly approve)	100	11
How much of the time can you trust the government to do what is right? (% of the time)	107	12
How interested do you think the government is in hearing what people like you think? (very interested/quite interested)	136	15
Responsiveness of Government		
Interest of government in the opinions of (% yes):		
People of your race group	152	17
People of your economic class	123	14
People who share your home language	137	15
Impact of government		
Impact of the actions of the government over the last year (% positive or very positive):		
Personally	90	10
On people of same race	123	14
On people who share same language	121	14
On people in same economic class	75	8
On Zimbabwe	84	9
Discrimination by Government		
Extent to which the following are unfairly treated by government (% always or to a large extent)		
People of your group	340	37.8
People who share your home language	340	37.8
People of your economic class	358	39.7
You personally	345	38.4
N=900		

treated by the government in terms of their race, language group and economic class. These are extraordinarily high levels of dissatisfaction by any standard. It should be born in mind though that this is not a general survey of Zimbabwean political attitudes. One can certainly see, however, why the opposition MDC enjoys support amongst the more educated urbanites in the country.

The only policy which seems to command support is public-sector employment. Since independence, the Zimbabwean Government has adopted policies which promote the hiring of the indigenous black population. The black population has historically been disadvantaged and affirmative action aimed to redress some of the injustices. Survey results show that 68% of the sample support or strongly support affirmative action (Table 20). Although the sample is small, only 32% of whites opposed affirmative action (compared with 83% of whites in South Africa). Males (73%) are more supportive of affirmative action policies than females (59%), possibly because they are the major beneficiaries. Affirmative action policies, unlike in South Africa, are therefore unlikely to have a significant role to play in emigration decisions.

## CONDITIONS ABROAD

The respondents were asked to compare the conditions in the country and those in their most likely destination (MLD). Generally, potential emigrants are likely to take a dim view of conditions at home and to romanticize those abroad.

However, the question is worth asking to ascertain the nature and size of the gap between the two. Table 21 shows that the conditions that are most attractive to prospective emigrants in the MLDs include the lower cost of living, prospects for professional advancement, availability of quality affordable products and high incomes. Overwhelmingly, therefore, it is the economic prospects of the MLD that provide the attraction to hard-pressed Zimbabweans.

	Race of respondents				% of Total
	% of Blacks	% of Whites	% of Coloureds	% of Indians	
Strongly support	42	14	22	14	40
Support	29	36	22	14	28
Oppose	12	18	7	29	12
Strongly oppose	10	14	26	0	10
Don't know	8	18	22	43	9
N=900					

## MIGRANT NETWORKS

The survey also sought to establish the prior travel experiences of the respondents in order to help determine their emigration potential. Generally, people who have wider travel experiences are likely to be conversant with the conditions prevailing in the desired destinations and the potential emigrants also get to know about the opportunities and constraints to movement and settlement in the destination society.

Table 22 shows that skilled Zimbabweans are generally not well-travelled, meaning that they have limited contact with both people and firms in the country of destination. It is important to note that most of the people who have travelled outside the country have ended up in

	Race of respondents				% Total
	% of Blacks	% of Whites	% of Coloureds	% of Indians	
Better or much better overseas					
Cost of living	88	86	81	71	88
Your job	83	68	74	43	82
Prospects for professional advancement	80	59	74	86	79
The security of your job	59	50	67	14	59
Your level of income	88	77	78	71	87
Ability to find a house you want to live in	58	68	67	71	59
Ability to find a good school for your children	61	68	56	29	60
Ability to find medical services for family and children	74	73	78	57	74
Your level of taxation	74	82	63	72	73
Relative share of taxes paid in comparison to others	66	59	63	57	65
Your personal safety	49	68	37	29	49
Your family's safety	49	68	37	29	49
The future of your children	66	82	67	57	66
Upkeep of public amenities	73	86	78	71	74
Availability of quality affordable products	86	91	85	71	86
Customer service	71	77	70	43	71
N=900					

	Frequency	% of total
Travel once a year or more to:		
Southern Africa	227	25
Elsewhere in Africa	72	8
Europe	37	4
North America	9	1
Australia/New Zealand	8	1
Asia	9	1
N=900		

African destinations, particularly in Southern Africa. This is because travel costs are lower for destinations within the region compared to those overseas. It is not surprising that 90% of whites have been to European countries while only 4% of blacks have been to Europe.

Since international migration depends on the flow of information between the potential migrant and the desired country, the survey also sought to establish the main sources of information about job opportunities in other countries. Most of the respondents (70%) cited friends as their main sources of information about job opportunities in other countries (Table 23). This suggests that Zimbabweans in the country have numerous friends who have migrated to other countries and are potentially engaged in chain migration.

The extent to which Zimbabwe's skills base has already been bit by emigration emerged when respondents were asked about their knowledge of other emigrants. Firstly, 52% of the respondents have at least one emigrant amongst the members of their immediate family (Table 24). Second, 73% of the respondents know at least one emigrant amongst members of their extended family. As many as 81% know a

	Race of respondents				% of Total
	% of Blacks	% of Whites	% of Coloureds	% of Indians	
Get information about job opportunities in other countries once in a while or often from:					
Professional journals/newsletters	64	45	63	86	64
Newspapers	68	59	56	86	68
Friends	70	59	67	57	70
Family	51	64	59	71	51
Professional associations	54	41	59	29	53
N=900					

close friend who has emigrated to another country. Furthermore, 69% indicated that they know a co-worker who has left for greener pastures while 76% know of at least one person in their profession who has emigrated to another country. Zimbabweans are far better “networked” than South Africans in this regard (Table 24).

	Race of respondents					
	% of Blacks	% of Whites	% of Coloureds	% of Indians	% of Zimbabweans	% of South Africans
Knows at least one emigrant amongst						
Members of immediate family	52	45	52	29	52	19
Members of extended family	74	59	74	57	73	36
Close friends	81	91	67	71	81	59
Co-workers	69	73	44	57	69	40
People in profession known personally	76	86	59	71	76	57
N=					900	725

These results have serious implications for the likelihood of skilled personnel in Zimbabwe leaving the country in the future. Firstly, the knowledge of members of immediate family and friends living abroad can itself trigger migration. Secondly, the knowledge of other people within the profession who have left also provides a psychological push to the potential emigrants since they are assured of getting a job in the country of destination.

Zimbabweans are also relatively optimistic about their ability to find employment in other countries. As many as 40% of the respondents believed that it would be easy for them to leave Zimbabwe to go and work in another country (Table 25).

## CONCLUSION

Zimbabwe has been experiencing a significant and escalating brain drain. The dimensions and reasons for this brain drain have been documented elsewhere.<sup>29</sup> In this study, we have taken the fact of the brain drain for granted and focused instead on the skilled people who remain. If the skilled population is essentially contented and giving no thought to emigration, then we could safely say that the brain drain is a passing phenomenon which will soon draw to a close. In fact, the primary finding of this study is exactly the opposite.

	Race of respondents				% of Total
	% of Blacks	% of Whites	% of Coloureds	% of Indians	
How Easy or Difficult Would It Be for You to Leave Zimbabwe to go and Work in Another Country If You Wanted To?					
Very easy	14	27	15	0	14
Easy	25	45	19	29	26
Difficult	36	23	41	43	36
Very difficult	19	5	11	0	18
Don't know	6	0	15	29	7
N=900					

Zimbabwe's skilled population is not only highly discontented with domestic economic, social and political conditions, but they are extremely pessimistic about the possibility of positive change within the next 5 years. The net result is a population with an extremely high emigration potential.

Various measures have been mooted by government with a view to keeping people in the country, including compulsory national service and bonding. The coercive approach to the brain drain has not worked particularly well elsewhere, so it is worth asking whether it is likely to have any impact in Zimbabwe. In fact, the survey shows that such measures could have the opposite effect to that intended, further adding to the burden of discontent that is encouraging so many to leave or think of leaving.

Firstly, the respondents were asked whether it would make any difference in their plans to emigrate if the government were to introduce measures that would make it more difficult for them to emigrate. Sixty seven percent of the respondents said that this policy would make no difference or it would make it more likely. Second, the majority of the respondents indicated that it would make no difference or would make it more likely for them to emigrate if the government was to require people leaving professional schools to do one-year national service in their area of expertise. Third, making Zimbabweans hold only one passport would not affect the emigration plans of most skilled Zimbabweans. Fourth, increasing fees for emigration would also not have an impact on the emigration plans of the respondents. These findings have important policy implications for they reveal the shortcomings of coercive measures in dealing with the brain drain.

The most important factors identified in this research as the driving forces of skilled emigration are the high cost of living currently prevailing in the country and the high level of taxation. Additional push factors

<b>Table 26: Emigration Policy and Likelihood to Emigrate</b>		
	Frequency	Percentage
Make no difference/more likely to emigrate from the country		
If the government took steps to make it more difficult to emigrate	601	67
If the government required people leaving professional schools to do one year national service in their area of expertise	603	67
If the government was going to allow people to hold only one passport	657	73
If the government increase fees for emigration	622	69
N= 900		

include the lack of quality affordable products, poor upkeep of public amenities, level of income, the future of children in Zimbabwe and the ability to find decent housing. Inability to meet basic economic and other needs has resulted in major discontent among the population, a definite spur to people to move to other countries.

The majority of the people who have a high emigration potential are in the 25-35 age group which represents the bulk of the economically active group in Zimbabwe which generally has a youthful population. The effect of the emigration of skilled labour from the country is likely to significantly reduce the population of skilled labour in the country. Thus, the loss of economically active, skilled people to other countries represents a crippling loss to Zimbabwe. It has also been seen that the majority of those who want to emigrate from the country intend to stay outside the country's borders for at least two years. It is also disturbing to note that nearly 70% of the people interviewed in this research say they are likely to emigrate within the next five years. Equally concerning is the fact that nearly 20% of the people interviewed have already applied for work permits in their intended countries of destination or are in the process of applying.

Thus, Zimbabwe faces a huge challenge in stemming the brain drain to other countries within Africa and overseas. Already the country is experiencing the effects of the brain drain in sectors such as health, where the brain drain to Botswana, South Africa and the United Kingdom has compromised the quality of health delivery in the country. The research has documented the root causes of discontent among the skilled personnel of Zimbabwe and these have been identified as the high cost of living, the high levels of taxation, and the low level of income. The government therefore needs to make the cost of living affordable, not only for the skilled personnel, but for the majority of the population. Measures are required which will arrest the current high rate of inflation currently running in excess of 50%. Zimbabweans have long been amongst the highest taxed workers in the world. The high

taxes on their own reduce economic growth as they affect the disposable income available to the workers.

It is imperative that the government implements measures to stem the brain drain from the country. However, the study has also shown the likely ineffectiveness of coercive or restrictive policies in stemming the brain drain. The only way to curb the high rates of skilled labour migration from the country lies in addressing the economic fundamentals of the country which will ultimately improve living standards.

Already key sectors are reeling from the impacts of the brain drain which makes the need to implement effective policies all the more urgent. The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) has played a lead role in the repatriation of emigrants living in foreign countries with mixed results.<sup>30</sup> The programme is weak in that it tends to dress the wound without addressing the root cause of the injury. The programme might be effective in re-attracting emigrants back to Zimbabwe but the success of such an initiative would be short-lived as they would soon be confronted with the economic realities which caused them to emigrate in the first place. Thus the economic conditions in the country need to be improved so as to re-attract the emigrants living abroad and also to stop the potential migrants from leaving the country.

Finally, the research has contributed much to the understanding of the present and probable migration trends from the country. The brain drain is usually publicised when certain sectors of the economy have been affected. The research has taken a new approach to the study of international migration in Zimbabwe in that it focused not so much on the results of the brain drain but attempted to project future migration trends of skilled personnel from the country. The conditions promoting the migration of skilled labour in the country have been highlighted as well as the pull factors in the countries where the skilled personnel are likely to end up. The majority of the skilled population in the country has an extremely high emigration potential, and should their plans be realised, the country stands to suffer, perhaps irreparably.

## ENDNOTES

- 1 P. Stalker, *Workers without Frontiers: The Impact of Globalization on International Migration* (Boulder: Lynne Reiner, 2000).
- 2 S. Commander, M. Kangasniemi and L. Winters, "The Brain Drain: Curse or Boon? A Survey of the Literature" Paper presented at CEPR/NBER/SNS International Seminar on International Trade, Stockholm, May 2002.
- 3 A. Adepoju, "Perspectives on Migration for Development in a Globalized World System" Paper presented at Sixth International Metropolis Conference, Rotterdam, 2001.

- 4 Adepoju, "Perspectives on Migration for Development in a Globalized World System"
- 5 N. Harris, *Thinking the Unthinkable: The Immigration Myth Exposed* (London: IB Taurus, 2002), p.87.
- 6 J. Crush, "The Global Raiders: Nationalism, Globalization and the South African Brain Drain" *Journal of International Affairs* 56(1) (2002), pp. 147-72.
- 7 Ibid; D. McDonald and J. Crush, eds., *Destinations Unknown: Perspectives on the Brain Drain in Southern Africa* (Pretoria: Africa Institute, 2002); E. Campbell, "To Stay or Not to Stay: Perspectives on the Emigration Potential of Skilled Batswana" In McDonald and Crush, *Destinations Unknown*, pp. 157-80; J. Gay, "Migration Attitudes of Skilled Professionals in Lesotho" In McDonald and Crush, *Destinations Unknown*, pp.181-206; H. Bhorat, J-B Meyer and C. Mlatsheni, "Skilled Labour Migration from Developing Countries: Study on South and Southern Africa" ILO International Migration Papers No, 52, Geneva, 2002.
- 8 L. Zinyama and D. Tevera, *Zimbabweans on the Move: Perspectives on International Migration from Zimbabwe*. SAMP Migration Policy Series No. 25, 2002.
- 9 See, for example, D. Potts and C. Mutambirwa, "Changing Patterns of African Rural-Urban Migration and Urbanisation in Zimbabwe" *Eastern and Southern Africa Geographical Journal* 1(1990), pp. 26-39; L.M. Zinyama and J.R. Whitlow, "Changing Patterns of Population Distribution in Zimbabwe" *GeoJournal* 13(1986), pp. 365-384; D. Simon, "Regional Inequality, Migration and Development: The Case of Zimbabwe" *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geographie* 77 (1986), pp. 7-17.
- 10 L.M. Zinyama, "International Migrations To and From Zimbabwe and the Influence of Political Changes on Population Movement, 1965-1987" *International Migration Review* 24 (1990), pp. 748-767; B. Paton, *Labour Export Policy in the Development of Southern Africa* (London: Macmillan Press, 1995); L. Sachikonye, "Rethinking about Labour Markets and Migration Policy in a New Era" In L. Sachikonye, ed. *Labour Migration Southern Africa* (Harare: SAPES Books, 1998), pp. 1-14; R. Gaidzanwa, "Cross-Border Trade in Southern Africa: A Gendered Perspective" In L. Sachikonye, ed. *Labour Migration in Southern Africa*; R. Gaidzanwa, *Voting With Their Feet: Migrant Zimbabwean Nurses and Doctors in the Era of Structural Adjustment*, Research Report No. 111, Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitute, 1999.
- 11 Gaidzanwa, "Cross-Border Trade in Southern Africa: A Gendered Perspective"; A. Cheater and R. Gaidzanwa, "Citizenship in Neo-Patrilineal States: Gender and Mobility in Southern Africa" *Journal of Southern African Studies* 22 (1996); B. Dodson, "Women on the Move: Gender and Cross-Border Migration to Southern Africa from Lesotho, Mozambique and Zimbabwe" In D.A. McDonald, ed. *On Borders: Perspectives on International Migration in Southern Africa* (New York: St Martin's Press, 2000),

- pp. 119-150; Zinyama and Tevera, *Zimbabweans on the Move*.
- 12 B. Paton, *Labour Export Policy in the Development of Southern Africa*; ILO, Labour Migration to South Africa in the 1990s, Policy Paper No. 4, Harare: ILO, 1998.
  - 13 Ibid.
  - 14 C. Gore, Y. Katerere and S. Moyo, eds., *The Case for Sustainable Development in Zimbabwe: Conceptual Problems, Conflicts and Contradictions* (Harare: ENDA Zimbabwe and Zero, 1992).
  - 15 See, for example, Loughty Dube, "Health sector faces massive brain drain" *Zimbabwe Independent* 15 February 2001; "ZIMTA attacks government" *Daily News* 14 August 2002; "How is the Crisis in Zimbabwe Affecting Pharmacy in the Country?" *Pharmaceutical Journal* 268 (2002).
  - 16 Gaidzanwa, *Voting With Their Feet*.
  - 17 McDonald, *On Borders*.
  - 18 Crush, "The Global Raiders."
  - 19 R. Iredale, "The Migration of Professionals: Theories and Typologies" *International Migration* 39(5) (2001), pp. 7-26.
  - 20 McDonald and Crush, *Destinations Unknown*.
  - 21 Ibid., pp. 21-2.
  - 22 B. Dodson, "Women in the Brain Drain: Gender and Skilled Migration from South Africa" In McDonald and Crush, *Destinations Unknown*, p. 55.
  - 23 R. Mattes and W. Richmond, "The Brain Drain: What Do Skilled South Africans Think?" In McDonald and Crush, *Destinations Unknown*.
  - 24 Ibid, p. 32.
  - 25 "Zimbabwe Deportation from United Kingdom" *Press Association*, 8 February 2002.
  - 26 J.Crush and D.McDonald, eds. *Transnationalism and New African Immigration to South Africa* (Toronto: CAAS, 2002).
  - 27 Ibid., p. 36.
  - 28 Ibid., p. 37.
  - 29 Zinyama and Tevera, *Zimbabweans on the Move*.
  - 30 T. Weiss, "Addressing the Brain Drain: IOM's Return and Reintegration of African National Programme" In L. Sachikonye, ed. *Labour Migration Southern Africa* (Harare: SAPES Books, 1998), pp. 75-82.

## MIGRATION POLICY SERIES

1. *Covert Operations: Clandestine Migration, Temporary Work and Immigration Policy in South Africa* (1997) ISBN 1-874864-51-9
2. *Riding the Tiger: Lesotho Miners and Permanent Residence in South Africa* (1997) ISBN 1-874864-52-7
3. *International Migration, Immigrant Entrepreneurs and South Africa's Small Enterprise Economy* (1997) ISBN 1-874864-62-4
4. *Silenced by Nation Building: African Immigrants and Language Policy in the New South Africa* (1998) ISBN 1-874864-64-0
5. *Left Out in the Cold? Housing and Immigration in the New South Africa* (1998) ISBN 1-874864-68-3
6. *Trading Places: Cross-Border Traders and the South African Informal Sector* (1998) ISBN 1-874864-71-3
7. *Challenging Xenophobia: Myth and Realities about Cross-Border Migration in Southern Africa* (1998) ISBN 1-874864-70-5
8. *Sons of Mozambique: Mozambican Miners and Post-Apartheid South Africa* (1998) ISBN 1-874864-78-0
9. *Women on the Move: Gender and Cross-Border Migration to South Africa* (1998) ISBN 1-874864-82-9.
10. *Namibians on South Africa: Attitudes Towards Cross-Border Migration and Immigration Policy* (1998) ISBN 1-874864-84-5.
11. *Building Skills: Cross-Border Migrants and the South African Construction Industry* (1999) ISBN 1-874864-84-5
12. *Immigration & Education: International Students at South African Universities and Technikons* (1999) ISBN 1-874864-89-6
13. *The Lives and Times of African Immigrants in Post-Apartheid South Africa* (1999) ISBN 1-874864-91-8
14. *Still Waiting for the Barbarians: South African Attitudes to Immigrants and Immigration* (1999) ISBN 1-874864-91-8
15. *Undermining Labour: Migrancy and Sub-contracting in the South African Gold Mining Industry* (1999) ISBN 1-874864-91-8
16. *Borderline Farming: Foreign Migrants in South African Commercial Agriculture* (2000) ISBN 1-874864-97-7
17. *Writing Xenophobia: Immigration and the Press in Post-Apartheid South Africa* (2000) ISBN 1-919798-01-3
18. *Losing Our Minds: Skills Migration and the South African Brain Drain* (2000) ISBN 1-919798-03-x
19. *Botswana: Migration Perspectives and Prospects* (2000) ISBN 1-919798-04-8
20. *The Brain Gain: Skilled Migrants and Immigration Policy in Post-Apartheid South Africa* (2000) ISBN 1-919798-14-5
21. *Cross-Border Raiding and Community Conflict in the Lesotho-South African Border Zone* (2001) ISBN 1-919798-16-1

22. *Immigration, Xenophobia and Human Rights in South Africa* (2001) ISBN 1-919798-30-7
23. *Gender and the Brain Drain from South Africa* (2001) ISBN 1-919798-35-8
24. *Spaces of Vulnerability: Migration and HIV/AIDS in South Africa* (2002) ISBN 1-919798-38-2
25. *Zimbabweans Who Move: Perspectives on International Migration in Zimbabwe* (2002) ISBN 1-919798-40-4
26. *The Border Within: The Future of the Lesotho-South African International Boundary* (2002) ISBN 1-919798-41-2
27. *Mobile Namibia: Migration Trends and Attitudes* (2002) ISBN 1-919798-44-7
28. *Changing Attitudes to Immigration and Refugee Policy in Botswana* (2003) ISBN 1-919798-47-1

PUBLISHED BY:

SOUTHERN AFRICAN MIGRATION PROJECT  
6 Spin Street  
Church Square  
Cape Town 8001

and

SOUTHERN AFRICAN RESEARCH CENTRE  
Queen's University  
Kingston  
Canada



PARTNERS:

Queen's University (Canada)  
Idasa (South Africa)  
Sechaba Consultants (Lesotho)  
ARPAC (Mozambique)  
University of Zimbabwe  
MRC, University of Namibia  
ITPPSD, University of Botswana  
University of Swaziland  
P&DM, Wits University

This project is funded by the  
Canadian government through the  
Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)  
and the British government through the  
Department for International Development (DFID)

