

HUSBAND IMMOBILITY AND THE INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION OF MARRIED  
WOMEN FROM ZIMBABWE

by

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## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis examined husband immobility and the international migration of married women from Zimbabwe. Data was collected from husbands and wives in married couple households where the wife had migrated alone. Face-to-face semi structured interviews were conducted with migrant women's husbands in Zimbabwe while migrant women were interviewed in countries of destination telephonically. Empirical results showed that migrant women and their husbands were middle aged. Preferred countries of destination were in the region and the United Kingdom. Having a wife's own social contacts in the preferred destination encouraged migration by reducing financial and emotional costs. Husbands' immobility facilitated wifely migration. Many wives exercised agency in migration decision making with more wives than husbands having initiated the discussion on migration. There were also cases of joint and wife sole decision making. With a few exceptions decision making was consensual. The women migrated as a survival strategy. In several households remittances were the primary source of income. Husbands were the main recipients of remittances. Some wives gave instructions on how the remittances should be used. Overall, remittances were used for paying fees, buying assets and for household upkeep. Some of the women had not visited their families since their migration. The physical separation of spouses had caused emotional distress in some marital relationships. The majority of respondents cited loss of consortium as a major problem.

**Key words:** international migration, husband immobility, wifely migration, migrant women, remittances, decision making, family, marriage, networks, gender relations, empowerment, economic crisis, migration theories, diaspora, culture, norms, Gweru, Zimbabwe.

## DECLARATION

I declare that I have composed this thesis, that it is my own work and that it has not been submitted for any other degree.

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A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Cmadebwe".

6 June, 2014

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## ACRONYMS

AFP	Agence France-Presse
APWLD	Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development
CCJP	Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace
CDE	Centre for Development and Enterprise
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CSO	Central Statistical Office
DFID	Department for International Development
ESAP	Economic Structural Adjustment Programme
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
GCIM	Global Commission on International Migration
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNP	Gross National Product
ICG	International Crisis Group
ICT	Information and communication technology
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
ILO	International Labour Office
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IMI	International Migration Institute
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IRIN	Integrated Regional Information Networks
ITUC	International Trade Union Confederation
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change
ODA	Official Developmental Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
SAIIA	South African Institute of International Affairs
TCPL	Total Consumption Poverty Line

UN	United Nations
UNAIDS	The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Education and Scientific Organisation
UNESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNGASS	United Nations General Assembly Special Session
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UN-INSTRAW	The United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women
UNRISD	United Nations Institute for Social Development
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
ZANU (PF)	Zimbabwe African National Union (Patriotic Front)
ZAPU	Zimbabwe African People's Union

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	ii
Declaration	iii
Acknowledgement	iv
Acronyms	v
List of maps	xii
List of tables	xiii
List of figures	xiii

### CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background	1
1.2 Gender and migration	3
1.2.1 The absence of women in early migration literature	3
1.2.2 Feminisation of migration	5
1.3 Statement of the problem	7
1.4 Objectives	10
1.5 Research Questions	11
1.6 Significance of the research	11
1.7 Study Area	12
1.8 Thesis Structure	16

### CHAPTER 2: CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND TO MIGRATION FROM ZIMBABWE

2.1 Introduction	18
2.2 Zimbabwe's migration phases	19
2.2.1 The first phase of migration (war of liberation to 1990)	19
2.2.2 The second phase of migration (1991-1997)	20
2.2.3 The third phase of migration (1998-current)	21
2.3 Causes of recent migration from Zimbabwe	22
2.3.1 The political context to migration from Zimbabwe	

after the year 2000	22
2.3.2 The economic context to migration from Zimbabwe	
after year 2000	25
2.3.3 The social context to migration from Zimbabwe	
after the year 2000	27
2.4 Composition of Zimbabwe's migrants	28
2.5 Migration management in Zimbabwe	29
2.6 Conclusion	30
<b>CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK</b>	
3.1 Introduction	31
3.2 Theories that explain the initiation of international migration	31
3.2.1 Neo-classical economic theory	32
3.2.2 The New Economics of Labour Migration Theory (NELM)	36
3.2.3 World systems theory	38
3.2.4 The Segmented or dual labour market theory	40
3.2.5 Relative Deprivation	41
3.3 Theories that explain the perpetuation of	
international migration	42
3.3.1 Migrant Networks	42
3.3.2 Migration systems theory	43
3.4 Immobility	45
3.5 Social factors underlying married women's migration decision	47
3.5.1 Gender norms	48
3.5.2 Gender roles	49
3.5.3 Gender relations	50
3.6 Economic and social impacts of married women's	
labour migration	50
3.6.1 Economic impact of married women's migration	50



3.6.1.1 Impact of remittances on household income	51
3.6.1.2 Impact of remittances on household poverty reduction	52
3.6.2 Social impact of married women’s migration	53
3.6.2.1 Impact on marital relationships	53
3.6.2.2 Impact on gender roles	54
3.6.2.3 International labour migration and the empowerment of women migrants	55
3.7 Conclusion	60
<b>CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY</b>	
4.1 Introduction	62
4.2 Research philosophy	62
4.3 Research design	63
4.4 Sample selection	65
4.5 Research Methods	67
4.5.1 Questionnaire survey	67
4.5.2 Questionnaire for non-migrant husbands	68
4.5.3 Questionnaire for migrant wife	68
4.5.4 Semi-structured interviews	68
4.5.5 Semi-structured interviews with non-migrant husbands	69
4.5.6 Telephone based interviews with migrant wives	74
4.5.7 Focus group discussion	76
4.6 Reliability and validity	77
4.7 Challenges faced	78
4.8 Pretesting	80

4.9 Strengths and limitations of the research	80
4.10 Ethical considerations	81
4.11 Data Analysis	81
4.11.1 Quantitative data analysis	82
4.11.2 Qualitative data analysis	82
4.12 Field diary	88
4.13 Conclusion	88

## **CHAPTER 5: BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS**

5.1 Introduction	89
5.2 Main sample characteristics	89
5.3 Household characteristics	92
5.4 Labour market activity of respondent husbands and wives	93
5.5 Countries of migration	96
5.6 Reasons for selecting destination country	97
5.7 How migrant women's migration was financed and supported	97
5.8 Support that women received at destination	98
5.9 Migrant women's immigration status at destination	99
5.10 Conclusion	100

## **CHAPTER 6: HUSBAND IMMOBILITY AND MIGRATION DECISION MAKING IN COUPLE HOUSEHOLDS**

6.1 Introduction	101
6.2 Migration decision making in couple households	101
6.3 Did husbands' immobility facilitate wives' migration?	107

6.3.1 Unquestioned immobility/expected immobility	110
6.3.2 Contextual immobility	115
6.3.2.1 Passports	116
6.3.2.2 Preferred destinations	120
6.3.3 Impeded mobility	122
6.3.4 Satisfied/Preferred immobility	123
6.3.5 Role played by husbands' immobility in wife's migration	127
6.4 Perception about migration	128
6.4. 1 Wives' perception of their migration	129
6.4.2 Husbands' perceptions of their wives' migration	132
6.5 Conclusion	134
 <b>CHAPTER 7: ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL IMPACT OF MARRIED WOMEN'S MIGRATION ON FAMILIES AT ORIGIN</b>	
7.1 Introduction	136
7.2 Economic impact of married women's migration on families left behind	136
7.3 Social impact of married women's migration	140
7.3.1 Impact of married women's migration on marital relationships	141
7.3.2 Impact of married women's migration on gender roles	148
7.3.3 Impact of migration on conjugal family's stability	153
7.3.4 Impact of migration on financial relationships in migrant families	159
7.3.5 Impact of married women's migration on relationships with the extended family	162

7.4 Conclusion	166
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## **CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSIONS**

8.1 Introduction	168
------------------	-----

8.2 Overview of the thesis	168
----------------------------	-----

8.3 Limitations	170
-----------------	-----

8.4 The thesis's contributions to knowledge	171
---	-----

8.4.1 Methodological contributions	171
------------------------------------	-----

8.4.2 Theoretical contributions	171
---------------------------------	-----

8.4.2.1 The role of husbands' immobility in wifely migration	172
--	-----

8.4.2.2 Migration decision making	173
-----------------------------------	-----

8.4.2.3 Empowerment of married women through migration	174
--	-----

8.5 Areas for further research	175
--------------------------------	-----

8.6 Policy recommendations	175
----------------------------	-----

<b>REFERENCES</b>	177
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## **APPENDICES**

Appendix 1: Ethical clearance	226
-------------------------------	-----

Appendix 2: Consent form	227
--------------------------	-----

Appendix 3: Questionnaire for non migrant husband	228
---	-----

Appendix 4: Questionnaire for migrant woman	241
---	-----

Appendix 5: Questions for a focus group discussion	254
--	-----

## **LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS**

### **LIST OF MAPS**

Map 1.1	Location of Gweru in Zimbabwe	14
Map 1.2	Location of Gweru in the Midlands Province	15
Map 1.3	Spatial Distribution of Residential Areas in Gweru	15

## **LIST OF TABLES**

Table 4.1	Interview sites	70
Table 4.2	Research participants' responses to request for an interview	72
Table 4.3	Migrant wives by country of migration	76
Table 4.4	Thematic framework used for data classification and analysis	85
Table 4.5	A case analytical matrix used to capture the migration history of couples	87
Table 4.6	A theme analytical matrix used to collect information from husbands on why it is the wife who migrated and not the husband	87
Table 5.1	Characteristics of respondents	89
Table 5.2	Household characteristics	92
Table 5.3	Labour market status of respondents	93
Table 5.4	Reasons for choosing a destination country	97
Table 5.5	How migration was financed and supported	97
Table 5.6	Types of support that women received from social networks	98
Table 7.1	Remittances as proportion of household income	136
Table 7.2	Use of remittances by recipient households	137
Table 7.3	Reverse remittances	140
Table 7.4	People that disapproved of wives' migration	141
Table 7.5	Expected year for wives' permanent return	148
Table 7.6	Mode of communication with family	154
Table 7.7	Frequency of communication with the family at origin	155
Table 7.8	Number of visits	158
Table 7.9	Recipient of remittances	159

## **LIST OF FIGURES**

Figure 5.1	Migrant women's destination countries	96
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Figure 5.2	Migrant women's immigration status at destination	99
Figure 6.1	A model for explaining the link between husbands' immobility and the migration of married women	127

*'Do not go where the path may lead, go instead where there is no path and leave a trail'*  
(Ralph Waldo Emerson).

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

International migration is a dynamic global phenomenon. In 2008, 214 million people or 3.1% of the global population were living outside of their country of birth (United Nations 2009). While movement is in either direction, the United Nations estimates that 37% of international migrants move from developing to developed countries and 3% in the reverse direction (United Nations 2009). Over half the world's migrants move within developing countries (International Organization for Migration (IOM) 2005a; Mora 2006; United Nations 2006; United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) 2006). Historically and in contemporary times (voluntary) migration has been undertaken for a plethora of reasons ranging from education, employment, family re-unification, family formation, asylum and return migration (Carling 2001). Family migration flows to the United States of America, Portugal and France as proportion of total permanent flows are 70%, 62.1% and 59% respectively (OECD 2008). However, worldwide labour migrants are the fastest growing category of migrants (UNFPA & International Migration Policy Programme 2004: 48; UNFPA 2005).

International migration is a contentious issue and has gained currency in academic discourses, social and political movements (Carletto & de Brauw 2007; Bloch, 2009; Vertovec 2009; van der Velde & van Naerssen 2010). Many countries are opposed to mass immigration and have adopted policies to reduce unrestricted migration while allowing specialized labour to fill sector specific needs particularly in the information and communications technologies (ICT) sector (Talani, Wolff, Henrard & Thielemann 2003; van der Velde & van Naerssen 2010). The United Kingdom, Australia, Canada and New Zealand, for example, use a selective skills-based criterion in the admission of migrants and charge exorbitant fees for work permits. In addition to these constraints, people's ability to migrate is limited by social network constraints, prohibitive relocation costs and non-transferability of human capital (Becker 1962; Vogler & Rotte 2000; Carling 2001; Hatton & Williamson 2002; Konseiga 2007; Zaiceva & Zimmermann 2008). For these reasons, many people are in essence involuntary non-migrants due to substantial barriers to mobility.



Opposition to migration in receiving countries derives from perceived fear of overcrowding, labour and housing competition, overloading of the welfare system and threats to national identities (van der Velde & van Naerssen 2010). In addition, trade unions in developed countries are opposed to a regime of unrestricted labour mobility fearing job losses and a perceived corresponding decline in wages. According to the United Nations (2010), many governments seek to manage migration by restricting instances of family re-unification. For example, family members of temporary migrants are denied entry visas and work permits in half of all developing countries and a third of developed countries.

In some migrant sending countries particularly where returns to education are perceived to be low, loss of skills through migration is considered a major problem. For instance between 2000 and 2010, 12.7% of all people with a tertiary education including 30.7% and 24.2% of locally trained physicians and nurses respectively had migrated from Zimbabwe (World Bank 2011). Malawi has lost 90% of locally trained physicians. In Zambia, only 50 out of 600 physicians trained in the country's medical school between 1978 and 1999 are retained by the public sector. The Philippines sends out 14 000 nurses annually to the United States of America, Saudi Arabia, Ireland and Britain while 50% of registered nurses in New Zealand are from foreign countries (World Bank 2006a). Despite opposition to migration by both sending and receiving countries, labour mobility is nonetheless a significant factor in global socio-economic transformation (ILO 2003a; Lowell 2007).

Although there is contradictory empirical evidence regarding the developmental impact of migration on sending and receiving countries, remittances from developed to developing countries nevertheless total nearly two thirds of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) flows and double Official Developmental Assistance (ODA) (World Bank 2006; Carletto & de Brauw 2007; Ratha, Mohapatra, Vijayalakshmi & Xu 2007). In 2006, remittances contributed 1.6% to Africa's Gross National Product (GNP). In Lesotho, Gambia and Cape Verde the contribution of remittances to GNP was 25%, 13% and 12% respectively (Lindley 2008). In Uganda, Bangladesh and Ghana remittances reduced by 11%, 6% and 5% respectively the proportion of the population living in poverty (Adams 2006; World Bank 2006). In 1999, migrant remittances in Egypt were 26% of exports and contributed 4% to the GNP.

In the Philippines, South Korea, Turkey, Mexico, India and Barbados international migration is a socio-economic development strategy of the government. Remittances sent by migrants contribute significantly to national economies in these countries (Bakewell 2007). However, there are concerns regarding the welfare and rights of migrants (de Haan 2000; International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) 2010). This is particularly evident in the case of undocumented migrants. During and after migration women in particular face risks of physical and sexual violence, social and labour market discrimination and trafficking (Piper 2003; UNFPA & International Migration Policy Programme 2004: 44; Vargas-Lundius, Lanly, Villarreal & Osorio 2008). Because of the many diverse forms of migration and the gendered impact of the migration process, gender sensitive research in migration is necessary for effective policy formulation that helps to engender migration.

## **1.2 Gender and migration**

### 1.2.1 The absence of women in early migration literature

According to the United Nations General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) (2004), women have always participated in international migration. By 1960 the proportion of female migrants in international migration flows approximated that of migrant men (de Haan 2000; Mora 2006; Pina-Guerassimoff 2006; Lomellin 2008; Munduate 2008; Zaiceva & Zimmermann 2008). As participants in the labour market, migrant women contribute to the social and economic welfare of their families, countries of origin and destination (Anja & Spehar 2010). Yet migrant women's role in migration processes and their experiences were not written about in early migration literature (Kofman, Phizacklea, Parvati & Sales 2000; Lutz 2008).

Whereas male mobility was considered the norm, women were assumed to remain in areas of origin to take care of reproductive work. This category of work is diverse and includes domestic and agricultural work, care of dependent children, the elderly and the disabled. In the event that women migrated their migration was classed as associational or for family reunification (Piper 2003; Dannecker & Sieveking 2009). The perception of women as dependants was also supported by the 1949 International Labour Organization's conceptualisation of a migrant worker's family as his wife and minor children (ILO 1999). While there was explicit recognition of the participation of women in family migration, this form of migration did not attract the interest of researchers till the mid-1980s (Dumon 1989).

However, historical research studies of migration show that some women travelled independently (Dannecker & Sieveking 2009). In other cases where the reason for initial migration was associational, some women subsequently joined the labour force after migrating (Phizacklea 1983; Morokvasic 1984; Kofman 1999; Chant 2003; Yinger 2006).

It is only in the past 30 years that migration researchers have sought to make women visible in migration flows (Cerrutti & Massey 2001; King & Zontini 2000; Jolly & Reeves 2005; Anthias & Cederberg 2006). The work of feminist researchers in the 1960s and 1970s created interest in the study of the migration of women. The first such studies were undertaken predominantly by female researchers who wrote exclusively about the migration of women (Pedraza 1991; Hondagneu-Sotelo & Cranford 1999; United Nations 2006). By adopting this approach the researchers wanted to compensate for the exclusion of women as migration subjects in early migration scholarship. Additionally, the approach was meant to counteract sexist biases in early migration studies (Campani 2007).

Accordingly, in the compensatory women-centred studies of migration, gender was conceived as meaning 'women' (Carling 2005: GCIM. 2005). Inevitably these studies replicated the gender bias of early migration literature through the exclusion of a male perspective to migration (Boyd & Grieco 2003; Pessar & Mahler 2003). Apart from women-only studies there were also the 'add women and stir' studies (Hondagneu-Sotelo 2003). These studies sought to compare characteristics of migrant men and women. They incorporated gender by inserting the variable sex during data collection (Carling 2005; Piper 2005; Pfeiffer, Richter, Fletcher & Taylor 2008:12). Study subjects were categorized by demographic sub-population groups to yield descriptive statistics on age, education, and timing of migration and labour market participation of male and female migrants (Hondagneu-Sotelo 2003). Like the women-centred studies, the approach generated information about women's participation in migration but failed to explain the role that gender plays in the migration of men and women (Salih 2006). Including women as a variable in such studies did not adequately explain the dynamic social relations that exist between men and women.

It was during the 1980s and early 1990s that migration scholarship incorporated gender as a set of social practices shaping and shaped by migration (Kofman 2000; Willis & Yeoh 2000; Hondagneu-Sotelo 2003; Piper 2005). The shift in approach was precipitated by the

recognition that migration has a social context. Men and women have unequal power which causes differences in their migration behaviour. The migration decision itself is gendered and is affected by gender power relations, gender roles, hierarchies and resources (United Nations 2006; Biao 2007; Radel & Schmook 2009). Gender determines access to information, social networks, migration opportunities and outcomes (de la Brière, de Janvry, Sadoulet & Lambert 2002; Boyd & Grieco 2003; UNGASS 2004; Jolly & Reeves 2005; Semyonov & Gorodzeisky 2005; Morrison, Schiff & Sjöblom 2007; Pfeiffer & Taylor 2007; UN-INSTRAW 2007). Therefore, a gender-specific analysis of migration allows for differentiated documentation of the diverse forms of migration and experiences of men and women (Boyd & Grieco 2003:6; Jolly & Reeves 2005; Pfeiffer, Richter, Fletcher & Taylor 2005; 2006; United Nations 2006). While a gender analysis has made women visible in migration streams the feminization of migration has exposed several issues about the migration of women that need to be addressed (Lipszyc 2004; IOM 2005a).

### 1.2.2 Feminisation of migration

An important aspect of international migration is its feminisation (Castles & Miller 2003; Hugo 2005a). Half of all the world's migrants are women although proportions vary by country and region from majority female in Asia and Latin America to majority male in Africa (Houston, Kramer & Barret 1984; Simon & Brettell 1986; Ong 1991; Gabaccia 1996; Donato, Gabaccia, Holdaway, Manalansan & Pessar 2006; UNESCO 2004; UNFPA 2006:5; United Nations 2006; Yinger 2006; Morrison, Schiff & Sjöblom 2008:1; Anja & Spehar 2010). There is a growing number of women now who make independent decisions to migrate alone to take up paid employment abroad and are the sole income earners for their families (Moreno-Fontes Chammartin 2001; Sharpe 2001; IOM 2003; GCIM 2005; Oso Casas & Garson 2005; UNFPA-IOM 2006; Paiewonsky 2007; UN-INSTRAW 2007; Guerrero & Sobritchea 2010:i; Mane 2011).

Feminisation of migration has a broader meaning than just denoting a quantitative increase in the number of female migrants. The concept also refers to greater visibility of women in migration research than was the case in early migration literature (Dannecker & Sieveking 2009). In the past few decades there has been sustained interest to document the role and experiences of women throughout all phases of migration, starting with their exit from countries of origin, their entry and settlement in destination countries and their return

migration (Harzig 2001: 16). Feminisation of migration is also associated with the emergence of female only forms of migration as in state organized migration of women into care and domestic services, mail brides and trafficking of women for sex work (Moreno-Fontes 2006).

There are multiple reasons for the migration of women. Women migrate for economic reasons in response to male unemployment, limited livelihood opportunities at origin and labour market policies that discourage women from working (Adepoju 2004; OECD 2004; GCIM 2005; Piper 2006; UNFPA 2006; Bakewell 2007; Kabeer 2007; Mendola 2008; Phalane 2010; ILO 2011; Razavi, Arza, Braunstein, Cook & Goulding 2012). The economic crisis in some Asian countries in 1997 and in Ecuador in 1998 led to the migration of women as a household survival strategy (UNFPA 2006). Other factors that encourage female migration include changing gender roles in countries of origin, the rise in female education, the development of gender specific economic niches, the expansion in the service economy and export-oriented industrialization driven by foreign direct investment (FDI) (de Haan 2000; Sassen 2001; UNRISD 2005; Pyle 2006; Spaan & van Moppes 2006; Gaye & Jha 2011). Migration of women is also facilitated by gender selective policies in some developed countries. In Spain for instance, the domestic service sector is unregulated allowing for easy entry of women migrants (UN-INSTRAW 2007). Apart from economic motives, women also migrate for non-economic reasons (Kim 2010; United Nations 2006). For example, some women's migration is associational, while others migrate for education, marriage, family reunification or to escape oppressive family relationships and unhappy marriages (Gamburd 2000; Pearson 2000: 34; Horgan 2001; Jolly & Reeves 2005; ILO 2011).

Feminisation of migration has exposed the many challenges faced by migrant women. Although male and female migrant workers occupy the lowest jobs at destination, migrant women workers are over-represented in traditional and secluded female labour sectors not covered by labour regulation or social security (Anker 1997; Pearson 2000:34; ILO 2003b; IOM 2003a; Moreno-Fontes Chammartin 2004; Piper 2005; Anja & Spehar 2010; ILO 2011). A possible explanation is that men relative to women have the requisite labour skills that enable them to have better paying jobs due to gendered access to education and gender segmented labour markets (Deshingkar 2004; Boyd 2006; Worku 2007; Vargas-Lundius, Lanly, Villarreal & Osorio 2008; UNAIDS 2012:3). Even where men and women have the same qualifications and skills there are gender differentials in access to employment,

occupational mobility and remuneration (Horgan 2001; Purcell 2002; Deshingkar 2005; Mendola 2008; Ghosh, 2009; ILO 2011).

Although migration offers men and women opportunities to improve their lives, there are contradictory views about the impact of migration on women (Horgan 2001; UNFPA & International Migration Policy Programme 2004: 14; Carling 2005; GCIM 2005). The optimistic view is that migration empowers women by giving them personal and financial independence (Hugo 2000: 287; IOM 2002; Chant & Craske 2003; GCIM 2005; IOM 2006: 25; Mahler & Pessar 2006; UNFPA 2006; UNFPA-IOM 2006; Martin 2007; UNDP 2009; Anja & Spehar 2010; Phalane 2010; Mane 2011). Pessimistic studies, on the other hand, suggest that migration of women may in fact perpetuate pre-existing gender inequalities (UN 2006; UN-INSTRAW 2006: 6; Tolstokorova 2010).

However, in spite of efforts to document the migration of women, there are still several aspects of their migration and its consequences that have been given limited attention (OECD 2009). In view of these gaps in knowledge there is a continued need for gender based analyses in international migration studies in order to highlight differences between the migration of men and women. This is desirable so as to enable the formulation of appropriate gender-specific policies that safeguard and improve the welfare of migrants (GCIM 2005; IOM 2005a; IOM 2005b).

### **1.3 Statement of the problem**

In Zimbabwe, international migration has reached unprecedented levels (Kiwanuka & Monson 2009; IOM 2011). Spatial labour mobility has become a structural element of the Zimbabwean society and economy. After year 2000, the country became predominantly a migrant sending country and is now ranked among the top ten emigration countries in sub-Saharan Africa (World Bank 2011:33). In the last decade, an estimated three to four million people or approximately a quarter of the country's population emigrated (UN-INSTRAW & SAIIA 2006; IRIN 2009; IOM 2010). Migration pressure is very high as evidenced by monthly deportations. South Africa deported an average of 17 000 Zimbabweans per month in 2007 compared to 4 000 in 2004 (Centre for Development and Enterprise (CDE) 2008; Leslie 2008). Further evidence is provided by statistics of asylum seekers. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in 2009, Zimbabwe had the

greatest number of people in the world seeking asylum (158 200) (AFRIK-NEWS 16 June, 2010).

High emigration from the country is linked to asymmetries in the national labour market and lack of long-term economic prospects (Fleischer 2007). The volatile socio-political environment typified by intense, episodic and cyclical farm invasions and evictions that started in 2002, the destruction of informal settlements in 2005 (Code named Operation Murambatsvina), political violence after the March 2008 presidential elections and severe financial instability fuelled emigration (CDE 2008; Bloch 2008; IOM 2009; Kiwanuka & Monson 2009; IOM 2010). Although considerably understated, the month on month inflation rate reached 213 million percent in July 2008 (Government of Zimbabwe & United Nations Country Team 2010). Thus, the dire economic situation caused many households to adopt migration as a survival strategy. Major migrant receiving countries include the United Kingdom, Botswana, the United States of America, South Africa and Canada (IOM 2005a).

Unlike the historically male dominated migration to South African mines, the migration of women from Zimbabwe is a recent development. Although macro-level and micro-level data limitation makes it difficult to determine the exact number of migrant women, the IOM (2011) estimated that in 2010, the proportion of female migrants from Zimbabwe was between 37.8% and 50%. The migration literature often portrays married women as victims of male migration. Unravelling the multifactor dynamics of the migration process of women remains a daunting task because women are not a homogenous group. Migrant women fall into four groups, namely married women migrating for employment or in association and single women migrating for employment or for marriage (Thadani & Todaro 1984). Champion (1992) suggested that it is more useful to study subgroups of migrants within the migration streams in order to analyze their migration within the relevant societal context. This thesis focuses specifically on the migration of married women.

Socio-cultural factors impact on married women's ability to migrate as principal wage earners (United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women 2004). In particular, social legitimacy for the international migration of married women is necessary before a critical mass of married women migrates. According to Tacoli (1999) creating an enabling environment for women's migration requires renegotiation of normative roles within the precincts of gender ideologies and social acceptability to avert conflict. Married women

migrants have varying obligations and expectations that affect the balance of conjugal power. Because of the importance of marriage in the family system, sole migration of a married woman may have a lasting impact on family dynamics (Wahyuni 2005).

In particular, transnational maternal labour migration is presumed to disrupt and modify structures and processes of family life to the extent of causing the adoption of variant models of parenting and child care forms. In addition, it also affects the emotional and psychosocial roles of members of households. Although results are mixed, children are assumed to suffer from multiple psychosocial effects associated with maternal migration like lack of self esteem, feelings of abandonment and loneliness (Bakker, Elings-Pels & Reis 2009; Graham & Jordan 2011). The behaviour may be externalised in the form of violence, anger and other forms of anti-social behaviour. Children left behind may also perform poorly at school and suffer from poor health. Despite obvious financial benefits from wifely migration, non-migrant husbands may experience difficulties associated with gender role reversal. They may become addicted to alcohol and drugs when financial dependency on their wives and performing care responsibilities is seen to undermine their sense of masculinity.

Due to the many social consequences associated with it, migration of married women is perceived as atypical and, therefore, socially unacceptable (Jolly & Reeves 2005; Parrenas 2005; Raimundo 2005). Men's migration is considered part of their breadwinning role and therefore, less disruptive to families (Kumari & Shamim 2007; Bakker, Elings-Pels & Reis 2009; IOM 2009a). Women's migration on the other hand is seen as undermining traditional family norms, family cohesion and familial relations (Cabanés & Acedera 2012; UN Women 2013). Not surprisingly, people make disparaging comments about married women who migrate alone (Bastia & Busse 2011) and vilify them for wanting to become social men (Carling 2005).

While it is practically feasible for single people to migrate in order to exploit employment opportunities elsewhere, being married is associated with a reduced propensity to migrate particularly among women (van Dalen, Groenewold & Schoorl 2004). Women's immobility is highly valued in order for them to fulfil their production and reproduction roles (Carling 2005; Lutz 2010). Social norms about the inappropriateness of women migrating alone restrict their migration (Hampshire 2002:25; Holst, Schafer & Schrooten 2011). Kenyan women, for instance, are constrained by patriarchal sanctions from taking advantage of



employment opportunities in urban areas (Agesa 2003). If they migrate they may have to endure intensely contested intra-household negotiations in order to circumvent conjugal power (Jacobsen & Levin 2000).

According to prevailing patriarchal norms, a married woman in Zimbabwe would not ordinarily leave home without her husband's permission if she wanted to maintain union stability. This thesis posits that a husband's immobility creates an enabling environment for a married woman to strategize and negotiate her own migration. She can use a husband's immobility to circumvent conjugal power since her decision to migrate does not supplant that of her husband. In fact, a married woman who migrates in the context of her husband's immobility could represent this as being highly opportunistic and having been thrust upon her by her husband's inability to migrate or to provide for his family. It is also opportunistic because national economic instability in the last decade severely limited the supply of household economic resources to such an extent that livelihoods were dependent largely on non-conventional sources. Thus, a fortuitous combination of husbands' immobility and severe economic hardships may have weakened patriarchal constraints on married women's mobility and assisted them to get support for their migration.

#### **1.4 Objectives**

The research seeks to:

- Identify socio-demographic characteristics of migrant wives and their stay behind husbands.
- Ascertain kinship and/or recruitment networks that may have supported the migration of married women.
- Examine factors that led to the decision for the migration of married women rather than their husbands.
- Examine whether married women had autonomy to make the decision to migrate.
- Examine whether husbands' immobility enabled women to circumvent conjugal power and negotiate their own migration.
- Examine why husbands with migrant wives were immobile.

- Assess how husbands feel about their wives' migration.
- Analyse economic and social impacts of married women's migration on their families at origin.

### **1.5 Research Questions**

The following are the empirical research questions that the thesis will focus on:

What socio-demographic characteristics distinguish migrant wives from their left-behind husbands?

What kinship and/or recruitment networks supported married women's migration?

Did husbands' immobility enable married women to circumvent conjugal power and negotiate their own migration?

How do non-migrant husbands explain their immobility?

Did married women have autonomy in migration decision making?

What factors led to the decision for the migration of the wife rather than the husband?

How do husbands feel about the migration of their wives?

What are the economic and social impacts of married women's migration on their families at origin?

### **1.6 Significance of the research**

This research is important on account of substantial emigration of both men and women from Zimbabwe in the last decade (Kiwauka & Monson 2009; IOM 2010). It is also important because as far as I am aware no research was carried out in Zimbabwe targeting the migration of married women. Additionally, there are hardly any studies that have empirically examined interactions between husbands' immobility and the migration of their wives. Existing research on the independent migration of women has not explored what role husbands' immobility plays in the decision making process for married women's migration. Apart from work done by Resurreccion & Ha Thi Van Khan (2007) in Vietnam, there are hardly any empirical studies that focus on men as the ones left behind (Planning Commission 2008:

412), how they are affected by their wives' migration, why they are immobile and whether such a choice is voluntary. An examination of whether husbands' immobility increases married women's access to migration opportunities has potential to yield new insights on the migration of married women. In this regard, the thesis will contribute to debate on how gender relations mediate the macro and micro-level factors that influence the migration of women. The thesis will also reveal information on the extent to which women in conjugal relationships exercise agency in negotiating their migration with their husbands. Furthermore, while only 3% of the world's population are migrants, immobility has received little attention in the migration literature (Jonsson 2011).

This thesis hopes to fill these research gaps by exploring the interconnections between immobility and migration in couple families through profiling married women migrants, analyzing their motivations while simultaneously explaining immobility among their husbands and enquiring how this may have fed into the migration decision making processes and issues related to the wife's selection for migration. As a result of adopting this approach the thesis will add new perspectives to the context of migration decision making in couple households thereby contributing to an understanding of contemporary migration processes from Zimbabwe.

### **1.7 Study Area**

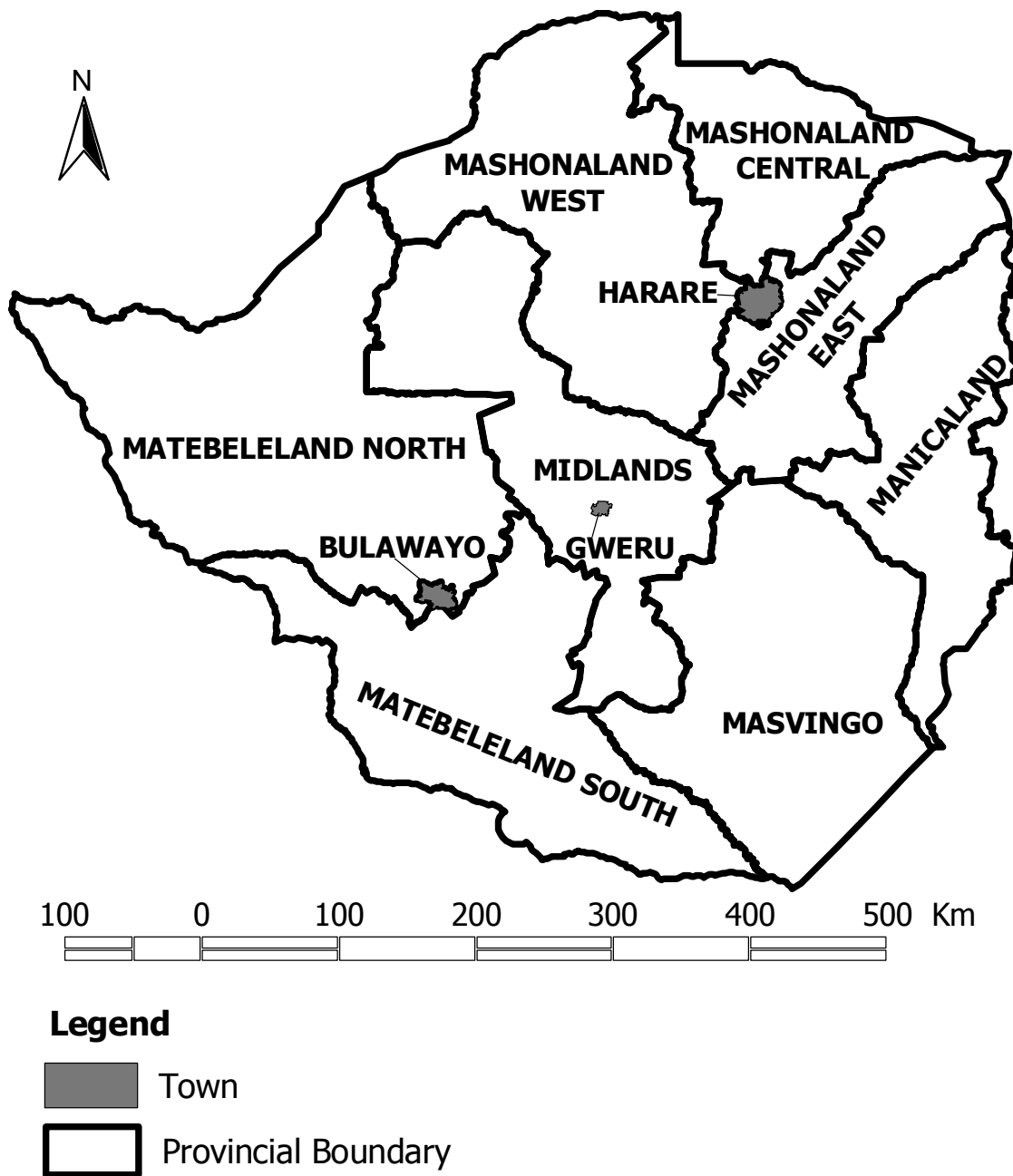
In 2002, Zimbabwe's population was 11.6 million distributed unevenly in 10 administrative provinces. Only two of the provinces, Harare and Bulawayo, are 100% urban (CSO 2002). In the rest of the provinces a large proportion of the population is rural. Thirty-five percent and 65% of the country's population lives in urban and rural areas respectively. The study was carried out in Gweru which is the administrative capital of the Midlands province. The province is the third most populous province in the country with a population of 1.46 million (CSO 2002).

Zimbabwe's towns have evolved following a pattern of primacy dominated by two large cities namely Harare (the capital city) and Bulawayo with populations of 1.89 million and 676 650 respectively (Mutizwa-Mangiza 1986). Based on rank-size distribution of urban settlements in Zimbabwe, Gweru is the third largest town in Zimbabwe. Its population in 2002 was 140 806 (CSO 2002). The town is located approximately midway between Harare and Bulawayo. Because of its central location in the country, Gweru has direct rail and road

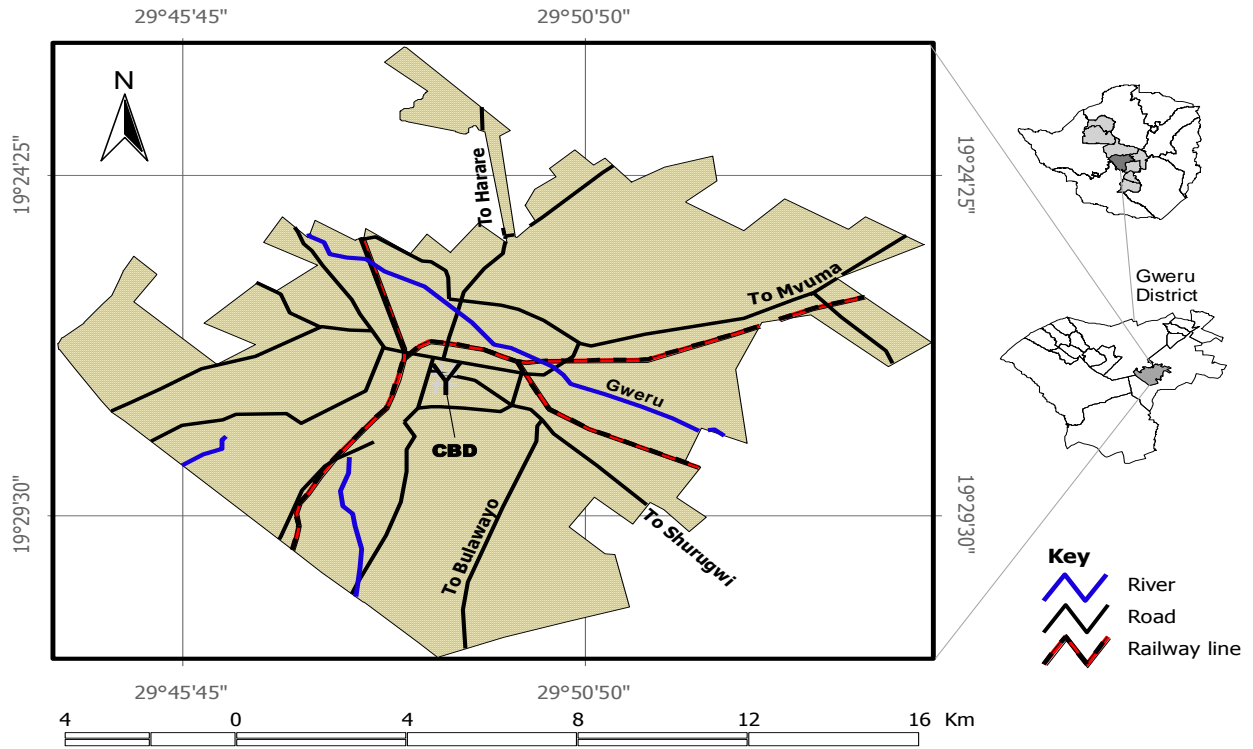
links with towns and cities throughout the country, which makes the town an important destination for inter-urban and rural migrants.

Towns were de-racialized at independence in 1980 to allow for inclusion in urban areas of formerly excluded racial groups. However, the pre-independence racial residential segregation as a criterion of exclusion has been replaced in the post independence period by residential segregation based on income (Munzwa & Wellington 2010). Urban residential areas are categorized into low, medium and high population density residential areas. Former white only designated suburbs are now known as low population density suburbs because plot sizes are large. Correspondingly, the former black townships are now known as high population density residential areas because plot sizes are considerably smaller allowing for clustered residential development.

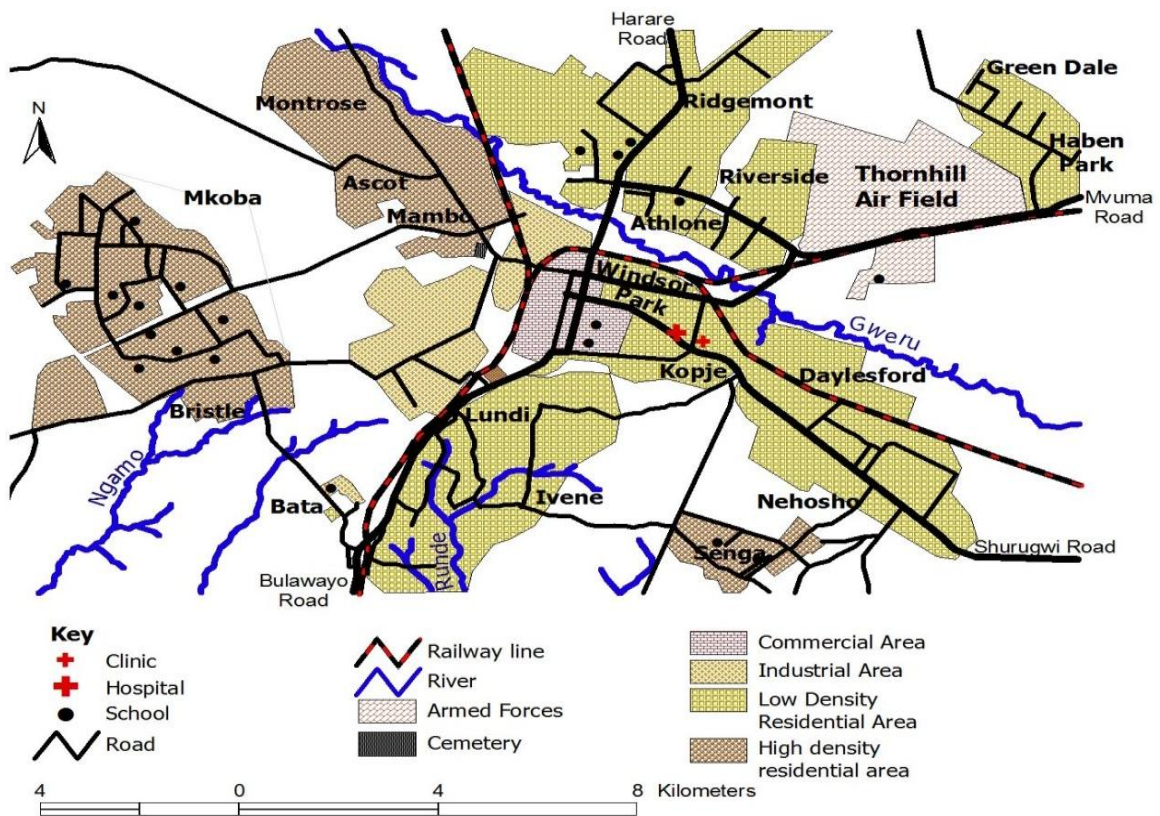
Decline in industry and manufacturing capacity in Gweru, like elsewhere throughout the country in the last decade, has caused unemployment and out-migration to rise due to a perception of lack of economic prospects. The study focused on married couple households in all residential areas with a migrant wife and a stay-behind husband in order to understand with regards to the former causes of migration and in the latter causes of immobility, among several other sub-themes to be investigated. Figure 1.1 and 1.2 show the case study location maps in Zimbabwe while Figure 1.3 shows the spatial distribution of residential areas in Gweru.



**Map 1.1 Location of Gweru in Zimbabwe**



**Map 1.2 Location of Gweru in the Midlands Province**



**Map 1.3 Spatial Distribution of Residential Areas in Gweru**

## 1.8 Thesis Structure

The thesis is presented in 8 chapters. The current chapter provides a general background to the thesis, outlines objectives and research questions. **Chapter 1** also discusses reasons for the lack of representation of women in early migration literature, factors causing the feminisation of labour markets and issues of concern regarding the feminisation of migration. The chapter also points out that the thesis has potential to add to knowledge about the extent to which married women in couple household exercise agency in negotiating their migration.

**Chapter 2** examines the historical, socio-economic and political context within which contemporary international migration from Zimbabwe is taking place. The chapter details causes of migration pressure. Political, economic and social instability that prevailed in the country after year 2000 are the major factors that are discussed.

**Chapter 3** presents a literature review of selected theories of migration. Because the theories were formulated to explain causes of migration rather than who migrates, the chapter also provides an evaluation of the relevance of these theories in explaining the migration of women. Secondly, the chapter explains immobility and outlines individual and structural causes of immobility. The chapter also discusses social factors that curtail women's ability to make independent migration decisions and socio-economic consequences of their migration.

**Chapter 4** provides a description of the research design and methods that were used to collect data. For migrant women the main data collection instrument was the telephone interview. Data from non-migrant husbands was collected using one focus group discussion, a questionnaire with closed and open ended-ended questions and semi-structured interviews. The chapter also describes reliability, validity and ethical issues.

**Chapter 5** profiles and describes main characteristics of migrant women and their husbands. The discussion covers sample characteristics such as age, education, duration of marriage, level of education, employment status, religion, size of the household, number of own children, immigration status and the role of social capital in supporting women's migration.

**Chapter 6** explores reasons for husbands' immobility and migration decision making in couple households where the wife migrates alone. The role of husband's immobility on wife's selection for migration is discussed.

**Chapter 7** discusses the economic and social impact of married women's migration on families at origin. The analysis covers an examination of size of remittances as proportion of household income, regularity of remitting and utility of remittances. An assessment is also made of the social impact of wives' migration on both husbands and wives.

**Chapter 8** is the concluding chapter. It synthesises the research findings and makes some suggestions for policy formulation.



## CHAPTER 2

### CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND TO MIGRATION FROM ZIMBABWE

#### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter chronicles migration phases and gives an overview of the contextual background to emigration from Zimbabwe in the last three decades. The country is one of ten top emigrating countries in Sub-Saharan Africa that include Mali, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Eritrea, Nigeria, Mozambique, South Africa, Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo (World Bank 2008a). Intensive emigration from Zimbabwe in the last decade masks the fact that for over a century the country was both a migrant sending and receiving country (Maphosa 2005). Before independence in 1980 immigrants came to Zimbabwe from Zambia, Malawi, Asia and Europe attracted by economic prospects in agriculture and mining (Tevera & Zinyama 2002). This is because during the 1980s the country was the fourth most industrialised country in Africa south of the Sahara with a middle income status supported by a diversified economy (Nhema 2002: 127; Sachikonye 2002: 130).

Buoyed by a sound economy and under pressure to redress past social inequalities and to fulfil electoral campaign promises, the government adopted redistributive socialist fiscal policies (UNDP 2008). Apart from offering free access to primary education and health the government also supported several social welfare programmes. Rapid expansion in these sectors created growth in public sector employment. Unfortunately, there was no corresponding increase in government revenue generation to pay for such increase in government expenditure. Increasingly, such free social services were financed by domestic and international loans (Bond 1998). This caused the budget deficit to grow to unsustainable levels such that by the mid-1980s the economy was in recession. The poor economic situation was exacerbated by the effects of successive droughts during the 1982/83 and 1984/1985 agricultural seasons, a fall in the demand for the country's exports and foreign investment (UNDP 2008). For these reasons there was a marked decline in national foreign currency reserves.

## **2.2 Zimbabwe's migration phases**

In the last 30 years, Zimbabwe has experienced substantial changes in the migration dynamics, causes and the composition of people engaged in migration. Emigration from Zimbabwe has never ceased since independence and can be discussed in three phases spanning the period before and after independence as outlined below. The phases are predicated on changes in the government's political and economic policy management of the country. The adoption and implementation of politically expedient policies in the decades following independence severely undermined the economy. The political, social and economic instability that ensued caused migration from the country (Kanyenze 2004).

### **2.2.1 The first phase of migration (war of liberation to 1990)**

Migration in the first phase encompasses the period spanning the war of independence (1960-1979) to the first decade after independence. Escalation of the war of liberation in 1972 caused an estimated 210 000 political exiles to leave the country. They went to various countries in southern and eastern Africa notably Zambia, Botswana, South Africa, Tanzania and Mozambique. At various periods during that time 75 000 unskilled labour migrants went to South Africa to work in the gold mines and farms (Makanya 1994). In the aftermath of independence there was an outflow of a small number of black professionals and 142 000 white Zimbabweans to South Africa, the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada and New Zealand. They migrated because they were disconcerted by the loss of power and privilege. They were also generally pessimistic about the country's future under a socialist government. Furthermore, they also had general security concerns or feared retribution (Tevera & Crush 2003:34; Bloch 2005). To make up for the skills loss associated with the migration of white skilled workers and professionals the government recruited expatriate workers. It also supported temporary migration to the United Kingdom, South Africa and former eastern bloc countries (East Germany and USSR) for the purposes of higher education (Chung and Ngara 1985).

Further migration during this period is attributed to political insurrection during 1982-1987 in Matabeleland and some parts of the Midlands Provinces. According to the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP) (1997) in early 1982 Zimbabwe had serious security threats in several parts of the country especially in the western part of the country. Groups of dissidents were killing civilians and destroying property. To contain the problem

the government responded by launching a brutal army operation conducted by the 5<sup>th</sup> Brigade which was a North Korean trained military outfit. CCJP (1997) estimated that a total of 20 000 civilians were massacred in Matabeleland and the Midlands Provinces. Those targeted were accused of harbouring dissidents. Peace was only restored after signing of the Unity Accord between ZANU PF and ZAPU in November 1987. This protracted violence caused the emigration of 5 000 people to South Africa, Botswana and Britain (Jackson 1994). Those who migrated were predominantly young male adults. They were especially harassed by soldiers of the 5<sup>th</sup> Brigade who accused them of either being dissidents, or supporting or sympathising with dissidents (Muzondidya & Gatsheni-Ndhlovu 2007).

### 2.2.2 The second phase of migration (1991-1997)

In the first decade after independence, the country was also bedevilled by economic problems that resulted in the adoption of the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) in October 1991. ESAP was meant to facilitate trade liberalisation, reduction of the budget deficit and deregulation of prices and wages (UNICEF 2011a). Another objective of ESAP was to reduce social spending by the government. This was to be achieved through removal of price controls, food subsidies, cost recovery in education and health and reduction of the number of workers in the public service. However, ESAP did not achieve the desired results. By 1995 the budget deficit was over eight percent of GDP compared to the ESAP target of five percent of GDP. Furthermore, deregulation of wages caused incomes to fall to levels below the pre-independence period (UNDP 2008; Chagonda 2010). For example, wages for civil servants declined by 65%, 56% for construction workers, 48% for farm workers and 62% for domestic workers (Bond & Manyanya 2003: 35). Concurrently, removal of food subsidies caused severe hardships. Once famed as the bread basket of southern Africa the country moved from having a vibrant economy at independence to a highly fractured economy unable to provide basic public services. Government also deregulated the job market in particular wage determination. Deregulation of the labour market allowed free collective bargaining between workers and their employers. These measures caused severe socio-economic problems and general discontent expressed in the form of food riots and strikes.

Continued poor performance of the economy caused many companies to relocate to South Africa. Others downsized operations citing viability problems. Export competitiveness was

negatively affected by high production costs and negative climatic conditions. In the years following independence domestic companies had not recapitalised or invested in new and efficient production technologies that would have enabled them to compete against imports following trade liberalisation under ESAP (Bond & Manyanya 2003:30). Specifically, there was contraction in key manufacturing sectors such as textiles by six percent in 1990 to 1995 and twenty percent in 1996 to 2000 (Ismi 2004). This resulted in considerable job losses such that by 1997 unemployment was fifty percent. The public sector and the private sector retrenched 18 000 and 50 000 workers respectively. Throughout the ESAP years the country was heavily reliant on international donor aid. The proportion of the population living in poverty rose to seventy percent (Moore 2003). Liberalisation of the economy had not yielded the desired objectives of reducing poverty and diversifying the economy. By 1997 the economic situation in the country was so severe that ESAP was abandoned (UNICEF 2011a).

As a direct consequence of the austerity measures associated with ESAP, migration was adopted as a survival strategy (Gaidzanwa 1999; Chetsanga & Muchenje 2003; Bloch 2005; UNDP 2008). Apart from unskilled and semi-skilled workers, approximately 200 000 skilled professionals emigrated frustrated by the introduction of wage restraints, deteriorating working and living conditions as well as instability in food prices due to removal of subsidies. However, the number of Zimbabweans escaping economic hardships associated with the adoption of ESAP never reached the alarming proportions that were witnessed during the third phase of migration.

### 2.2.3 The third phase of migration (1998-current)

In terms of volume, international migration from Zimbabwe peaked after 2000. For a country not at war the volumes of migration were unprecedented. Because of the large numbers of people migrating from the country in the last decade, Crush and Tevera (2010) referred to such emigration as an 'exodus'. It was estimated that there was at least one emigrant per household (Tevera & Crush 2003). By July 2008, the Zimbabwean migration stock was estimated at four million (Orozco & Lindley 2008). Migration from the country continued even after the stabilisation of the economy through dollarisation in 2009. This is because the economy failed to create new jobs. Industries are undercapitalised, operate below capacity or remain closed. According to the International Crisis Group (ICG 2007: 2) since year 2000, over 900 companies had closed or scaled down production causing industrial output to drop

by thirty percent. The economy also suffered from liquidity problems, depressed investor confidence and a government policy environment pervaded by anti-market sentiments (Kanyenze 2006). For example, the Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment Act (No. 14 of 2007) mandates mining, manufacturing and financial businesses to sell fifty–one percent of their shares to indigenous Zimbabweans. Such policies create market uncertainties and unpredictability on issues regarding property rights and pricing. Due to this and several other factors de-industrialisation has remained a major problem. Thus, inability to get jobs caused an upsurge in permanent and circular migration to regional countries (Crush, Chikanda & Tawodzera 2012).

Recent migration from Zimbabwe is notable on account of the scale of the migration, the composition of migrants, causes of migration and its impact, particularly on neighbouring countries. A potent mix of political, social and economic instability was the major driver of international migration during this phase (Tevera & Crush 2003). Migration from the country in particular from year 2000 onwards is symptomatic of structural political and economic problems (Zinyama 2002; Bloch 2005). This migration is exceptional because of the large presence of non-refugee migrants (Betts & Kaytaz 2009; McGregor, Marazzi & Mpofo 2011). From 2005 to 2009 the Johannesburg reception centre registered an average of 3 000 Zimbabweans a day (Betts & Kaytaz 2009).

## **2.3 Causes of recent migration from Zimbabwe**

### **2.3.1 The political context to migration from Zimbabwe after the year 2000**

The fundamental cause of large-scale migration from Zimbabwe is political instability which spawned social and economic instability creating a combination of factors that destroyed people's livelihoods. Political violence is now endemic in Zimbabwe's political landscape. Desire for monopolistic political power by the ruling party (ZANU PF) is a dominant determinant in the political violence that affected most parts of the country, resulting in internal displacement and migration. Political repression takes many forms, ranging from murder of opponents, rape, mutilation, violence, repression and intimidation. All these tactics aim to suppress opposing views (Maroleng 2008:23). The break down in the rule of law means that there is no recourse to justice even when perpetrators are known (Hammar 2008).

Resort to political repression and intimidation is due to the ruling party's (ZANU PF) refusal to accept political pluralism. After decades of being the only political party in the country, the formation of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) in September 1999 was seen as a major challenge to the status quo (Mlambo & Raftopoulos 2010). The tipping point was in the year 2000 when the MDC-led anti-constitution campaign caused the defeat of the ruling party in a national referendum on a new Constitution. It was the first such political upset for the ruling party in twenty years. Inevitably the party leadership was incensed by the opposition party. So in order to thwart the opposition party from national ascendancy evidenced by the MDC's strong showing in the June 2000 parliamentary elections, ZANU PF resorted to intimidation and violence against political opponents and their supporters (Bond & Manyanya 2003). Since then with each subsequent election (in 2000, 2002, 2005 and 2008) political violence has become entrenched in the ruling party's psyche. When the urban electorate overwhelmingly rejected the draft constitution and subsequently voted out ZANU PF in urban local government elections in June 2002, the seeds of conflict between the ruling party and the opposition party were sown. Until 2002 the ruling party had commanded a majority in national and local government elections. The political elite refused to accept democratic political pluralism. The people were no longer perceived as a political asset but an electoral risk (Kamete 2002). Consequently, government unleashed ZANU PF trained militia against them. It was predominantly the unstable political situation in Zimbabwe since year 2000 that caused people to migrate (Bloch 2006:69).

Further displacement and migration is linked to the launch of the fast track land reform programme in the year 2000. Under the operation ZANU PF supported 'new farmers' who invaded commercial farms. A total of 3 000 farms were earmarked for acquisition (UNDP 2008). The violent seizure of large scale commercial farms spearheaded by a violent youth militia throughout the country's provinces caused the migration of white commercial farmers. The white farmers were targeted for their perceived support for the opposition party that led to the rejection of the Constitution. In total over 2.5 million farm workers lost their jobs when commercial farmers lost their farms (Sachikonye 2003). Using the provisions of the Citizenship Act (2003) the government revoked citizenship rights to people born in Zimbabwe to parents of foreign origin. This rendered many commercial farmers and farm workers stateless (Muzondidya 2007). As a result many of these workers migrated and sought work in the Limpopo province of South Africa (Rutherford 2008).

Agriculture had always played a critical role in Zimbabwe's economy contributing 11-14% of the Gross National Product, 45% of the country's exports and 60% of all raw materials used by Zimbabwean industry (Weiner, Moyo, Munslow & O'Keefe 1985). Agriculture was also the largest formal sector employer in the country. However, the chaotic implementation of the fast track land reform programme ruined the livelihoods of many people (House of Commons International Development Committee 2010). Because of the knock on effect that the fast track land reform programme had on the national economy there was a decline in exports and inputs to agro-processing, textiles and other manufacturing industries. As a result by 2007 capacity utilisation in industries fell to 18.9% (Confederation of Zimbabwe Industries 2008). Loss of income derived from exports caused the budget deficit to grow. There was also severe foreign currency shortage. Since then farm seizures have been ongoing albeit on a less intense scale than in the years immediately after year 2000.

Further migration was also associated with the launch of Operation Murambatsvina (Restore Order or Clear the Filth) in 2005. Following commercial farm seizures the economy contracted and unemployment rose to 70%. In order to make ends meet people in urban areas joined the informal sector (Bond & Manyanya 2003). However, in May 2005 the Government launched Operation Murambatsvina under the guise of limiting uncontrolled growth of the informal sector. There was a nationwide operation that destroyed informal settlements and illegal trading structures. It was evident that the ruling party had embarked on the cleanup operation out of revenge to punish an urban electorate that was perceived to have caused its electoral defeat by supporting the opposition party in the year 2000 and 2005 elections. The operation displaced 70 000 people and ruined their livelihoods. During the operation goods and wares of informal traders were confiscated by the police and the army (Tibaijuka 2005). Many displaced people migrated in order to rebuild their lives and find livelihood opportunities elsewhere.

The largest number of migrants to date fled the country following the harmonised presidential, parliamentary and local government elections in 2008. The election results were disputed. Although the president and his party lost the elections he did not cede power claiming that the opposition party had less than 51% of votes as required by the Constitution. Consequently a presidential run-off was undertaken as per requirements of the Constitution. ZANU PF ran a violent election campaign backed by the army, war veterans and youth militia that targeted opposition supporters, many of whom were arbitrarily arrested, forced

into hiding, maimed or killed. Due to this, the opposition party was forced to pull out of the presidential runoff in June 2008 citing country wide violence and intimidation of their supporters. The political polarisation and repression that followed caused many people to migrate to flee the violence.

### 2.3.2 The economic context to migration from Zimbabwe after the year 2000

The seeds of the severe economic instability that affected the country after the year 2000 were sown in the late 1990s. In November 1997 a politically motivated decision was made to pay each of the 50 000 war veterans a belated and unbudgeted one-off payment of Z\$50 000 and Z\$2 000 monthly pension for their participation in the liberation war (Mlambo & Raftopoulos 2010). From there onwards economic indicators dipped. Following such gratuity awards to war veterans, the Zimbabwe dollar shed 72% of its value against the United States dollar while the stock market crashed (Chimhou, Manjengwa & Feresu, 2010). In 1998 the country participated in the conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo. This further drained the economy of resources causing the government to run a large budget deficit (UNDP 2008). Seizure of white owned commercial farms eroded investor confidence resulting in lack of foreign investment. Farm invasions further hurt the economy by destroying a key sector of the economy. It also caused severe food shortages and loss of exports. As a corollary to the fast track land reform programme agriculture production fell by an average nine percent a year, manufacturing eight percent and mining seven percent (Zanamwe & Devillard 2010). Shortages of basic commodities spawned inflation, a black market and a foreign exchange parallel market.

GDP fell by a third in the period 1999 to 2006 impacting negatively on the balance of payments situation, incomes and social indices (Sachikonye 2006; World Bank 2009; Adebajo & Paterson 2011). The country earned the infamous tag of having the fastest shrinking economy in the world outside of a war zone. Annual GDP growth rate fell from 3.9% during 1980-1998 to -14.1% in 2008 (McGregor 2006; Makochekanwa & Kwaramba 2010). This decline of the economy occurred at a time when other African countries notably Angola, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Madagascar, Malawi, Swaziland, Namibia, Tanzania and Zambia were achieving reasonable rates of growth (UNDP 2008). This attracted Zimbabwean migrants.



Unemployment rose to 94% in 2008 (AFP 2009; Van Klaveren, Tijdens, Hughie-Williams & Martin 2010). Formal employment shrunk from 3.6 million in 2003 to an estimated 480 000 by 2008. High unemployment caused informalisation of the economy where incomes are unstable (Simpson 2008; McGregor, Marazzi & Mpofu 2011). For all sectors of the economy the minimum wage<sup>1</sup> in 2009 of between US\$20 to US\$391 per month was below the poverty line (Van Klaveren et al 2010). Although official sources claimed that inflation was 231 million percent the IMF (2009) pegged inflation at 500 billion percent in September 2008 while Hanke (2009) thought inflation of 89.7 sextillion percent was more realistic for the period. Such hyperinflationary conditions eroded incomes and caused instability in prices of basic goods. Price rises of basic goods of up to three times a day were common.

Difficult economic conditions caused a surge in poverty levels. For example, in 2003 the Total Consumption Poverty Line (TCPL) rose from 61% to 72% (Zanamwe & Devillard 2010). Inability to access money in the banks due to hyperinflation and shortage of bank notes made life particularly difficult for ordinary people. Such hyperinflation reduced economic competitiveness forcing traders to demand payment for goods and services in foreign currency. Poverty and deprivation caused families to adopt survival migration as a coping strategy. During the economic crisis remittances became the primary source of income for the majority of households (Tevera & Zinyama 2002; Bracking & Sachikonye 2006; Van Klaveren et al 2010; Adebajo & Paterson 2011). A survey by Bloch (2008) in both the United Kingdom and South Africa found that 80% of respondents sent remittances to their families. Households were receiving an annual median amount of US\$109.30 in cash remittances and US\$54.90 in goods (IOM 2009a). At the same time, remittances benefited the national economy through fees and taxes levied on formal remittances. By 2008 remittances were estimated at US\$361 million or 7.2% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (IFAD 2007; Makina 2010b). So battered was the economy that the local currency ceased circulating in October 2008 (IMF 2009). Accordingly, government was forced to authorize the adoption of a multicurrency regime in February 2009 in order to stabilize the economy.

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<sup>1</sup> Minimum wages are government stipulated wages for each economic sector. Workers in the agriculture sector are the lowest paid workers in the country.

### 2.3.3 The social context to migration from Zimbabwe after the year 2000

Due to limited resources, the government reduced expenditure on health, education, housing and other public services. Thus after the year 2000 service delivery systems collapsed or became dysfunctional. Hospitals closed due to lack of drugs, medical and support staff. Apart from individual initiatives, foreign recruitment agencies facilitated the migration of doctors and nurses. By 2003 the health sector had lost over 2 100 doctors and 1 950 nurses (UNDP 2008). Schools suffered the same fate as an estimated 15 200 teachers migrated to neighbouring countries because salaries were too low, having been severely eroded by inflation. For many people it was no longer worthwhile to go to work when the purchase price of bread was Z\$ 3 330 000. Furthermore, salaries could not be accessed from banks anyway due to shortage of bank notes. In rural areas teachers perceived as opposition party supporters were evicted from their schools by ZANU PF militia.

Lack of basic services in urban areas caused a serious cholera epidemic which killed 4 000 people out of the 100 000 infected with the disease. Urban local authorities attributed the cholera outbreak to inability to purchase water treatment chemicals due to lack of foreign currency. The problem was compounded by power shortages which reduced water pumping capacity (Makina 2010b). There were also severe food shortages throughout the country (Simpson 2008). Altogether 7.5 million people were food insecure and depended on donor aid. This made Zimbabwe the only country in the world with over half of the country reliant on food aid. A combination of a worthless currency, lack of foreign currency and food shortages pushed people to migrate.

On account of HIV/AIDS and poor standards of living for the majority of the people, life expectancy fell from 61 years in 1992 to 43 years after year 2000 (Sachikonye 2006; Simpson 2008; Mlambo & Raftopoulos 2010). The proportion of the population living below the poverty line rose from 57% in 1995 to 69% in 2002 and to 80% in 2005. Thus, rising poverty levels and limited livelihood opportunities pressured many people to migrate (Betts & Kaytaz 2009). High levels of unemployment and low wages left people with limited options for survival hence the adoption of migration to diversify survival strategies. By year 2000 Zimbabweans had become the largest group of people seeking asylum in the United Kingdom (Bloch 2005). The number of asylum applications rose from 230 in 1999 to 7 655

in 2002 (IOM 2005a: 11). To tame the numbers the United Kingdom was forced to impose visa restrictions on Zimbabweans in 2002 (McGregor 2006).

#### **2.4 Composition of Zimbabwe's migrants**

As outlined above, migration from Zimbabwe was caused by inter-related factors ranging from political and economic instability, poverty, low returns to labour, unemployment, increased informalisation of the economy, fluctuation in prices of basic commodities and their erratic supply (ILO 1998). Migrants from Zimbabwe are a diverse combination of people of all ages that include professionals, semi-skilled workers, documented and undocumented migrants dispersed in countries in the region, predominantly South Africa and Botswana, and far flung countries like the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Canada, Australia and New Zealand (Zinyama 2002; Kirk 2004:15; Mbida 2004; Bloch 2006; Human Rights Watch 2006; Polzer 2008; Zanamwe & Devillard 2010; Van Klaveren et al 2010). Whereas traditionally migrants have been people in the health services, recruitment and relocation agents operating from Harare facilitated the migration of teachers, engineers, academics, architects, surveyors, veterinary doctors, forensic scientists, journalists, artists, sports persons, economists and people from several other disciplines (McGregor 2006). According to Chetsanga and Muchenje (2003) and Wintour (2009) among all documented migrants 25% were medical doctors and nurses, teachers (20%), accountants (17%) and engineers/scientists (2.3%). The portfolio Committee on Health and Child Welfare reported in 2010 that the country only had 21% of the required medical practitioners. The national vacancy data base showed 80% vacancies for midwives, nursing tutors (62%), medical school lecturers (63%) and 50% for pharmacy, radiology and laboratory personnel.

Whereas in the past male migration was dominant, after year 2000 women have migrated in almost equal numbers with men (Crush & Tevera; Makina 2010b; Van Klaveren et al 2010). Within the region there are also a growing number of children migrating alone. The proportion of unmarried migrants rose from 25% in 1997 to 49% in 2010. In terms of education, the percentage of migrants with either primary or secondary education rose from 48% in 2005 to 60% in 2010. Because of high unemployment obtaining in the country, 35% of migrants had never held a job in Zimbabwe (Crush, Chikanda & Tawodzera 2012).

## **2.5 Migration management in Zimbabwe**

Given the large numbers of individuals who have left the country, the government of Zimbabwe acknowledges the need to manage migration for the national benefit and is aware of the magnitude of migration challenges currently facing the country. Some of these challenges include severe loss of skills in some sectors of the economy and lack of a comprehensive migration management policy, legal and institutional framework (Mudungwe 2011). Current migration management initiatives involve partnering with the International Office of Migration in Zimbabwe to craft the national migration and development strategy. The policy seeks to maximise benefits from migration while minimising the negative impacts of migration. Initiatives to manage migration undertaken so far include:

- a) In March 1995, the government of Zimbabwe and the government of South Africa established a Permanent Joint Commission for Economic, Technical, Scientific and Cultural Cooperation.
- b) In 2004, the Zimbabwe-South Africa Commission signed a memorandum of understanding in the fields of labour and employment.
- c) In 2006, Government in conjunction with the International Office of Migration established the Beitbridge Reception and Support Centre with the purpose of assisting returnees who have no means of travelling back home after being deported from South Africa.

The above initiatives culminated in a pilot project on inter-state cooperation between the government of Zimbabwe and South Africa to facilitate labour mobility. The pilot project was called 'Facilitating Temporary and Safe Migration of Zimbabwean farm workers to the Limpopo Province' (Government of Zimbabwe & International Office Migration 2007). The project aims to facilitate foreign labour recruitment and placement for Zimbabwean migrant farm workers opting to work in the agricultural sector in South Africa's Limpopo Province. Efforts are also underway to encourage Zimbabweans in the diaspora to send remittance money through formal money transfer channels so that remittances can benefit the economy. The Homelink scheme for example is a money transfer service which was set up by the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe in 2004 to harness remittances for investment. Through other initiatives migrants are recruited to participate in skills transfer programmes and are encouraged to invest back home.

## **2.6 Conclusion**

This chapter gave an overview of the contextual and background factors that led to migration from Zimbabwe. While migration from the country has never ceased since independence intense mobility from the country is a characteristic of the last decade. A severely ravaged economy, political and social instability are the major drivers of contemporary migration from the country. It is noteworthy that in the last decade the profile of migrants has changed from predominantly male to include an equal proportion of women. In addition, unaccompanied children are also taking part in migration. In light of the main challenges posed by high volumes of migration from the country, the government in recent years has adopted a proactive attitude towards the management of migration. Working with the IOM (Harare) and donor partners, the government drafted a national migration and development strategy which seeks to manage migration and enhance its development impact. Some of the migration management initiatives seek to recruit Zimbabweans in the diaspora to participate in skills based transfer programmes. The government also hopes to protect the rights of migrants by managing the recruitment and placement of farm workers intending to work on farms in the Limpopo province of South Africa. It is also making efforts to encourage Zimbabweans in the diaspora to return to the country to fill the skills gap created by migration and to urge them to invest in the national economy. However, the economy remains constrained by lack of money and low investment. Therefore, it has not created many new jobs. As such Zimbabweans in the diaspora are unlikely to consider return migration unless the economy shows significant improvements. Additionally, it will depend on the ability of the government to improve governance indicators in the short term and restore the political rights of Zimbabweans in the diaspora.

## CHAPTER 3

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

#### 3.1 Introduction

The thesis examines the international migration of married women in the context of their husbands' immobility while simultaneously accounting for their husbands' immobility and how this may have impacted the decision making process for the wife's migration. The thesis posits that the prevailing harsh socio-economic conditions in Zimbabwe coupled with the immobility of their husbands created a combination of circumstances that enabled married women to circumvent their normative immobility and negotiate their own migration. Additionally, the global gender segmentation of labour markets has increased opportunities for female labour migration, paving the way for women to be primary migrants (Danneker 2005).

There are several theories of migration, including Ravenstein (1889), Lee (1996), Mabogunje (1970) and Massey et al (1993). Causes of international migration for both men and women are complex. In the absence of a comprehensive theory of migration, the chapter gives an overview of both structure and action of theoretical perspectives (de Haas 2008; Rabby, Azam, Yeasmin & Hoque 2010). The purpose of this selective review is to examine aspects of migration theories relevant to explaining the international migration of married women from Zimbabwe. I argue that mainstream migration theories do not accord gender the prominence it deserves (Fortes 2004:124). Adopting the classification of international migration theories by Massey et al (1993), sections 3.2 and 3.3 outline theories that explain the initiation and perpetuation of migration. These two categories of theories are of course not mutually exclusive. Section 3.4 examines and explains immobility, namely situations where there is dissonance between intention and migration or a lack of intention to migrate. Section 3.5 gives a brief review of literature on social issues that underlie married women's migration decision-making while section 3.6 outlines economic and social impacts of married women's labour migration.

#### 3.2 Theories that explain the initiation of international migration

A number of theories have been formulated to explain why migration begins. Such theories examine the fundamental causes of migration. Since there is no single factor that can explain

the multiple causes of migration, initiation of migration can best be explained by a combination of propositions derived from the neo-classical economic theory, new economics of labour migration theory, world systems theory, the segmented or dual labour market theory and relative deprivation. The discussion in this section gives a brief overview of each of these theories.

### 3.2.1 Neo-classical economic theory

Neo-classical economic theory was formulated to explain rural-urban migration by Todaro (1969) and Harris & Todaro (1970), among others, but has since been applied to international migration (Todaro & Maruszko 1987; Borjas 1989). The theory explains migration with reference to spatial differentials in the supply and demand of labour, leading to wage differentials (Bauer & Zimmermann 1998:95). Accordingly intra- and inter-country differentiation in economic opportunities and inter-sectoral wage differences trigger migration (Hagen-Zanker 2008). In the developed countries, wages are high because labour is scarce relative to capital. Developing countries on the other hand have labour surpluses and a low market wage. On account of this, dominant labour migration flows are rural-urban or from developing to developed countries where there are better job opportunities and prospects. However, not every migrant is likely to find a job at destination whether full time or part time. In order to account for employment probability Todaro (1969) argued that it is not simply wage differentials between origin and destination that cause migration but rather expected income differentials, consisting of both wage differences and the probability of getting employment at destination (Todaro 1969:138).

The theory was widely used to explain migration in developing countries where high fertility coupled with a decrease in child mortality has caused growth of the labour force at rates that outpace job creation (Ammassari & Black 2001; Fleischer 2007). In these countries, the labour force grows by an estimated 40 million people per year (IOM 2005a:185-187). Since in these countries, the economy grows at rates lower than growth of the labour force it causes high levels of unemployment. For instance, in Liberia in 2003 the unemployment rate was 85% (Ikenwilo 2007), while in Zimbabwe the unemployment rate was 95% in 2009 (CIA World Factbook 2014).

Hatton and Williamson (2003) and Makina (2010) observed that 80% of total migrants from developing countries move to countries with high prospects of employment and good living

conditions. When jobs are hard to find locally for both men and women, migration may be the only viable option out of poverty. Thus, movement of labour from labour surplus countries to labour scarce countries is, over time, expected to result in an equilibrium determined by market forces. Continued out-migration of labour from areas of origin will cause labour shortages, forcing wages to go up thereby reducing the need for labour related migration (Harris & Todaro 1970; Todaro & Maruszko 1987; Skeldon 1997:19; Castles & Miller 2003:22).

According to the theory, individuals act rationally, undertake a cost-benefit analysis and migrate to destinations where perceived benefits offset the costs involved in migration. Since migrants incur financial, psychological, adjustment and various other costs associated with migration, Sjaastad (1962) considers migration as an investment in human capital. The larger the income gap, the greater the likelihood for migration. Hatton and Williamson (2002) estimated that a 10% wage difference between origin and destination labour markets would cause out-migration from Africa of one per thousand. Migration is expected to continue for as long as there are net benefits between perceived incomes and the cost of migration (Massey 2003). The reason for migration is thus to optimize individual economic self improvement. To make the theory empirically realistic, Bauer and Zimmermann (1998:97) refined the Harris and Todaro model of rural to urban migration by incorporating factors other than unemployment and differential wage rates that influence expected income gains at destination. These factors include the opportunity costs of migration, costs of travel, psychic and settlement costs.

In spite of these adjustments, the theory has been criticised because there are indications that despite persistent income differentials, movement of labour has been observed to take place from countries undergoing modernisation and industrialization rather than from very poor countries (Castles & Miller 1994: 22). Even within countries it is not the poorest people who migrate (World Bank 2005). For example, Domozetoy & Yossifov (1991) observed that potential migrants from Bulgaria were people who owned houses and other assets. In Japan Tidrick (1971) found that it was students from the middle and upper classes who desired to migrate and not those from lower classes. Another criticism of the theory is that it does not explain inter-country differences or continued migration flow when initial causes of migration have disappeared or diminished (Portes & Borocz 1989: 607, 612).



So far there is inadequate empirical evidence to support the theory. If the reason for migration is attributable to wage differentials the theory fails to explain why there has been little movement of labour between countries in the European Union or why there are more migrants from some countries and not from others that are structurally similar (Arango 2000). The theory also fails to explain why some people do not migrate in spite of existent disparities in wages and standards of living between countries including some that share contiguous borders (Arango 2004). For example, there is negligible migration from the former Soviet Republics to Sweden (Olofsson & Malmberg 2010). The examples are an indication that the theory does not factor in political, socio-cultural and interpersonal determinants of migration (Dustdar-Sinclair 2002). A further limitation of the theory is that most migrants have no capacity to make a cost-benefit reconciliation of their migration projects.

The emphasis on agency assumes potential migrants have choices and information to make the appropriate decision. The theory, therefore, ignores the impact of micro- and macro-structural factors by presuming that migration takes place in a social, political, socio-cultural and institutional void (Curran & Saguy 2001: 60; Rigg 2007; de Haas 2008: 6; IOM 2012). It is a recognized fact that governments everywhere regulate migration. Immigration laws determine legal status and participation in the labour force particularly for women. Labour markets are social institutions which are influenced by social norms and power inequalities (Razavi et al 2012). Accordingly, there are limitations imposed on migration by the socio-cultural environment (Fusfeld 1989: 361). Membership in social groups influences the migration behaviour of individuals. Notably, social norms and expectations impact the decision making process.

Furthermore, the theory ignores the impact of gender and social pressure affecting migration. Lawson (1998:14) criticized the theory for assuming that both men and women place an equal weight on the economic motivation of migration. Because of the differences in motivation for migration the quality of migration experience and outcome is gendered (Abril & Rogally 2001). Neo-classical economic theory, therefore, does not consider differences and inequalities between men and women that shape their migration experiences by constraining women's ability to exploit opportunities that may arise from migration (Oishi 2003: 7). The theory also ignores the diversity of migration experiences of individual women (Baluja 2003).

By lauding the economic motive the theory assumes female dependency in migration (Oishi 2002; Nawyn, Reosti & Gjokaj 2009). In addition, people do not always migrate out of self interest. Some people migrate to enable family members to achieve their goals. For example, in Thailand and the Philippines, daughters migrate so as to enhance the welfare of their parents (Mills 1997; Curran & Saguy 2001). Besides economic reasons, people migrate for purposes of individual or social security, marriage, wish-fulfilment, to experience urban life, escape socio-economic deprivation and gender based violence (Mills 1997; United Nations 1997; Hardill & Macdonald 2000; Jolly, Bell & Narayanswamy 2003; Jacka 2006; Ikenwilo 2007). Thieme (2008) reported that young women migrate from Kyrgyzstan to escape early marriages while McGregor (2006), noted that migration can be induced by the desire to escape failed marriages. Thus, the benefits from migration are not always monetary (Wilson 1987: 279).

The theory does not adequately explain the migration and development nexus (Usher 2005). Countries like Turkey, South Korea, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Jamaica, Cuba, Barbados, Mexico, El Salvador and Nicaragua encourage migration as a deliberate development strategy (Silvey 2004). Thus, people also migrate in response to socio-political pressures and incentives (Indra 2004; Jolly & Reeves 2005). In other instances people migrate to satisfy changes in location specific consumer goods (Graves & Linneman 1979; Resurreccion & Khanh 2007). Furthermore, the theory presumes legal status for all migrants and thus overlooks the role of human traffickers in illegal migration of men, women and children. The theory also assumes identical human capital such as education and presupposes that potential migrants have equal access to information about potential jobs at destination (Rabby, Azam, Yeasmin & Hoque 2010; Razavi et al 2012).

Neo-classical theory emphasises that equilibrium can only be attained through labour market forces. Such an assumption does not take cognisance of the short and long term impacts of inequalities due to historical social injustice, exploitation and dependency. By treating labour migration as a factor of production which equalizes labour markets, the theory fails to explain return migration in some cases back to economically depressed areas of origin (Bijak, Kupiszewski & Kicingier 2004).

### 3.2.2 The New Economics of Labour Migration Theory (NELM)

Whereas the neo-classical migration theory supposes that individuals make the choices to migrate, the NELM as pioneered by Stark (1982) assigns the motivation and the decision to migrate to the household (Stark & Bloom 1985). In particular the purpose of migration is to minimize household income shocks (Arango 2000). According to the NELM the household does not aim to primarily maximize income but rather to diversify its sources of livelihood by selecting and sponsoring the migration of a member who has the greatest potential to contribute to the collective welfare of the household. While the neo-classical economic theory of migration considers only failure of the labour market as the cause for migration the NELM considers the state of other markets such as capital, credit and insurance markets to be crucial. In developed countries, insurance markets and public sector social security programmes protect families from income shocks. By contrast, governments in developing countries have no money to fund such programmes (Dixon 2001; International Labour Office Social Security Department 2008).

While remittances do not play a role in the neo-classical migration theory, within the NELM remittances are perceived as one of the most essential motives for migrating (Taylor & Fletcher 2001). In fact the NELM is the only theory that explicitly links the migration decision with remittances (Arango 2000; Taylor & Fletcher 2001). Thus, under conditions of income uncertainty migration enables households to reallocate their labour resources by sending some members of the household to work in local and external labour markets. Such spatial distribution of household labour benefits both migrants and non-migrants (Pina-Guerassimoff 2006). Households can recoup their investment by exerting an influence on the migrant through the use of implicit contractual arrangements based on reciprocal kinship obligations (de Haan 2000; Gelderblom & Adams 2006; Fleischer 2007). The money remitted by migrants is used to settle debts, accumulate financial capital for savings, invest in children's education and to start businesses (Dustmann & Kirchkamp 2002; Edwards & Ureta 2003; Waddington 2003; Ferro 2006; Rapoport & Docquier 2006; Resurreccion & Ha Thi Van Khan 2007; Rigg 2007; Woodruff & Zenteno, 2007; Yang 2008; Konica & Filer 2009). It is also in the interest of migrants not to sever ties with kin at origin in order to secure their eventual return in the event that their migration project ends in failure.

In many developing countries, migration is interlinked with masculinity in the sense that it allows men to fulfil their role as household providers (Bastia 2012: 9; Aagesa & Kim 2001:73). On account of their dependent status, the migration of women is believed to occur in a family context. Applicability of the theory to the migration of married women is limited since the theory does not accommodate gender inequality in decision making within families and cultures. For women the migration decision is mediated by the household power structure as influenced by gender and age. Within families, gender relations determine who migrates between men and women (Chen 2006; Hoang 2009). While the NELM assumes commonality of interest, at times there is divergence of interests within households (Nawyn, Reosti & Gjokaj 2009). A further criticism of the NELM is that in many instances the outcome of the migration decision making process tends to reflect the wishes of members with the most bargaining power in the family (Harzig 2001; Mahler & Pessar 2006; Fleischer 2007). Married women have to negotiate their migration at various levels in the family, first with their husbands and then with members of the extended family (Jacobsen & Levin 2000; McGregor 2006; Bastia 2012). Due to intra-household power inequalities they are expected to defer to male power by consulting their husbands before making a decision. A man on the other hand can often make decisions that disregard the wishes of his wife (Mumtaz & Aysha 1982). The decision of males to migrate is uncontested by members of the household and indeed assumed as normal behaviour, while the decision of married women to migrate is often censored (Posel 2003; Hoang 2009). Overall, married women have limited agency in their husbands' decision to migrate or their own migration (Chant 1992: 197,198).

Traditional gender based ideology and gendered social expectations exert social pressure to dissuade women from migrating (Chen 2006; Lo 2007). Migration of married women is in some societies considered a public repudiation of the husband's failure to look after his family (Kabeer 2000:99). Women may also be barred from migrating because their migration is seen as an affront to notions of proper female behaviour (Gordon 1996; Cohen, Rodriguez & Fox 2008). Migrant women are negatively seen as wanting to be like men (Carling 2005). By migrating they are assumed to play a role that undermines men's masculinities (Gamburd 2000; Yoshihama 2001; Kabeer 2007; Gonzalez-Gonzalez & Varco 2008; Hoang & Yeoh 2011). In Laos, young men whose self esteem is threatened by the migration of women reciprocate by reasserting their masculinity or by subverting the migration of women (Rigg

2007). Therefore, the idea is to rein in and deliberately suppress the migration propensity of women.

But, in spite of the existence of gender norms about the inappropriateness of the migration of women, there are instances where women are encouraged by their families to migrate (De Jong 2000). This is particularly so in societies where women are seen as reliable, pliable and likely to remain loyal to the family (Curran et al 2005). Households that sponsor women migrants expect them to consistently remit money (Silvey & Elmhirst 2003; Orozco, Lowell & Schneider 2006; UN-INSTRAW 2006:6; Liki 2009). This is linked to the belief that women have been socialised to place the needs of others above their own and also because of the relative stability of female jobs on the labour market (Markham & Pleck 1986; Shihadeh (1991). In Thai society, for example, female migrants are expected to take better care of their parents compared with male migrants (Mills 1997).

As discussed above, a major criticism of the NELM is that it does not incorporate gender variables that affect intra-household decision making. The degree of women's involvement in decision making varies from place to place. For example, women in North Africa, the Middle East, Pakistan, northern India and Afghanistan are restricted from migrating alone due to restrictive patriarchal and religious codes (de Haas & Fokkema 2009). Men in these regions and countries are entrusted with safeguarding the family honour through exercising their control over women. By contrast, in South America as many women as men migrate (Menjívar 2005). However, even in countries where the migration of women is encouraged, traditional gender values of women as reproducers and home makers are preferred (Parrenas 2008).

### 3.2.3 World systems theory

World systems theory was put forward by Wallerstein (1974). According to the theory, political, social and economic human interaction has occurred within a global capitalist system in which two or more regions are interdependent through flows of trade, capital and labour (Martinez-Vela 2001). There is uneven economic development in the world which has led to the creation of hierarchical regions, namely, core, periphery and semi-periphery. Financial resources and technology determine whether a country is classified as core or periphery. The core predominates in capital-intensive production while in the periphery there is dominance of labour intensive production (Goldfrank 2000). According to this

classification, developed countries make up the core while developing countries are the periphery. The relationship between the core and the periphery is structural. Countries in the periphery are structurally constrained to experience a type of development that reproduces their subordinate status.

There is also a power hierarchy between the core and the periphery. Core countries determine trade terms and prices of commodities. Once core-periphery differentiation has occurred, core countries exploit the countries in the periphery for labour, markets and raw materials (Kardulias & Hall 2007). This relationship is more apparent between European colonial powers and their former colonies. Post decolonisation, there continues to be administrative, transport, linguistic and cultural linkages between former colonial powers and their former colonies (Morawska 2007). When former colonies became independent, political dependency on former colonial powers declined but economic dependency has continued.

According to the theory, migration is caused by penetration of capitalist capital and markets in countries in the periphery (Massey et al 1993: 445). Multinational companies in particular, have bought expanses of agricultural land and set up agribusinesses and export processing zones. Some of their activities have displaced local communities. This has disrupted the traditional methods of livelihood creating a large pool of unemployed people who then migrate in a quest to find means of livelihood internally or internationally (Massey 2003; Morawska 2007). According to the theory, international migration is fuelled by structural demand for cheap labour in developed countries in low paying sectors of the economy such as in manufacturing, agriculture, construction and in the care and service sectors (Sassen 1988; Zlotnik 1998).

The theory has been criticised for downplaying individual motivations for migration. It treats migrants as passive victims of capitalism (Arango 2004: 27). A further criticism of the theory is that it assumes migration occurs only after capitalist capital penetration, whereas empirical evidence suggests that migrants go wherever opportunities for a better livelihood have been identified. Furthermore, the theory does not acknowledge that national governments can channel migration in some directions and not in others. According to the theory people who migrate are abused and exploited. However, this is not always the case. Some migrants have achieved economic success in destination countries. The theory explains only labour migration and not other forms of migration, for example, intra-regional movements in

peripheral countries, migration between developed countries or internal migration within a developed country.

### 3.2.4 The Segmented or dual labour market theory

The dual labour market theory explains migration at the macro-level. Piore (1979) used the theory to explain international migration based on pull factors at the destination. More specifically the theory was used to explain structural labour demand in developed countries (Arango 2000). In developed countries, the labour market is divided into two distinct sectors namely the primary and secondary sector. It is this bifurcation of the labour market that draws in migrant labour. The primary sector of the economy is capital intensive and provides permanent, well-paid jobs covered by trade union and social security protection. The sector draws mainly native, skilled labour (Cole & Sanders 1985). On the other hand, the secondary or low productivity sector is labour intensive. The sector attracts semi-skilled labour (Cole & Sanders 1985). Jobs in the secondary sector are considered dirty, difficult and dangerous (Song, Zheng & Qian 2009). For this reason jobs in agriculture, construction and care work are filled by migrants. The jobs are temporary, lowly paid and therefore regarded as low status jobs (Baldwin-Edwards 1999:1-15; King, Rodriguez & Meguizo 1999:55-57). There is no occupational mobility or job satisfaction. Additionally, the jobs are not covered by trade union or social security protection, are unstable and are affected by economic cycles.

In developed countries, native, skilled workers will not take up jobs in the secondary sector even under conditions of structural unemployment (Arango 2000). Accordingly, this creates a permanent demand for immigrant workers, sometimes brought in as a result of active recruitment efforts by employers or labour recruitment agencies. Wages are not just a factor of demand and supply but are interlinked with social stratification. High wages confer status and prestige. In the secondary sector wages are deliberately kept low in order to retain high margins of profit (Portes & Walton 1981). Native, skilled workers perceive that low wages associated with the secondary sector will not enable them to accumulate financial capital, attain social mobility or maintain social status. By contrast, migrants take up these jobs because wages are higher than wages they would otherwise get from the labour market at origin (Oishi 2002; Wang 2008). Furthermore, high unemployment at origin means that not everyone can expect to get a job, so low paying jobs in the secondary sector of developed countries are an opportunity to escape poverty. Since the majority of migrants do not desire to

remain permanently at destination, the low status conferred by these jobs is considered temporary. Migrants tend to measure their status at origin rather than at destination (Nelson 1976; Kabeer 2007; Belanger & Linh 2011). Remittances enable migrants to enjoy a high status at origin.

The dual labour market theory has been used to explain post-World War II migration trends to Europe and the United States. However, the theory has been criticised for explaining international migration based only on one determinant of migration. In the theory, focus is placed on the demand side of migration without offering insight into the migrant's decision making process. Furthermore, according to Arango (2000) not all migration is demand driven. Some people just migrate for no apparent rational explanation. After their migration they join neither the primary nor secondary sector but instead engage in self employment (Light, Sabagh, Bozorgmf & der-Martirosian 1994). Additionally, the theory does not explain causes of migration from countries of origin. In any respect the theory does not explain different rates of immigration in developed countries with similar economic structures.

### 3.2.5 Relative Deprivation

The theory of relative deprivation was used by Runciman (1966) to explain feelings caused by social inequalities but was extended by Stark & Yitzhaki (1988) and Stark and Taylor (1989, 1991) to migration decision making. According to the theory, when individuals or groups of people compare their living standards and social status with the personal well-being and social status of others in their communities it may cause feelings of relative deprivation (Runciman 1966; Czaika 2011). In the context of migration, feelings of relative deprivation among non-migrant households are caused by remittances to migrant households which cause household inequality in income in communities of origin (van Dalen, Groenewold & Schoorl 2005; Rigg 2007). Such feelings of relative deprivation may be aggravated by media exposure of conspicuous consumption which diffuses ideas about new wants and consumption expectations. As a result, non-migrants feel deprived because they want the same material goods that migrants have but they cannot afford them (Quinn 2006).

Consequently, when feelings of relative deprivation are strong, they encourage migration by raising aspirations and propensity to migrate among non-migrants (Stark 2006). Those who are dissatisfied with their standard of living compared with other people's standards of living will increasingly begin to perceive migration as an opportunity to generate an income and to



improve their social status relative to that of others in their community (Stark & Taylor 1989; Stark 1991; Mills 1997; Jones & Kittisuksathit 2003; Liebig & Sousa-Poza 2004; Stark 2006; Resurreccion & Ha Thi Van Khan 2007). Therefore, according to the theory, relative deprivation perpetuates migration by giving non-migrants an incentive to migrate in order to bridge the gap between their current standard of living and the standard of living they perceive they deserve (Brown 2000). Relative deprivation is thus, more likely to cause further migration particularly from areas where economic opportunities are limited (de Haas 2008).

### **3.3 Theories that explain the perpetuation of international migration**

One of the problems of formulating a grand theory of migration arises from the recognition that causes of migration are different from factors that sustain it. While wage differentials, household strategies, labour shortages in destination countries and global capital penetration in developing countries may continue to encourage migration, migration processes tend to gain their own momentum. This is because new conditions may arise which subsequently function as independent causes for continued migration (Massey et al 1993). Theories that perpetuate migration which are discussed in this section are migrant networks and migration systems theory.

#### **3.3.1 Migrant Networks**

Migrant networks are social relationships based on friendship, membership of a family, clan or community of origin, that connect non-migrants as well as current and former migrants at places of origin and destination (Massey et al 1993:448; Heering, van der Erf & van Wissen 2004; Gelderblom & Adams 2006). The migration network grows incrementally as each individual migrant expands the network (Massey & Zenteno 2000).

Migration networks ensure the success of the migration outcome by reducing the costs and risks associated with migration (Gurung 2008). Potential migrants draw on networks for information, resources and access to employment and accommodation (Massey et al 1993:448). First time migrants can be assisted to get accommodation, jobs and travel documents among others. For example, 37% of Zimbabweans surveyed in the United Kingdom had offered first time migrants temporary accommodation while 24% of Zimbabweans surveyed in South Africa had assisted first time migrants with relocation costs (Bloch 2005). Similarly, a study of Bangladesh migrants by Afsar (2009) showed that two-

thirds of migrants found jobs abroad with the help of personal contacts while 75% of free visa holders and 66% of those with contractual visas were assisted by social networks. In Singapore, Rahman (2004) found that twelve Bangladesh pioneer migrants had cumulatively helped 101 new migrants financially and through information diffusion. Migration networks ingrain migration on a community's psyche and channel migrants to a particular geographic location and sometimes to a particular labour sector causing clustering by ethnicity, nationality and occupation (Guilmoto & Sandron 2001; Adler 2008 in Werner & Barcus 2009).

A criticism of the theory is that social networks are gendered (Curran & Rivero- Fuentes 2003). There is unequal access to social networks between men and women. Women are more likely than men to depend predominantly on personal and kin networks whereas men can additionally draw on non-kin networks. A further criticism of the theory is that in some countries employers, government officials, traffickers, migrant brokers and online-based virtual communities facilitate migration in the same way that social networks do.

### 3.3.2 Migration systems theory

Migration systems theory was formulated by Mabogunje (1970) to explain rural-urban migration in Africa. He defined a migration system as a set of places linked by flows and counter-flows of people, goods, services and information which tend to facilitate further exchange, including migration, between places. According to the theory, improvements in transport and communication facilitate linkages between urban and rural areas. Increasing accessibility of rural areas results in their integration in the national economy. It also enables urban areas to expand their spheres of influence into the rural areas. As a result of diffusion of information from urban to rural areas, people in rural areas become increasingly aware of opportunities of a better life and begin to desire goods and services in towns. It is such aspirations which may cause rural-urban migration.

According to Mabogunje, the volume of rural to urban migration is determined by rural control sub-systems made up of the family and the village community, and an urban control subsystem comprising city administration, employment agencies and other institutions that help to support or discourage migration. Apart from these control subsystems migration is also affected by social, economic and other relationships that Mabogunje termed adjustment mechanisms. Households in rural areas that send out migrants have to adjust production

strategies to reduce decline in agricultural output. Similarly in urban areas new migrants have to adjust to their new social and economic environment through mechanisms of incorporation.

According to the theory, rural-urban migration is sustained by feedback mechanisms. This can take the form of exchanges of information and ideas between migrants and areas of origin or through demonstration effect due to conspicuous consumption by migrants. When migrants send reports of satisfaction with their stay and activities at destination it will raise aspirations to migrate among non-migrants at origin. Due to such positive feedback, further migration from the village is likely to take place and will most likely be directed to the same city and in some cases, to parts of the city where pioneer migrants reside. Mabogunje also noted that such migration might result in concentration of migrants from the same places of origin in the same kind of jobs. On the contrary, negative feedback will discourage further migration. According to Mabogunje the rural and urban environments and their subsystems change continuously causing the system to be open and dynamic (Hagen-Zanker 2008). The migration process itself also modifies the migration system by strengthening or weakening the initial structural interdependences through various feedback mechanisms.

Although the migration system theory was formulated to explain rural to urban migration, as outlined above, it has been applied to international migration (Portes & Borocz 1987; Fawcett 1989; Kritz et al 1992). In the international context, a migration system is made up of two or several countries which exchange large volumes of migrants, flows and counter-flows of goods, capital, ideas and information (Fawcett 1989; Massey et al 1998). Countries in a migration system are connected not just by movement of people but other linkages arising from pre-existing links between destination and countries of origin (Castles & Miller 1998). Such linkages can be historical, cultural, colonial or technological (Kritz & Zlotnik 1992). Countries in a migration system do not have to be geographically close together since historical and technological linkages can connect distant migrant receiving and sending countries. In addition, countries can belong to several migration systems (Massey et al 1993). For example, some countries in North Africa belong to the European migration system and the North African migration system where migration is directed towards the Gulf States (de Haas 2007b).

An international migration system is dynamic. Countries join or exit a migration system depending on whether prevailing political, economic and social relationships between countries in a migration system are conducive. Apart from external causes, international migration itself can change the context of a migration system and the linkages between countries. For example, depending on their numbers migrants can change the social, political, demographic and economic context of destination and origin countries. As in the rural-urban migration system, in the international migration system migration is sustained by migrant networks. Additionally, migrants who acquire new life styles at destination and transmit them to areas of origin stimulate further migration among non-migrants.

### **3.4 Immobility**

Only a small proportion of the world's population are migrants. In 2008, 214 million people (or 3.1% of the global population) were living outside of their country of birth (United Nations 2009). Unlike migration, immobility has not attracted the attention of researchers because it is assumed to be normal behaviour (Werner & Barcus 2009; Jonsson 2011). Those who do not migrate are regarded by researchers as a reference or comparative category or in the context of analyzing the impact of migration on those 'left behind' (Werner & Barcus 2009; Jonsson 2011:4). Classical theories of migration examine reasons why people migrate but do not explain why the majority of people do not migrate.

Immobility is when there is disjuncture between the desire to migrate and definitive migration. Aspirations and intentions to migrate are not always consummated for a variety of reasons ranging from lack of human capital, social and financial resources to constraints arising from exclusionary migration policies (Gelderblom 2006). Carling (2002) refers to such inability to migrate as involuntary immobility to distinguish it from voluntary immobility. The latter is when people who are able to move elect not to migrate (Werner & Barcus 2009). Jonsson (2011:2) defines immobility as 'the absence of migration'.

There is a normative context to immobility. In societies where migration is used as a household survival strategy, those who benefit from the migration of others may not feel the urge to migrate. For example, in China internal migration raised income for household members who stayed behind by 16%-43% per capita (Taylor, Rozelle & de Brauw 2003). Thus, the migration of one or some household members may encourage immobility in others. By contrast, in communities with a culture of migration there is pressure to migrate.

Immobility is disconcerting and is associated with individual failure (Carling 2002). In Mali and Senegal, young men use the migration experience as a sign of entry into adulthood or a rite of passage (Jonsson 2007). In many societies immobility is gendered. Whereas migration is an extrinsic attribute of masculinity it is considered desirable for women not to migrate so that they can perform their normative roles of production and reproduction (Jonsson 2011). Additionally, such societal censure of the spatial mobility of women arises from fear that such unaccompanied moves may induce moral decadence.

Before migrating people weigh personal satisfaction or dissatisfaction at origin compared to the satisfaction to be derived from migration (Ferro 2006). Most people do not move because the knowledge and skills that they have acquired over time are location-specific and not transferable to external geographical locations and may not be remunerated at comparable levels than if they remain immobile (Becker 1962; Friedberg 2000). Skills acquired at origin may be lost due to emigration as a consequence of de-skilling. For example, Zimbabwean trained lawyers are not allowed to practise law in the United Kingdom and may, therefore, have to be content with unskilled, poorly remunerated work (Pasura 2010). Migration in this case is associated with downward occupational and income mobility and consequently loss of status (Charsley 2005; Sabates–Wheeler, Sabates & Castaldo 2005; Bloch 2008).

Individuals who remain immobile can acquire considerable insider advantages. Society insider advantages are social and political bonds that a family or an individual has built up over time by being a member of a particular community. The longer people stay at a place the less likely it is that they will migrate. An individual compares the utility of his or her stock of assets and abilities in different locations. Therefore, immobility becomes attractive to people who would otherwise derive less benefits from migration due to loss of location specific assets and abilities.

Determinants of immobility are varied ranging from psychic factors and long duration of stay in an area and work-place. According to Gelderblom (2006) some people do not move because migration would take them out of their comfort zone by rupturing their usual routines leaving them feeling insecure and disoriented. For this reason they choose immobility. They would rather stick with the familiar. They are afraid of alienation and atomization attributed to an inability to develop meaningful emotional and social ties at destination (Jagganath 2010). They may also be so immersed in the lives of their communities that they find it

difficult to extricate themselves (van der Velde & van Naerssen 2010). Others suffer from inertia and never actively seek to consummate migration intentions. In Jagganath's (2010) study one migrant woman's husband was reluctant to leave South Africa as that would entail severing regular physical contact with members of his extended family. To take advantage of economic opportunities elsewhere potential migrants must have the requisite human, financial and cultural resources to do so, otherwise they remain immobile (Nawyn, Reosti & Gjokaj 2009).

Immobility for men can also be attributed to rigid immigration policies and state run recruitment policies that target mainly women as a developmental objective, as is the case in the Philippines (Hatton & Williamson 2002; McKay 2005). Unfavourable labour market conditions may dissuade some people from migrating. Some of these conditions are racial discrimination in appointments and employer discrimination against qualifications obtained elsewhere. For example, in the United Kingdom, Zimbabwean nurses, doctors and teachers have to enrol and pass adaptation courses which can last for periods upwards of 6-12 months before they can complete the requisite registration procedures (Buchan, Jobanputra, & Gough 2005). In the case of doctors and nurses upon successful registration with the National Health Service they start at entry level irrespective of pre-migration experience acquired in Zimbabwe thereby drawing low pay (McGregor 2006). It is therefore, not surprising to find that under these conditions some people choose immobility over migration in order to retain their current social standing (Jonsson 2011). Varied visa regimes also make it problematic to find work, for example, those on visitor's visa are not allowed to work. Immobility can also be due to constraints related to age limits. For instance, Saudi Arabia admits only workers within the age range 30-40 years (Shaw 2008).

### **3.5 Social factors underlying married women's migration decision-making**

There is gender inequality in decision-making. Married men are more likely to make independent decisions to migrate without facing the same constraints that limit married women's ability to make similar decisions. Due to discriminatory social norms and women's care obligations, most married women are unlikely to make the migration decision alone. Understanding how married women in the research sample for this thesis participated in the decision-making process for their independent migration will yield important insights. To address this issue the research for this thesis collected information pertaining to three

different types of decisions the women in the research sample were expected to have made namely: Did the women make their own decision to migrate? Did they choose a remittance recipient? Did they decide how the money they remitted was used?

These issues were examined bearing in mind that family and marriage are social institutions that shape women's migration decisions (Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994, 1999). It is within the family that women's roles are determined and assigned. It is also in the family that women's subordination to male authority is most apparent (Boyd & Grieco 2003; Mollard 2013). Overall, empirical research has shown that women's agency in migration decision making is constrained by gender norms, gender roles and gender relations (Gardner 1981; Hoang 2011).

### 3.5.1 Gender norms

Gender norms shape institutions and dictate acceptable masculine and feminine forms of behaviour (Kenny & Mackay 2009). Norms are the informal rules that shape the understanding of acceptable behaviours (Portes 2006). In the context of labour migration, cultural gender norms are major factors which affect women's agency. They affect resource distribution and power relations in the family creating gender inequality. According to the World Bank (2012: 169), gender norms determine the context and space in which women can exercise agency. In many contexts such norms are accompanied by surveillance and sanctioning practices to ensure compliance. These can range from community pressure to enforcement by violence. Gender norms pertaining to the relationship between men and women underpin decisions about migration. For instance gender norms determine who migrates, who the migrant travels with, where to migrate to, economic activities at destination, obligations to kin at origin and ways in which obligations are carried out and how remittances are allocated (Curran & Rivero- Fuentes 2003; Murphy 2004).

In many traditional societies the social environment is not supportive or permissive of the independent migration of women. The migration of women raises moral issues and creates tension between the women's economic role and the expectation that they should perform care work for the family (Sager 2012). In these societies, since men's control over women is a crucial factor, female labour migration may cause distrust when women are away from the control of male family members (Carling 1996). Thus, discouraging women's migration is also meant to enable men to control women's sexuality. This lack of social legitimacy for the migration of women inhibits their migration. Oishi (2002) explained social legitimacy as a set

of norms that are conducive to the migration of women. Married women that migrate alone are frequently perceived as potential prostitutes and accused of being negligent wives and mothers (Hofmann & Buckley 2008). Such women may face alienation and sanctions (Adepoju 1983: 62).

### 3.5.2 Gender roles

Gender roles refer to expected behaviours for men and women. Household tasks and employment are socially assigned to women and men respectively (Momsen 2010). Gender roles permeate daily life and are the basis for self-regulation thereby, affecting individual agency. Women are socialised to be caregivers and nurturers of families who ought to be submissive and dependent on men. In Zimbabwe, customary law is defined and controlled by men who manipulate it to protect their own interests (Maboreke 1987; Shenje 1992; Gordon 1996:64). Society lauds the ideology of motherhood which restricts women's mobility. Married women who travel without their husbands' consent are considered to have abandoned their wifely duties (Pankhurst 1991), while unescorted women who go to public places are harassed and labelled 'prostitutes'. They often face the indignity of being rounded up in operations that the police refer to as clean-up operations (Jacobs 1989: 166; Ranchod- Nilsson 1992; Marwizi 2013).

On the other hand, men are expected to be breadwinners, to make decisions and provide leadership in their families (Barker & Pawlax 2011). Research by Hindin (2004) on decision-making using the Zimbabwe Demographic Household Survey data showed monopoly of marital decision-making power by husbands. Husbands had the final say in the majority of decisions ranging from decisions on major purchases, whether or not the wife works and fertility. Men's migration is encouraged and considered altruistic (Keough 2006). Tasks assigned to women are generally less valued when compared with roles assigned to men (Reeves & Baden 2000). Men tend to be assigned productive work that attracts market salaries while women's reproductive work is unpaid and performed in the private sphere. In Zimbabwe, like in other countries, gender roles have a different impact on a migrant's obligations towards the family at origin (IOM 2009). Ratha and Reidberg's (2005) study found that women tended to feel more responsible to the family at origin compared with men.



### 3.5.3 Gender relations

Gender relations are hierarchical relations of power between men and women that have been historically and socially constructed (Momsen 2010). They are often naturalised and are seen as the way things are and must be practised (Burns 2005). However, since they are socially and culturally determined, they change over time (Reeves & Baden 2000). Gender relations are constituted by several institutions that include the family, legal systems and the labour market. They are a resource that is used to reinforce rules, norms and practices that govern social institutions. In many societies gender relations underpinned by culture influence many aspects of labour migration (Murphy 2008).

### **3.6 Economic and social impacts of married women's labour migration**

Women's participation in labour migration is now widely recognised. In particular, the south-north labour migration of women is increasing both in complexity and scope (Graham & Yeoh 2013). Generally, this migration is a response to socioeconomic and legal processes operating in countries of origin and destination (DFID 2007). The restructuring of the international labour market has made it increasingly possible for women migrants from developing countries to find jobs in the care and service sectors. While there are varied reasons for migration, married women often migrate as a strategy to diversify or secure livelihoods. The discussion in this section will review literature on the impact of married women's labour migration on household income, poverty reduction, marital relationships, gender roles, impact on children and the status of women. To allow for systematic analysis of these impacts I will focus on micro-level impacts of women's migration on their families.

#### 3.6.1 Economic impact of married women's migration

Although there is inadequate literature on gender-differentiated remitting behaviour, some research findings indicate that the propensity to remit is influenced by gender (Piper 2005; UN 2009). Differences in remitting behaviour between migrant men and women have been observed to determine the amount, frequency and sustainability of remittances over time (Mane 2011). Women migrants send remittances to their families regularly. To illustrate, 76% of women migrants from Myanmar working in Thailand as domestic workers remitted regularly (UN 2009). A further example was provided by Collinson et al (2003). One of the findings from a study they conducted in South Africa was that 25% of employed male

migrants were less likely to remit compared with employed female migrants. Although women migrants earn less money than male migrants, they remit a higher proportion of their salaries regularly (UN 2006). This observation is typical for both internal and international migrants. According to Ndiaye, Melde & Ndiaye-Coic (2011), women migrants from Africa in the Netherlands sent more money to their families at origin. By socialising less outside the home, they were able to save more money than male migrants. Furthermore, in small groups they were able to raise additional financial resources from pooling together a proportion of their incomes. On a rotational basis, a member of the group then got a lump sum to send home.

Although there may be varied reasons for remitting, research evidence suggests that women migrants remit regularly because they maintain strong ties with their families at origin. It is clear that remittances serve the purpose of strengthening bonds of ‘solidarity, reciprocity and obligation’ (Ramirez, Dominguez Morais 2005; UN-INSTRAW 2007; Devasahayam 2008; Bastia & Busse 2011). It is also further suggested that migrant women’s remitting behaviour is not solely based on altruism. According to Curran & Saguy (2001), women’s remittance-sending behaviour should additionally be viewed as a mechanism that migrant women use to fulfil filial obligations and their gender roles as primary care givers.

#### 3.6.1.1 Impact of remittances on household income

In developing countries, migration of women has generated significant financial resources that have benefitted their families (UN 2006). Some women migrants are the sole income providers in their households (UN-INSTRAW 2006). In fact, the majority of women migrants who send remittances to their families were observed to fall into this category (Ramirez, Dominguez Morais 2005). In Indonesia, for example, 80% of all overseas workers were women (World Bank 2008b). Empirical studies have yielded evidence to suggest that remittances contribute significantly to household income. In Bangladesh, research conducted in four districts by Siddiqui & Abrar (2003) established that remittances contributed 55% of household income. In a related study in the same country, a household survey undertaken by IOM (2009b) showed that 20% of migrant households reported an increase in household income attributed to remittances.

Migrant women send remittances so as to improve standards of living of their families (UN-INSTRAW 2007). More specifically, they prioritise basic consumption needs of their

families. In particular, they commit more financial resources to food, clothes, education and health (IFAD 2008). Additionally, they send remittances to stabilise household incomes particularly when there are economic crises (World Bank 2006b). A study in Ghana by Quartey (2006) found evidence to suggest that remittances cushion households from severe economic hardships. Furthermore, when remittances are set aside as savings they act as insurance against income shortfalls in the future especially in countries with unstable national economies. In Ethiopia, Ghana, and Mali, households have been observed to save a proportion of remittances so that they can use such money to cover unexpected emergencies like severe illness or death (IOM/UNFPA/UNDESA 2013). Remittances are also used for debt repayment. Apart from sending money to their immediate family, women migrants also remit money for the upkeep of the elderly (Gresham & Smit 2011; UN-INSTRAW 2007).

Remittances have also been used to facilitate income and asset accumulation. UN-INSTRAW's (2006) study in the Dominican Republic showed that women migrants were interested in savings more than men. Another key finding of the study was that whereas women migrants invested in human capital, male migrants preferred to invest in physical capital. Women also invested in real estate such as purchase of land, house construction or improvements (Gresham & Smit 2011). They also invested money in small-scale commercial businesses.

### 3.6.1.2 Impact of remittances on household poverty reduction

Migration is a household survival strategy which can be used to reduce household poverty (Asis 2000). This is particularly important for households living at subsistence levels (Quartey 2006). In such situations, remittances not only reduce household poverty but also provide insurance against future poverty. Since women remit regularly, the money they send can help take care of income shortfalls. Using panel data, Acosta, Fajnzylber & Lopez (2007) found that remittances caused a reduction in poverty levels in several countries in Latin America. Migration reduces poverty via an increase in household finances, reducing household vulnerability during difficult economic periods, availing money to start businesses which can be supported by technology or information passed on by migrants living in other countries (Ratha, Mohapatra & Scheja 2011). Business activities augment family income through generating profits and increasing the number of household members in gainful employment. In the Pacific Islands a comparison of families with or without a migrant found

a reduced poverty rate of 55%-65% among households with a migrant (IOM/UNFPA/UNDESA 2013).

Overall, migrant women send remittances to improve the quality of life of families left behind. However, remittances can produce some negative outcomes. They can cause families to be overly dependent on remittances reducing their participation in employment and other activities. They may also accentuate income inequalities. Sometimes remittances can be unreliable. A case in point is the global economic crisis in (2009-2010) when some migrants either lost their jobs and were forced to return or had to contend with reduced salaries (Global Migration Group 2009; IOM/UNFPA/UNDESA 2013). Remittances may be unsustainable since the remitting-behaviour is influenced by individual migrants' life cycles and other social determinants. For instance, family reunion might reduce propensity to remit.

### 3.6.2 Social impact of married women's migration

A married woman's migration impacts on a family's welfare in diverse ways (Azam & Gubert 2006). For instance, while migration yields substantial financial benefits for resource poor countries and communities the social impacts are less documented (UN Women 2013). In communities where traditional gender roles are strong, the impacts of women's migration are far ranging. The migration of married women is a source of anxiety to migrant families and the communities in which they are embedded (DFID 2007). This is so because when a wife or mother migrates gender roles have to be reassigned so that their families can cope with their absence.

#### 3.6.2.1 Impact on marital relationships

Migration causes the physical separation of conjugal partners. Over time, prolonged periods of separation can weaken family cohesion (Devasahayam 2008; Ratha, Mohapatra & Scheja 2011). It also puts marital relationships under pressure (Hugo 2002). While information technology can keep migrants in touch with their families, for some migrants it remains expensive or inaccessible. In exceptional cases migrant women in domestic service living with employers have been denied the opportunity to contact their families (APWLD 2010; Human Rights Watch & ILO 2010). As a result, maintaining long distance relationships may be problematic.

According to Asis (2003) migration can cause marital instability or divorce. In fact some studies have identified a higher incidence of divorce among migrant households when compared with non-migrant households (Ratha, Mohapatra & Scheja 2011). To illustrate, high divorce and separation rates were observed among returnee contract workers in a village in Java (Bryant 2005). In Tajikistan, the divorce rate among returnees was 2.5%. However, assigning the cause of marital problems solely to migration is problematic. According to Lucas (2005: 268), some divorces that occur in the post-migration period could be rooted in marital problems in the pre-migration period. For example, it could be that some women whose marriages were already unstable had chosen to migrate. Additionally, women's economic independence after their migration may have provided them with an opportunity to escape failed marriages. In countries where divorce is difficult to attain migration could provide an exit strategy. Asis (2003), however, noted that the phenomenon was not widespread. Some non-migrant husbands have been observed to engage in extra-marital affairs and remarriage.

#### 3.6.2.2 Impact on gender roles

Within families, persistence of traditional gender ideologies influences the division of labour along gender lines. Women perform multiple social, reproductive and production roles within the confines of their homes. They care for children and the elderly and perform domestic tasks. These tasks are not remunerated and have a low status. Men on the other hand, perform visible economic roles and are the main breadwinners for their families. Their jobs are performed in the public sphere and give them status. This established pattern is disturbed when women migrate alone leaving their children behind. Many women migrate without their children for a variety of reasons. Unskilled and semi-skilled female migrants are often in unstable jobs, work long hours and get low pay making it difficult to support children at destination. Some are undocumented while others cannot take their children with them because of restrictions on their overseas contracts and other immigration restrictions imposed by destination countries.

Migration of women affects the traditional gender conceptions of the breadwinner role. This is often because married women's migration is triggered by economic crises in countries of origin which have caused male unemployment. As a result, many families have been forced to depend on income earned by women migrants rather than men. Unsurprisingly, providing

financial resources for their families has raised the status of some migrant women. In Indonesia, for example, non-migrant husbands were reported to have high respect for their wives who are working overseas (Hugo 2002). In addition, while their husbands may have dominated decision making in the pre-migration period, women's enhanced status had boosted their decision making and bargaining power in the family (UNESCAP 2008).

Labour migration of women, therefore, calls for a reconfiguration of familial gender roles. In some situations work of absent wives and mothers has been outsourced to other women within or outside the migrant families. Carers for children left-behind include but are not limited to other children in the migrant families, grandparents, female relatives and friends. In some instances children have had to move out of their parental home to go and live with carers elsewhere. In others it is carers who have moved in to live with children in their parental home (UN Women 2013).

Notably, there is increasing evidence to suggest that migration causes gender role reversal in migrant households. When women abandon physical care work to take on breadwinning roles in distant geographical areas, men have adjusted to their absence by engaging in reproductive tasks of caring for children and the elderly (King & Vullnetari 2006). In families with young children, fathers supervise children's school work. They spend more time with children by cutting down on recreational activities that take them away from home. In essence, female migration is causing changes in traditional attitudes regarding the allocation of work according to prescribed gender roles within some migrant households (Hugo 2002; Bryant 2005; Ghosh 2009). Men with migrant wives are also beginning to realise that they are not the sole financial providers of their families. In essence women's breadwinning role challenges men's sense of masculine identity (Gamburd 2001; Parrenas 2001). For this reason in some families it has led to marital conflict and caused some non-migrant husbands to turn to alcoholism and gambling because of the perception that performing reproductive tasks is contrary to normative expectations of masculinity (UN Women 2013).

### 3.6.2.3 International labour migration and the empowerment of women migrants

This section examines whether women are empowered through migration. More specifically, research on whether or not migration empowers women has been conducted in predominantly migrant sending countries and not in others making it difficult to generalise findings. According to Hugo (2000), the relationship between migration and women's empowerment is

paradoxical because empowerment can cause more women to migrate while migration in turn can further empower women.

Empowerment is a process by which people without power gain power (Kabeer 1999). In the context of this discussion, empowerment is used to refer to the ability of women to change relationships of power that restrict their options and autonomy so that they can make decisions and transform such choices into desirable actions and outcomes (Dreze & Sen 2002; World Bank 2007). The core elements of empowerment include options, control, power, conscientisation, agency, and ownership of resources, ability to make choices and to participate in decisions that affect one's life (Malhotra, Schuler & Boender 2002; Charmes & Wieringa 2003).

Whether women are empowered by migration depends on social contexts, type of migration and the characteristics of the women migrants. Some migrants come from highly patriarchal societies where there are restrictions to women's rights and autonomy (Pillinger 2007). For such women 'the act of migration is empowering in itself as it stimulates changes in the women themselves' (UNFPA/IOM 2006). Their migration demonstrates a great willingness to depart from cultural norms of dependence on men in their households. Empowerment is also influenced by women's skills level. Women with low education, low skills-set and who do not speak languages of host societies may face difficulties integrating into work and life in destination countries compared with professional and skilled women who have access to information through membership to professional associations (Pillinger 2007).

Scholarship on women's labour migration has generated debate which has led to divergent views regarding whether or not migration empowers women (Park 2008). The debate has yielded three perspectives. The first perspective is represented by studies that emphasize positive gains arising from women's migration. For example, Lamphere (1987), Grasmuck & Pessar (1991) and George (2000) opined that, when women engage in paid work it increases their bargaining power. The second perspective is advanced by studies that note that migration disempowers women. The thrust of these scholars' argument is that women are discriminated against in the labour market, are paid low salaries and work under exploitative conditions (Kibria 1993; Espiritu 1997; Ehrenreich & Hochschild 2003). A third perspective on migration and women's empowerment recognises that there is duality in the lived experiences of women. It posits that migration embodies conflicting forces that coexist to

empower and disempower women at every stage of the migration process (Ferree 1985; Foner 1998; Menjivar 2003). This is attributed to the fact that not all women are able to resist patriarchal constraints (Jolly, Belly & Narayanaswamy 2003).

It is clear there are gains and losses associated with migration. To illustrate, Park (2008) noted that while paid labour frees women from being financially dependent on their husbands it causes their dependence on low paying jobs in order to maintain such independence. Similarly, Foner (1998) pointed out that while economic independence enhances women's bargaining power it has not significantly altered their domestic responsibilities. In a related study of Mexican migrant women in America, Parrado & Flippen (2005) found that although women gained economic autonomy there was strong compliance with traditional gender roles. Oishi's study (2005) showed that 90% of Filipino migrants reported that their self confidence had gone up. They had also gained new skills although they reported that they had been exploited and harassed.

Migrant women's participation in paid labour enables them to acquire new responsibilities (Gaye & Jha 2011; Bastia 2012). Assuming the breadwinning role gives women self-worth and control over household economic resources which can boost their decision-making and bargaining power in their households (Zentgraf 2002; UNESCAP 2008). This contrasts markedly with the position of some women in the pre-migration stage who reported that their decision-making capability was compromised by male influence. When migrant women have economic independence and self-respect it enhances their ability to take charge of their lives and pursue personal goals (Gaye & Jha 2011). Economic independence also enables women to have a say over their fertility, health and education of their children particularly girls.

Migration also provides migrants with a broad world view which makes them realise that there are alternatives to their former way of life (Bastia & Busse 2011). Such perceptions and attitudes may diffuse to their families benefitting their daughters. Labour participation also yields economic resources that can be used for upward social mobility. It empowers them to realise 'the power within' (Yu 2007). In some communities successful migrants have gained social recognition for skills, knowledge and experience acquired abroad (Ratha, Mohapatra & Scheja 2011). They have also become influential figures, role models and are engaged in business that employs both men and women. In the Dominican Republic, one key finding of a



study by UN-INSTRAW (2006) was that all return migrants from Spain had established their own businesses.

Aspects of migration that may cause empowerment include removal of women from the local environment, exposure to new places and people, insertion of women in the labour market and severance from family networks (Hugo 2002). In addition, migration challenges women's identities as mothers. Zentgraf (2002) called the early post-migration stage transformative. Since women have to weather the storm alone in destination areas, the experience can increase their resilience and assertiveness. They have to depend on their internal sense of power (Yu 2007). Their self-agency and self-awareness is heightened. In the process, they acquire greater personal autonomy, independence and self confidence and are empowered by the decisions they have to make (Parrenas 2005; Pessar 2005; Morokvasic 2007; McIlwaine 2010). For south-north migration, women get exposure to new egalitarian cultural settings which might lead them to question their gender role situations in places of origin. Such exposure can cause social change (Bastia & Busse 2011). In the process of integration women migrants acquire new values and norms which they communicate to non-migrants in origin. For instance, they can transmit information on higher marriage age for girls and health improving practices (Fargues 2001; UNDP 2009:79).

Apart from positive outcomes outlined above, migration may cause women to have negative experiences. Women migrants may suffer disempowerment at work because in destination countries, social and economic relations are stratified by ethnic, racial and gender divisions (Pillinger 2007). A consequence of this is that migrant women become vulnerable to abuse, exploitation, isolation and deskilling. This may cause them to suffer from stress and associated health problems. In spite of their difficult living and working conditions, some scholars propose that migrant women should not be perceived as victims but agents of change in their own lives. They justify this assertion by pointing out that migrant women have used individual and collective agency to organise and resist employers in various ways (Parrenas 2001; Yu 2007).

Another possible negative impact of migration is that upon return to their countries of origin, women empowered in destination countries may experience disempowerment. For instance, they may lose their decision making power when subjected to powerful social norms causing tension within families. For example, 9.4 % of female return migrants in Tajikistan reported

that they had been excluded when key decisions affecting their families were made (ILO 2010). In Georgia, Hofmann and Buckley (2008) found that return migrants talked less about the money they earned preferring instead to talk about the emotional strain they had experienced when they were separated from their children. In their narratives they sought to reconcile migration with Georgian gender roles. In other words, migrant women did not conceptualise the role of providing economically for their families as a primary role or a form of identity (Devasahayam 2008). Upon return, women who had been overseas contract workers considered their role as that of housewives. In Bangladesh, Belanger and Rahman (2013) found that return migrants were stigmatised by their peers and suffered from social exclusion. For women who choose to return, the adjustment to a sedate domestic life might also be disempowering (Yu 2007). Furthermore, they may also find that the money they had remitted had not been used according to their wishes (Siddiqui 2003). This view is supported by research in the Philippines, Thailand and Indonesia which found evidence that some non-migrant husbands spent remittances on prostitutes, alcohol, gambling and remarriage (UN Women 2013).

It would seem that despite the contradictory impacts that migration has on women's agency, it has been observed to be a positive and empowering experience. By creating distance between women and their families migration allows them to make decisions about their lives without interference from husbands, parents or any other forms of traditional patriarchal authority (Siddiqui 2003; UNFPA/IOM 2006). As a consequence of migration, women have been able to achieve varying degrees of social and economic independence. According to Bastia (2007) and Yu (2007) migration conscientises women to confront and negotiate gender relations and structural inequalities.

Importantly, whether women are empowered by their migration experiences depends on women's individual capacities to reconcile the competing relationships between work and family. Park's (2008) study of Korean migrant women in America found that in the initial stages of their migration the women were reluctant to join the labour force preferring instead to devote the time to caring for their children in line with Korean normative expectations of motherhood. For these former middle class women, work signified downward social mobility. It was also evidence of a husband's inability to provide for his family. However, when forced to work as a survival strategy they subsequently rationalised that they were

doing it so that their children can have a bright future. Work was then interpreted as compensating instead of competing with their role as mothers.

### **3.7 Conclusion**

This chapter provided a review of some of the theoretical debates on international migration. Firstly, an assessment was made of the adequacy of migration theories for explaining the migration of women. The discussion encompassed a review of theories that initiate migration in the first instance followed by a review of theories that perpetuate migration. Under theories that perpetuate migration, the neoclassical economic theory uses labour market differences to explain why people migrate while the NELM suggests that migration is undertaken as a family strategy to secure livelihoods. The dual labour market theory attributes migration to the nature of demand while the world systems theory attributes migration to global economic integration. Relative deprivation causes migration when individuals or groups of people compare their living standards and social status with the personal well-being and social status of others in their communities. Conspicuous consumption by successful migrants may cause feelings of deprivation which may encourage migration. Under theories that perpetuate migration, existence of networks perpetuates migration by reducing costs and risks to migration while the systems approach sustains migration by enabling migration flows to develop stability and structure over space.

Secondly, since in the thesis the influence of husband's immobility on wifely migration is a key theme, immobility was defined in order to clarify the discussion in the analysis chapters. Several causes for immobility were discussed. Thirdly, the chapter also reviewed literature on factors that underlie married women's migration decision-making processes. It was outlined that discriminatory institutions, norms and women's care obligation curtail their mobility. Fourthly, since the migration of married women affects family members in various ways, the chapter examined positive and negative economic and social impacts of married women's migration on their families. When a woman's migration is successful the migrant household enjoys financial security but it may also cause financial dependency on remittances. Positive social outcomes may also arise from a married woman's migration. Children may have access to good nutrition, health and education. However in some cases children may lose interest in school and engage in anti-social behaviour. Migration of married women can also result in marital instability or divorce. Lastly, an appraisal of whether or not migration empowers

women was also undertaken. Research on this aspect of women's migration has yielded mixed results. Some studies provide evidence that migration is empowering for women migrants by opening up opportunities for women to assume or negotiate new gender roles. Perhaps a more realistic view is to perceive migration as empowering in some circumstances and disempowering in others depending on the context and the women migrants' socioeconomic characteristics.

## CHAPTER 4

### METHODOLOGY

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the approach I used to address the research problem in order to answer the research questions. It outlines the research paradigm that influenced the choice of the research design and the research methods that were used during data collection. The chapter also describes how the sample was chosen and how data analysis procedures were applied. In addition, the chapter outlines the stages in the research process and issues of validity and reliability. The chapter also details ethical procedures and the challenges I faced during the fieldwork.

#### 4.2 Research philosophy

Miles & Huberman (1994:4) recommend that researchers must outline their epistemological position on the nature of reality as this has a bearing on meanings that can be derived from the research data. In the research for this thesis I was guided by the interpretive epistemology and the ontological assumption that knowledge of reality is subjectively determined and is socially constructed (Husserl 1965; Crossan 2003; Mutch 2005). Furthermore, reality cannot be understood independent of its different actors (Orlikowski & Baroundi 1991: 64). Both individuals and groups of people interpret reality based on their beliefs and value systems, their memories, experiences and expectations (Darke, Shanks & Broadbent 1998).

According to interpretivists the meaning of phenomena is dynamic and based on social, cultural and historical contexts (Cantrell 1993:84). Denzin & Lincoln (2003) and Hughes (1994) assert that for interpretivists there are multiple realities. Thus, according to this research paradigm, a researcher can only find meanings to human behaviour by studying people in their social contexts in an interactive and cooperative relationship. Hussey & Hussey (1997) consider that such an approach to research enables a researcher to study social phenomena from the perspectives of research participants and the meanings and interpretations that they assign to their own actions. At the same time, interpretivist researchers acknowledge their own subjectivity during the research process (Darke et al 1998: 277).

In the research for this thesis I employed an interpretivist philosophy to investigate and understand married women's perceptions and constructions of their migration experiences and the related impact such migration has on families and spousal relationships. Qualitative methods were the dominant methods of data collection. This is because qualitative methods are sensitive to the context. At the same time, they yield detailed information about the phenomenon being studied (Neuman 2003).

### **4.3 Research design**

The research for this thesis is two pronged. It examines the independent international migration of married women from Zimbabwe. It also simultaneously explores contexts and reasons for their husbands' immobility and how they experience and cope with the absence of their wives. In order to do this effectively I needed to adopt a research design that would enable me to elicit information from the perspectives of married couples that had experienced migration. I felt that such an approach would enable me to collect detailed information on how being married affects migration decision making, attitudes, perceptions, feelings, migration motives and outcomes, spousal interactions and the context in which the migration decision was made and implemented.

Since the research questions on the topic: husband immobility and the international migration of married women from Zimbabwe are exploratory, I chose to undertake a qualitative study of migrant couples in which the wife was the migrant. Migrants in general and married women migrants in particular, are an invisible social group. I adopted a qualitative research approach in order to capture meanings, experiences, emotions and opinions (Maxwell 2005). Additionally, adopting such an approach allowed research participants to be studied within their social context by looking beyond observable behaviours, in order to develop insights into beliefs, value systems and meanings ascribed to experiences (Hammell 2002).

The methods that were used to collect data for the thesis are questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and a single focus group discussion. The focus group discussion provided a context for understanding cultural norms and societal attitudes towards the migration of married women (Valdez, Valentine & Padilla 2013). It enabled me to ascertain whether husbands with wives who had migrated held different views from husbands whose wives had not migrated. Where opinions between the two groups of husbands were varied the focus group discussion helped me to understand reasons that influence such opinions. Additionally,

the information collected from the focus group discussion helped me to explore socio-cultural perceptions and collective feelings towards married women who migrate alone. Such information enabled me to better interpret migrant wives and their husbands' perceptions and social impacts of married women's migration as outlined in sections 6.4 and 7.3 of the thesis. However, the limitation of the focus group discussion was that it collected group opinions rather than individual opinions. Furthermore, not all focus group participants felt obliged to express their opinions objectively.

Questionnaires collected information on background characteristics of research participants and the migration context. This information was then compared across different respondents. Personal and emotive information on subjective experiences like the impact of migration on spousal relationships, coping mechanisms to deal with absence of a spouse and attitudes towards the migration of women was collected using semi-structured interviews.

If I had used a research design that necessitated use of only one method, it would not have been possible to get detailed information on the research topic. The use of different methods allowed me to envision the research issues from multiple perspectives (Denzin 1970:3). In addition, using different methods allowed me to cross-check data collected using one method with data collected using other methods. This improves the accuracy of research results (Lincoln & Guba 1985; Creswell 1998; Mayoux 2006; Wolf 2010).

However, using different methods has problems of mode effect which might reduce data comparability due to among other problems social desirability bias (de Vaus 2002; Dillman 2000; Roberts, Jäckle & Lynn 2006; 2008). Mode effect occurs when an interviewee responds differently to a question because of the way in which the question was asked or presented (Roberts 2007; Lugtig et al 2011). For this thesis, interviews with non-migrant husbands were conducted face-to-face while migrant women were interviewed by telephone. Thus, the different ways in which the information on married women's migration was collected may lead to inconsistencies in the data. Face-to-face interviews can collect richer data than telephone interviews because this medium of data collection permits interaction between the interviewer and the respondent. The interviewer is able to read facial expressions and body language, make eye contact with the interviewee and hear changes in voice tones (Panteli 2002; Robert & Dennis 2005). By comparison while it may be possible to pick out changes in voice tones during telephone interviews, the interviewer cannot detect visual and

non verbal cues. A disadvantage of face-to-face interviews is that some of those interviewed face to face may be tempted to give responses that are socially desirable but which may not be necessarily truthful (Kreuter et al 2008). This can be attributed to interviewer or interviewee effects, which can range from visual and non verbal cues given by the interviewer or interviewee to the status differences between the interviewer and the interviewee (Selwyn & Robson 1998).

In the research for the thesis, the mode effect was countervailed by matching husbands and wives' responses, since the sample comprised of matched pairs of husbands and wives. Respondents were also made aware at the start of the interview that both spouses would be asked similar questions on common research themes. In addition, the mode effect was minimized from the onset by construction of questions in a manner that enabled them to be administered using different modes without unduly affecting data quality (Dillman 2000).

#### **4.4 Sample selection**

According to Patton (1990: 184), the sample size in qualitative research is determined by the objectives of the research, time and resources. Similarly, Lincoln & Guba (1985: 202) suggest that interviewing should be terminated when there is information saturation. At the start of the data collection process for this thesis I set a target sample of 30 married couples but I was only able to interview seventeen couples. However, in the final sample two couples were left out from the analysis because in one couple both husband and wife had initially migrated together. Ten years later the husband's contract expired. He then came back to Zimbabwe while his wife continued working as a nurse in Botswana. The husband did not fit in the category of immobile husbands as envisioned in this study as the husband's immobility must be present at the start of the wife's migration. The second couple was also excluded because the wife was single when she had migrated to the United Kingdom. Their marriage occurred several years after her migration although the husband continues to reside in Zimbabwe. On account of this, the sample is made up of fifteen couples.

Because of problems of locating prospective respondents for semi-structured interviews, I used non-random snowball sampling to identify and locate married men with an emigrant wife. According to Atkinson and Flint (2001), snowball sampling can be used to gain entry to and recruit dispersed and difficult-to-locate population sub-groups. Potential interviewees



were identified through chain referrals supplied by contacts (Jacobean & Landau 2003). This type of sampling reduces data collection cost associated with hidden populations.

In order to reduce selection bias I used multiple entry points to start the snowball. This is desirable so as to reduce bias by drawing information from diverse networks (Manski 2000; Schmalzbauer 2004). It allowed the inclusion in the sample of people with different socioeconomic characteristics and experiences. Altogether, I used four snowball initiation points. At the start of the research process, I used my family networks to initiate the sample. My family and I drew up a list of potential interview candidates known to us who met the research criteria. Once identified, potential interviewees were contacted and invited to participate in the research. Recruiting participants from one's social network reduces interview refusal rates among potential interviewees (Cornelius 1982:392). My family networks provided me with contact details for five couples, three of whom I could contact directly and two indirectly.

I got my second lead from a cobbler who works from under a tree at a shopping centre near where I live. Every day there is a group of men who sit with him under the same tree drinking beer while he works. I have observed this phenomenon over several years so I was sure he would suggest names of people with characteristics I was looking for. I was also certain he would spread word about the research I was doing. At our first meeting, I explained the purpose and requirements of the research and determinants of who could take part. He provided me with three names and promised to contact me if he should find more potential research participants.

My third link was provided by a woman affiliated to the Mothers' Union, an organisation made up of married female members of the Catholic Church. Through her and her network I was able to contact four couples that met the research criteria. Contact details for the rest of the sample were obtained from Midlands State University (MSU) students and my colleagues at work (4<sup>th</sup> lead). Thus, by using a wide range of networks and recruiting from different areas I was able to include in the sample people in different residential areas.

Research participants were selected based on an inclusion criterion, which I defined before I started fieldwork. In this thesis, the criterion for inclusion was a married man residing in any residential area in Gweru whose wife had worked out of the country for a period of at least six months. Since migrant wives were abroad during the course of the fieldwork, their

husbands were interviewed first. As part of the interview process, non-migrant husbands were asked to provide contact details of their wives whom I then interviewed telephonically. As a result, the transnational sample of migrant women was linked to a sample of husbands selected through snowballing in Zimbabwe.

## **4.5 Research Methods**

This section outlines in detail the research methods that were employed to collect data for this thesis. Quantitative and qualitative data for the thesis was collected simultaneously using a combination of a questionnaire, individual face-to-face semi-structured interviews, telephone interviews and a focus group discussion. Such a mix of methods was necessary because the thesis sought to collect comprehensive data which captured feelings and opinions of couples that have experienced migration.

### **4.5.1 Questionnaire survey**

According to Walsham (2006) starting with non consequential issues at the start of the interviews positively affects the interview process. To this end at the beginning of each interview I introduced myself and explained the purpose of the research and the interview. This helped to create an informal atmosphere and build a positive rapport with the interviewee, which is critical if one needs to subsequently actively engage the participant (Arksey & Knight 1999: 101). I also used the introduction to assure the research participants that the information they disclosed would be treated confidentially and anonymously. To allay any concerns they might have regarding the research process I encouraged them to ask questions or seek clarification at any time during the interview. After that I gave consent forms to research participants who then signed and returned them. Thereupon, research participants were given questionnaires for self completion. In the case of migrant women, I requested verbal consent before the start of data collection.

As outlined above, part of the empirical data for this research was collected using two types of self-developed questionnaires, one for non-migrant husbands and the other for migrant wives. Questionnaires are an effective instrument to investigate the background variables of research participants which may have fed into the migration decision making. The questionnaires I used consisted mainly of tick boxes. In the case of non-migrant husbands, self completion of the questionnaire preceded the semi-structured interview.

#### 4.5.2 Questionnaire for non-migrant husbands

The questionnaire for migrant husbands consisted of 13 questions attached to the interview guide (Appendix 3). The questionnaire collected individual information on the research participant pertaining to age, educational level, religion, employment status and sector, duration of marriage and number of own children. Household questions collected information on household size, sources of household income, residential tenure status, duration of stay at residence, childcare arrangements (if applicable), and household economic situation before and after the wife's migration. Questions about remittances collected information on regularity of receipt of remittances, size of remittances as proportion of household income and the intended use of remittances.

#### 4.5.3 Questionnaire for migrant wife

I interviewed migrant women aurally. I read out the questions and wrote down verbal responses to each question given by the migrant wife as the interview progressed. The questionnaire consisted of 16 questions (Appendix 4). The questions collected data on several variables including age, age difference with husband, duration of marriage, educational level, religion, children ever born, financial status of origin households before and after her migration, child care arrangements, role of networks in supporting wife's migration, pre-migration qualifications and profession, type of visa, employment history, mode of contact and regularity of contact with origin family, to whom they send remittances and their use, migration history and number of return visits since current migration.

#### 4.5.4 Semi-structured interviews

I was guided by the migration literature and the objectives of the thesis to formulate interview questions. In the research for the thesis I complemented data collected using questionnaires with data collected using semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the same participants directly after they had completed the questionnaire. I chose semi-structured interviews because they enabled me to capture views, thoughts, opinions and experiences of research participants (Denzin & Lincoln 2003:16). Semi-structured interviews ensure consistency but have flexibility of scope and depth (Merriam 2001; Bogdan & Biklen 1998). Semi-structured interviews allowed research participants to talk freely about their experiences and interpretations of their wives' migration. Furthermore,

semi-structured interviews enabled me to understand the individual experiences of those being researched (Denzin & Lincoln 1998). Giving participants an opportunity to talk about issues they considered important encouraged them to share their thoughts and feelings about migration with me (Seidman 1991:7). Interviews can yield unexpected and insightful information thereby giving a new perspective to the research that a researcher had not initially considered (Hair et al 2003).

All husbands were interviewed in Zimbabwe. This created spatial and temporal differentiation in the manner in which interviews for husbands and wives were conducted. As a result, there was a time lag of between one to five weeks between a husband and wife's dates of interview. This is attributed to the fact that husbands were interviewed first and only afterwards asked to provide contact details of their wives. On average a migrant woman was interviewed three weeks after the researcher had interviewed her husband on account of the need to set up interview dates. This was often dependent on the flexibility of a migrant woman's work schedule, availability and quality of telephone connection.

#### 4.5.5 Semi-structured interviews with non-migrant husbands

An important aspect of the thesis was to understand migration decision making in married couple households and its impact on spousal relationship. I particularly wanted to know why it was the wives that migrated and not their husbands. I wanted to probe husbands' attitudes and feelings towards their wife's migration in order to get insight into how spousal relationships are affected by migration of one partner. To do this, I conducted face to face semi-structured interviews with non-migrant husbands. In fact, the bulk of the data for this thesis was collected using semi-structured theme based interviews. Questions were standardised to enable the researcher to make comparison between and across cases and to draw conclusions (Bernard 2000; Bryman 2001; May 2001).

Non-migrant husbands were interviewed in several locations in Gweru as shown in Table 4.1.

**Table 4.1 Interview sites**

Place where the interview took place	Number of interviews
Researcher's house	6
Respondent's home	3
Public places	2
Respondent's work place	4

I chose interview sites after consulting the respondent. In general, I chose locations that made the interviewees comfortable and which allowed for uninterrupted and open discussion. Altogether I conducted fifteen semi-structured interviews under predefined themes (Astedt-Kurki & Heikkinen 1994; Kvale 1996) (Appendix 3). However, I kept the interviews flexible to allow the conversation between the researcher and the research participants to flow naturally. Because semi-structured interviews are flexible in language and questioning it was possible for me during the course of the interviews to use probes in order to seek detail and clarification as well as to follow up on unexpected, interesting or ambiguous comments raised by interviewees (Arksey & Knight 1999; Berry 2002; Remenyi, Williams, Money & Swartz 2002; Berg 2004:78; Stephens 2007). On several occasions while conducting interviews, research participants volunteered additional information regarding their wives' migration. I was therefore, able to seek spontaneous clarification on pertinent issues where necessary while allowing research participants to elaborate on issues they considered important. According to Ruane (2005), semi-structured interviews enable the researcher to repeat partial responses back to research participants in order to encourage further discussion and to check consistency in responses.

Using an interview guide gave me control over the interview process without being intrusive (Holloway & Wheeler 2002). I was able to adapt the content and flow of the interview to suit each research participant. The interview guide enabled me to sustain conversation with the research participants while remaining focused on specific issues (Patton 1980: 2000; Bryman & Bell 2007). The guide allowed me to ask interview questions in a particular sequence for each research participant. This ensured homogeneity in content coverage and increased the

likelihood of all questions being answered by all research participants (Daymon & Holloway 2002:171). It also ensured that the research questions and objectives were answered in a systematic manner (Bryman & Bell 2007).

On the interview guide, questions 14-58 collected qualitative data. Questions were theme based and included opinion questions, feeling questions and knowledge questions (Patton 1990: 292). Altogether, the interview guide covered five themes. The first theme contained in the interview guide was about migration decision making. A total of 15 questions (Q14-31) were devoted to understanding the context of the migration decision making, the role played by the wife or husband in the migration decision making, and whether the decision was consensual or conflictual. I also investigated the role played by other people in the migration decision making including identification of those who opposed the wife's migration and why. It would not have been possible to get in-depth information pertaining to these issues using a questionnaire hence the choice of semi-structured interviews. The second theme collected information on the husband's migration history. This was considered important in order to determine whether the wife's choice of migration destination was influenced by the husband's past migration experiences and whether his social networks abroad supported the decision of the wife to migrate. The third theme sought to determine why the husband did not migrate. A total of nine questions (Q33-41) were used to collect information on an important aspect in the thesis insofar as the husband's immobility may have created an opportunity for the migration of married women. The fourth theme was about remittances. Nine questions (Q 42-50) were asked which explored issues such as in whose name remittances were sent, instructions on how to spend the money, how remittances are spent, impact of remittances at family level and whether money or goods were also sent as reverse remittance flows to the migrant woman and reasons for doing so. The fifth theme for which data was collected was on the social impact of migration (Q51-58). Thus, sensitive issues like impact of migration on spousal relationship were left to the end (Lee 1993).

Where permission was granted, interviews were digitally recorded. However, where interviewees considered recording the interview intrusive and felt uncomfortable with being recorded, extensive notes were written down on the interview schedule. Responses of potential interviewees to requests for an interview are shown in Table 4.2.

**Table 4.2 Research participants' responses to request for an interview (n=60)**

Number of respondents	Current marital status	Agreed to be interviewed	Refused to be interviewed	Agreed to have interview recorded	Refused to have interview recorded	Refused to provide wife's contact details
10	Married	√		√		
7	Married	√			√	
2	Married	√			√	√
10	Married		√			√
6	Married		√ Undecided and would consult wife first. Refused any further contact			√
5	Married	Working out of town. No interviews were set up.	I was unable to establish further contact after initial phone contact.			
4	Married	Wives have returned permanently to Zimbabwe.	Not interviewed because many questions no longer apply.	N/A	N/A	N/A
4	Married	Husbands emigrated 2-3 months prior to start of fieldwork activities	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
12	Divorced or separated post wife's migration		√	N/A	N/A	√

N/A= Not applicable

The refusal rate to be interviewed was very high. After the first initial telephone call to request interviews only seventeen married men agreed to be interviewed. Of these ten

allowed me to record the interviews while seven consented to be interviewed but declined to have the interviews recorded. Two husbands were excluded from the sample after the interviews because immobility was not an *a priori* issue at the time of the wife's migration.

Husbands who refused to be interviewed often expressed sentiments like those captured in the quotation below.

'Your topic is too sensitive. You will know personal details about us. It is an intrusion into our private life.' (Husband A<sup>1</sup> 13/10/2012).

Five of the men I contacted said they would not participate in the research until they had consulted their wives. This is how one of them framed his response via text message:

'I phoned wife and explained only what you said. I agree with her that we do not fit in your project. She does not send money home but instead gets money from here from rentals. Well, she is an independent assertive lady'. (Husband A<sup>2</sup> 14/10/2012).

Subsequent requests for an interview with the other four men yielded negative responses. I do not know whether the deference to their wives was an excuse not to take part in the research. Twelve other men out of the total number of men I contacted told me that they had since either separated or divorced from their wives following the latter's migration. Most of them told me that they had lost contact with their former wives. Responding to my request for an interview one of them said:

'We are separated now. Do you want to open old wounds?' (Husband A<sup>3</sup> 27/10/2012).

One informant referred to this group of men as 'wounded lions'.

My contacts did not always have the latest information regarding the circumstances of potential respondents. For example, acting on the information I had been given, I contacted four men only to find out that their wives had returned permanently to Zimbabwe in 2011. In three additional cases the men had since emigrated and joined their wives. I got this information from members of the emigrant husbands' households who answered my calls requesting permission to interview them. This information was later confirmed by others who told me that they had indeed emigrated. I also experienced the discomfort of going to three houses with a view of meeting potential respondents who did not respond to calls I made on the fixed line network, only to be told that they were now deceased.



#### 4.5.6 Telephone based interviews with migrant wives

According to Creswell (1998) telephone interviews are a viable way of collecting research data. Furthermore, unlike face-to-face interviews the quality of data is not compromised by interviewer effects. Respondents are not influenced by the interviewer's gestures, expressions and body posture. Therefore, they feel less pressured to give answers that they think the interviewer wants to hear (de Leeuw 2005).

In order to recruit migrant women, I made an initial pre-interview phone call during which I explained the research purpose and requested an interview. I used migrant women's contact details which I had obtained from their husbands. It was important to interview the women themselves rather than by proxy (e.g. spouse) because women's perceptions, knowledge and experiences of their migration, reasons and intentions to return and how their own migration may have impacted on spousal relationships would not have been captured if I had interviewed them by proxy. Quality of data collected by a researcher is improved when it is reported first hand. All appointments for interviews except two were made at the convenience of the migrant women as determined by their work schedules. I wrote down responses to each question on the interview guides as the interview progressed. In order to maintain the conversational nature of the interview, I recorded meanings of what respondents said rather than the exact words of what was said. During the Christmas holidays I was able to interview two migrant women who had come home on holiday.

The first interview theme explored employment related information. Questions 18-25 required research participants to talk about their occupation at destination, relationship of the current job to background training, how the job at destination was obtained and their level of satisfaction with the current job. A significant portion of the interview explored how the migration decision making occurred, was negotiated and implemented. These issues pertaining to current migration were examined by a set of questions under the second theme (Q26-46). Some of the questions under this theme covered issues about who initiated the discussion, whether the wife made the decision alone, how it was decided that the wife should migrate and to which country, the role the husband or any other people played in the decision making and intentions to return to Zimbabwe.

The third theme examined reasons why the husband did not migrate. Questions in this section (Q47-49) explored whether the husband's non migration was voluntary, reasons why it was

the wife that migrated and not the husband and what role the husband's immobility may have played in the selection of the wife. The fourth theme explored remittance behaviour of migrant wives. Questions (50-57) collected information on motivations for remitting, regularity of remitting, identity of recipients, remittances as proportion of salary, main purpose for which money is spent and whether migrants make decisions as to how money should be spent. The fifth theme examined the social impact of migration. Questions 58-59 asked migrant women to reflect on their own migration and assess the impact their migration may have had on spousal relationship and their greatest anxiety about living apart from their husbands. I also asked about the social stigma that is attached to married women who migrate alone, whether there were any people who criticised their migration, whether they intend to come back and what plans they have for their future when they come back. After the interviews, I asked research participants for permission to abstract excerpts for use in the analysis.

As is evident, the interview guides for migrant wives and non-migrant husbands had some common themes and questions namely, migration decision making, remittance information and impact of the wife's migration on spousal relationships. I compared husbands' and wives' perspectives of migration in order to get a deeper insight into the migration decision making process in couple households and their interpretations of the impact of migration at individual and family level. Throughout the interviews with either non-migrant husbands or migrant wives, research participants were encouraged to ask me questions on any aspects of the research and the data collection process. Telephone interviews were conducted with migrant wives in seven countries as shown in Table 4.3.

**Table 4.3 Migrant wives by country of migration**

Country	Number of women
Botswana	1
Canada	1
South Africa	5
Swaziland	1
United Kingdom	6
Dubai	1
Total	15

#### 4.5.7 Focus group discussion

One focus group discussion was conducted marking the final data collection phase. It was used to stimulate discussion, explanation and elaboration. The discussion was conducted in English. A single focus group discussion was organised for six non-migrant husbands on issues arising from semi-structured interviews that required further exploration and clarification. In particular, the discussion focussed on social norms that impact on the migration of women and the social impact of the migration of married women on marital relationships. This was in response to indications by interviewees and non-interviewees alike that migration affects the stability of marriages.

According to Kitchin and Tate (2000:213) focus group interviews yield data that can be used to examine research participants' feelings, experiences and opinions. Discussion points revolved around conceptions and perceptions of husbands regarding the migration of their wives, why wives migrated and husbands did not, the experience of being separated, what husbands felt about their wives being away and levels of satisfaction with the domestic situation and marital relationships. Such data could improve our understanding of several aspects of migration including migration determinants and decisions (Lundholm, Garvill, Malmberg & Westin 2004). A group interview of this nature enabled the researcher to collect data in a social context where each participant considers his views in the context of other people's views without need for agreement or reaching a consensus (Krueger 1988).

Furthermore, such group interactions can yield data on beliefs, behaviour and attitudes, which may be overlooked when data is collected only through surveys and individual interviews (Lloyd-Evans 2006).

Focus group discussions also have the added advantage of flexibility, which enables the researcher to change the course of direction of the discussion in order to follow up on new issues as they arise thereby generating new insights and understanding (Kvale 1996). The discussion was held mid-week in the late afternoon at the Village Lodge close to where the researcher lives. I chose the location because during the week the place is less busy therefore, it reduced interruption to the discussion. The group interview was conducted using a discussion guide with open-ended questions (Appendix 5). The discussion lasted two hours. Participants were served drinks of their choice as the discussion progressed. They, however, did not allow me to record the discussion.

#### **4.6 Reliability and validity**

Reliability and validity are concepts that are used to assess the quality of research data. Reliability refers to the extent to which data collection techniques and data analysis procedures minimize errors of measurement and bias. To achieve reliability, data collection procedures when repeated should consistently yield the same results and conclusions on different occasions assuming that the phenomenon of interest remains unchanged (Schwenk 1985; Kvale 1996; Yin 2003; Ghauri & Gronhaug 2005: 257). To ensure reliability of data in this thesis, methods of data collection are explained in detail (Walsham 1995) and an audit trail of the research process has been maintained in the form of digital recordings of the interviews, handwritten notes of interviewees' responses to questions on the interview guides and a field diary. From the onset of the fieldwork, I ensured that research participants were aware that interview summaries were on demand for verification of authenticity (Krueger & Casey 2000; Bryman 2008).

Respondent validation improves the validity of research findings (Miles & Huberman 1994). In the case of telephone interviews responses were read back to participants in instances where they wanted to know whether the notes I had taken captured their viewpoints. Respondents were also free to ask me questions pertaining to the research at any time during interviews.

Validity is often described in terms of construct validity and external validity (Yin 2003). Construct validity refers to the rigour with which the study was undertaken in terms of the extent to which the study measured what it claims to investigate. In the thesis, construct validity was achieved through data and methods triangulation. The thesis used questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and a focus group discussion thereby providing opportunities to cross check the data (Webb et al 1965). Consequently, research questions were answered from different perspectives (Long 2007). Such methodological pluralism increased validity and the degree of confidence in the results.

The focus group discussion was used to validate information collected through semi-structured interviews. Data triangulation was achieved by asking migrant wives and their non-migrant husbands, common questions regarding migration decision making, use of remittances, why husbands did not migrate and the impact of migration on spousal separation. Thus, collecting the same data in different ways improved the validity of research findings (Ghauri, Gronhaug & Kristianslund 1995: 93). Furthermore, this approach to data collection enabled me to minimise incidents of selective or deceptive reporting of migration experiences by either husband or wife which may occur due to social desirability bias. Thus, I was able to validate accounts given by husbands by cross checking them with accounts given by their wives (Cornelius 1982:24). This technique allowed me to identify inconsistencies in responses given by either partner and account for them wherever possible.

External validity is whether results can be generalised. Generalisability refers to the probability that patterns observed in the phenomenon under investigation in the sample will be present in the population from which the sample was drawn (Sapsford 1999). In the thesis I used a non-probability sample. The small sample size limited the ability to generalise the results. However, the thesis yielded important insights and ideas about migration decision making in married couple households and its impacts on spousal relationships.

#### **4.7 Challenges faced**

My greatest anxiety at the start of field work was that migrant wives would refuse to be interviewed by phone by a complete stranger whom they could not engage physically. On the contrary, what I found was that once I had interviewed the husband I did not have problems contacting the wives except in one case where a migrant woman refused to be interviewed as shown in the excerpt below:

Migrant woman: How did you get my number?

Researcher: From your husband?

Migrant woman: Where did you meet him? At church?

Researcher: No at your house.

Migrant woman: How did it all begin? Anyway what is your topic about?

Researcher: International migration of married women....

Migrant woman: What do you want to know?

Researcher: Migration decision making---

Migrant women: It's my secret. Sorry.

Some of the husbands I had interviewed had told their wives to expect me to call them. The migrant woman in the interview excerpt above had not been warned. Her husband had told me he wanted it as a surprise. He was certain that his wife would be happy to talk to somebody from 'back home' at no expense to herself. He was wrong of course. In instances where the wives had no prior warning, I was asked to explain how I got their telephone numbers. I could detect a sense of wariness at the start of the interview. In some cases, unanticipated changes in migrant women's work schedules made it difficult for the researcher to interview the women at specified times. For example a scheduled interview for 02/12/2012 was postponed by six hours because the interviewee was going to help deliver a baby for a woman who had unexpectedly gone into early labour.

Meeting projected fieldwork completion dates was made more difficult by the fact that the majority of women could only be interviewed at weekends. On 04/12/2012 I had to stay up in order to interview a migrant woman in Canada at 2 am on Wednesday (local time in Zimbabwe) but 8 pm on Tuesday in Canada. The interview started at 02.15 (hours) and ended at 03.10 (hours). Thus, differences in time zones were also a challenge when conducting the research for the thesis.

My biggest challenge was the high refusal rate to be interviewed among non-migrant husbands even after mentioning contacts who had supplied me with their contact details. This made it difficult to achieve a large sample. Once my attempts to arrange an interview were rebuffed there was nothing I could do about it. The often cited reason for refusal to be interviewed was a claim to invasion of privacy. Other respondents felt that my research

collected sensitive information which they were not prepared to give. In spite of giving research participants assurance that I would keep all information in strict confidence, husbands of migrant women expressed general unease when asked to release contact details of their wives to third parties. From their perspective, such information could be passed on to immigration officials in countries of migration or intelligence operatives in Zimbabwe at a time when there was increasing rhetoric about holding early general elections in 2013 and what import this may have on the safety of past political refugees and irregular migrants. Pressure on the United Kingdom Border Agency to curb immigration had resulted in the deportation of some Zimbabweans in 2012.

#### **4.8 Pretesting**

Cooper & Schindler (2006) encourage pretesting of the research instruments before the actual research process begins. Pretesting research instruments enhances the validity of research data. After pre-testing the research instruments, the researcher can correct weaknesses and ambiguities and estimate the duration of each interview (Stake 1995: 65; Maxwell 2005:93). In view of this, the questionnaire and questions on the interview guide were pretested on two return migrants and their husbands. They were asked to comment on the design, wording and sequencing of the questions. I did this in order to ascertain whether questions effectively collected data that would enable me to answer the research questions. At the same time it enabled me to practise and test whether the interview processes, namely questioning and interview recording, would take place smoothly (Finn, Elliot-White & Walton 2000).

#### **4.9 Strengths and limitations of the research**

The strength of the thesis is attributed to the choice of the topic. The independent international migration of women from Zimbabwe and the reasons for their husbands' immobility are under researched. Apart from this, the research collected data directly from couples affected by migration and not by proxy. This is why I conducted telephone interviews with migrant wives so that I could get their perspectives instead of interviewing any other members of their family at origin. Additionally, there is data and methods triangulation resulting in credible findings.

However, the small sample size limits generalisation of the research findings to the broader population. Furthermore, retrospective questioning may have caused research participants to

give incorrect answers to questions so as to project a good image of themselves to the researcher. In addition, while the study focused on migrant women and their husbands, it did not take cognizance of migrant women whose migration was not successful and who had since returned to Zimbabwe. Failed migrants may hold contradictory views to those held by migrant women still working abroad.

#### **4.10 Ethical considerations**

Ethical clearance for the research for this thesis was obtained from The Higher Degrees Committee of the Department of Sociology in the College of Human Sciences at the University of South Africa (UNISA) (See Appendix A). The research for the thesis followed prescribed ethical guidelines for collecting data including researcher's self identification, assuring research participants' anonymity and confidentiality when collecting and processing information (Jankowski & Van Selm 2001).

At the start of each interview I introduced myself and explained the purpose of the interview. I also told interviewees that participation was voluntary and that they could terminate the interview at any time if they so desired. Both husbands and wives were assured that the information they gave would not be shared with their spouses and that in the final thesis write up no individual would be identified by name. Thus, I gave research participants information about the research to enable them to make an informed decision to participate or not to participate in the research (Bryman 2004:540). Every respondent was notified in advance about the date and time of the interview (Finn, Elliot-White & Walton 2000) and allowed to choose the location of the interview. All respondents were allowed to talk without hindrance. Before conducting the interview I asked non-migrant husbands to read and sign the informed consent form. Interviews were only digitally recorded with research participants' permission.

In the case of migrant wives who were living abroad at the time of the interview, information on the informed consent form was read out to them. The telephone interview only went ahead after they had given their verbal consent. I gave all participants my mobile phone number and residential address so that they could contact me if they had any questions regarding the interview or the research project.

#### **4.11 Data Analysis**



The research for the thesis collected quantitative and qualitative data. The two data sets were analysed separately (Creswell & Plano-Clark 2007) but merged for the purposes of explaining relationships between variables. Data on socio-demographic and contextual characteristics of research participants were collected using questionnaires. It was expressed in numerical values. Such an approach allows researchers to compare variations between cases (Seale 2004). However, quantitative data cannot generate detailed views of research participants' migration experiences or their attitudes towards migration. Hence the need to complement data collected by questionnaires with that collected by semi-structured interviews and a focus group discussion. Data collected using semi-structured interviews and a focus group discussion were analysed qualitatively.

#### 4.11.1 Quantitative data analysis

Data was analysed manually. The quantitative component of the analysis makes up a very small part of the overall data analysis. For both non-migrant husbands and migrant wives, the questionnaire collected background information on respondents' age, duration of marriage, education level, and number of children, household income, household size, mode and regularity of contact with the family among other relevant variables. Simple counts and frequencies were used to summarise background characteristics of respondents. Single variable analysis allowed me to get some indication of the occurrence of the different values of each variable. Descriptive statistics like frequencies and percentages have the advantage that data can be interpreted easily. Furthermore, descriptive statistics enable basic patterns in the data to emerge.

#### 4.11.2 Qualitative data analysis

In qualitative research the aim is not to yield quantifiable data since most of the data is presented in textual format. Qualitative data analysis entails a process of making meaning out of the data. Qualitative data can be analysed using grounded theory, framework analysis and phenomenological analysis (Rapley 2011) among others. When compared with quantitative data, there is no best way to analyse qualitative data (Patton 1999; McBride & Schostak 2008). In the thesis a participant's response to a given question is derived from a combination of interview notes and tape based analysis (Onwuegbuzie, Dickinson, Leech & Zoran 2009). During the semi-structured interview and guided by questions on the interview guide, notes were taken per each response given and written onto the spaces provided on the interview

guide per each question. I also listened to the digital recordings of the interviews and made transcriptions of digital recordings of the interviews. Questions on the interview guide were theme based. Accordingly the thesis used a theme based analysis. To analyse the data, responses were categorised under each theme as per the issues in the interview guide. Data was thematically coded, compared and analysed across cases or per sub-sample namely, husbands only sample and women only sample. There were two stages in data analysis, namely the descriptive and the analytical stage.

In the descriptive stage, data was grouped according to themes as specified on the semi-structured interview guide. This is based on predetermined response categories designed by the researcher as indicated on the interview guide. In the analytical stage, categories were analysed in order to come up with a broad picture of specific issues. The aim was to identify common themes and patterns (Bernard 2000:419). Themes and sub-themes were then described and interpreted. Where deemed necessary, direct quotes were used to support the analysis. According to Patton (1990: 78) quotations are used in qualitative data analysis because they capture respondents' emotions, thoughts, their experiences and basic perceptions.

Categories and themes can be derived inductively or deductively. In the former, themes emerge from the data as in grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss 1967). In the latter, research analysis is theory driven (Weber 1990), that is, data is fitted into predetermined categories and themes. Such themes and categories could have been identified before or during the data collection process. In this thesis, data collected using questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions was analysed deductively according to phases in framework analysis (Ritchie & Spencer 1994). Framework analysis is sufficiently flexible to allow the inclusion of new categories, themes and sub-themes that are not apparent from the beginning but which emerge subsequently from the analytical process even though the researcher had not stated them at the beginning. Framework analysis is also flexible because data analysis can occur after or during data collection.

The analysis encompasses five stages: familiarisation, identifying a thematic framework, indexing, charting, mapping and interpretation (Ritchie & Spencer 1994). During the familiarisation stage the researcher gains detailed knowledge of the interview data. This is achieved by reading the data many times and listening to the digital recordings of the

interviews. The researcher becomes immersed in the data and identifies key issues and themes. In the research for the thesis, familiarisation with the data began during interviews and note taking. Transcribing audio recordings of the interviews carried this process forward. It was essential for me to do this in order to improve the quality of subsequent interviews and to understand from respondents' perspectives their cognition of issues to which I sought answers. For logistical reasons I did not carry out interviews every day. So, during intervals between interviews, I continued to listen to interview recordings, study interview transcripts and the notes I had written during interview. I also started to engage in the process of identifying and recording recurrent issues and themes.

**Table 4.4 Thematic framework used for data classification and analysis**

<b>Main themes</b>	<b>A priori sub-themes (theoretical concepts)</b>	<b>A posteriori themes (concepts emerging from the data)</b>
<b>Main theme 1</b>  Demographic profile	1.1 Age 1.2 duration of marriage 1.3 level of education 1.4 religion 1.5 size of household 1.6 number of own children 1.7 sources of household income 1.8 remittances as proportion of household income 1.9 duration of stay at residence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some wives obtained higher qualifications after migrating</li> </ul>
<b>Main theme 2</b> Migration history of husbands/wives	2.1 number of times he/she has migrated in the past 2.2 year of first/second and subsequent migration 2.3 duration of stay at destination 2.4 reason for return migration per each migration episode 2.4 wife's intention to return from current migration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two husbands had migrated in the past</li> </ul>
<b>Main theme 3</b>  Migration decision making	3.1 initiating the discussion about migration 3.2 selecting partner who should migrate 3.3 duration it took for the decision to be made 3.4 reasons for selecting the wife for migration 3.5 role played by partners in decision making 3.6 role played by other people in decision Making 3.7 reasons for choosing destination country 3.8 reasons why wife migrated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In one case migration was not discussed; wife made decision by herself and left without telling her husband</li> <li>• One wife's kin abroad refused to sponsor her husband opting instead to sponsor her migration</li> </ul>
<b>Main theme 4</b>  Husband's immobility	4.1 reasons why husband did not migrate 4.2 whether immobility was voluntary 4.3 effect of husband's immobility on wife's selection for migration 4.3 social attitudes about men who let their wives migrate alone 4.4 husband's feelings about wife's migration 4.4 husband's intention to migrate in the next 12 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some husbands preferred job prestige at origin</li> <li>• Husband's relatives opposed wifely migration</li> </ul>

<b>Main theme 5</b>  Economic impact of wife's migration	5.1 regularity of remittances 5.2 recipient of remittances 5.3 remittances as proportion of household Income 5.5 wife's role on how remittances are used 5.6 how remittances are used	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some wives did not send remittances</li> <li>• One husband sent money to his wife</li> </ul>
<b>Main theme 6</b>  Social impact of wife's migration	6.1 number of years wife has been away 6.2 number of return visits 6.3 mode of communication 6.4 regularity of communication 6.5 impact of migration on spousal relationship 6.6 coping mechanisms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some wives had not visited their families after their migration</li> <li>• One husband had an extra-marital affair</li> </ul>

The third stage in the analysis is the indexing stage. During this stage the researcher applies the thematic framework to the data. Portions of text from interview data are matched to themes identified in stage two of the analysis. Indexed data are then arranged in charts in stage four according to headings and sub-headings as per stage two of data analysis. Key findings in the charts can be arranged either on the basis of themes or cases. When data are displayed in charts, similarities or differences in the data per each theme tend to become apparent. A chart takes the form of an analytical matrix within which a column(s) is assigned to a topic or subtopic and a row for each respondent. This makes it possible to read across the whole data set. By the time all the data has been processed there will be charts on each key topic or theme. Charts can be thematic, covering each theme across all respondents. Table 4.5 shows an example of a section of a case analytical matrix that was used to capture the migration history of couples.

**Table 4.5 A case analytical matrix used to capture the migration history of couples**

Couple #	Before wife's current migration had you ever migrated?	Year of first migration	Reason for migration	Duration of stay at destination	Reason for return	Year of 2 <sup>nd</sup> migration	Reason for migration
1   Husband	Yes	1979	Education	6 years	Visa expired	N/A	N/A
Wife	No	2002	Economic	12 years	N/A	N/A	N/A

Additionally charts can be constructed per each theme across all respondents as shown in Table 4.6. Theme boxes capture some text, key words and quotations linking chart summaries to original interview notes.

**Table 4.6 A theme analytical matrix used to collect information from husbands on why it is the wife who migrated and not the husband**

Theme	Husband couple1 (HC1)	Husband couple 2 (HC2)	Husband couple 3 (HC3)
why wife migrated and not the husband	I was nearing retirement. Migration would breach terms of my employment contract jeopardising my chance to get my pension.	Could not get travel documents. My parents are "alien".	I had health problems arising from a car accident.
Role of husband's non-migration on wife's migration	Because I could not migrate my wife could migrate because life was hard.	Since I could not migrate that meant my wife could migrate because of the financial crisis.	I was not working we needed money for my hospital bills. Since I couldn't migrate my wife was the only person who could.
Husband's feelings towards wife's migration	I still support the decision we made that she should go.	We made the right decision. Our children were able to go to university.	I stand by the decision we made.

The last stage in the data analysis is mapping and interpretation. During this stage in the analysis the aim is to examine charts in order to look for associations and explanations in the data. Data is scrutinised in order to define concepts, map the range and nature of the phenomena, provide explanations or develop typologies (Ritchie & Spencer 1994). The process is guided by research questions, objectives and the themes that would have emerged from the data itself. The interpretation of descriptive and explanatory accounts of data contained in the charts was aided by the use of quotations from interviews.

#### **4.12 Field diary**

Once I started fieldwork, I kept a diary where I listed potential interviewees. When new names were suggested by networks I updated the information. When potential interviewees could not be tracked I adjusted the list accordingly. The diary also acted as an interviewee contact summary sheet and a record of emergent issues. In it I wrote brief summaries of my reflections about how each interview progressed, where it happened, its duration and tone. I also recorded non-verbal cues, sentiments and feelings exhibited by interviewees and used them to understand the context of the responses given by the respondents (Mostyn 1985; Silverman 2001). The diary enabled me to identify questions that caused comfort or discomfort to the interviewees. This information guided me to carry out interviews in a manner that was sensitive to the interviewee's feelings. This is particularly important in cases where the interaction between the interviewer and interviewee might be affected by power relationships which might bias responses (Kerlinger 1986:387).

#### **4.13 Conclusion**

This chapter outlined the epistemological positions that guided the research for this thesis and consequently the selection of data collection methods. Data was collected using a questionnaire, face-to-face semi-structured interviews, telephone interviews and a focus group discussion. Issues pertaining to reliability and validity of research findings and ethical issues were also explained. Data analysis procedures were outlined and an assessment was given of the strengths and weaknesses of the research. The next chapter will analyse the socio- demographic characteristics of the sample.

## CHAPTER 5

### BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

#### 5.1 Introduction

In this chapter I present and analyse the questionnaire data. The discussion covers sample characteristics such as age, education, duration of marriage, level of education, employment status, religion, size of the household, number of own children, immigration status and the role of social capital in supporting women's migration. This information is important as it builds up a profile of the research participants. It also enhances the interpretation of data as the background characteristics provide the circumstances and context to the women's migration. In addition, some of the characteristics presented in this chapter help to explain why it was the wives who migrated rather than their husbands. In view of the fact that the unit of analysis was couples rather than married women migrants, characteristics of migrant women's husbands are presented alongside those of their wives as shown in Table 5.1.

#### 5.2 Main sample characteristics

**Table 5.1 Characteristics of respondents**

Couple Number	Age Group	Age difference with wife (years)	Education	Religion	Number of children	House tenure status	Duration of stay at residence (years)
1.Husband Wife	55-59 40-49	9	Degree Degree	Catholic Apostolic faith	6	Owned	2
2.Husband Wife	55-59 50-54	3	Degree O-level	Catholic Catholic	4	Owned	10
3.Husband Wife	55-59 55-59	2	Diploma O-level	SDA SDA	3	Owned	10+
4.Husband Wife	50-54 40-49	9	Degree Degree	Lutheran Lutheran	2	Owned	10+



5.Husband	55-59	10	O-level	Methodist	3	Owned	10+
Wife	40-49		O-level	Apostolic Faith			
6.Husband	65+	3	O-level	Anglican	2	Owned	10+
Wife	60-64		O-level	Anglican			
7.Husband	40-49	2	O-level	Catholic	2	Owned	10+
Wife	40-49		Diploma	Catholic			
8.Husband	55-59	5	Diploma	Catholic	3	Owned	10+
Wife	50-54		O-level	Catholic			
9.Husband	40-49	6	Diploma	SDA	2	Tenant	4
Wife	30-34		Degree	Methodist			
10.Husband	40-49	2	O-level	Catholic	3	Owned	10+
Wife	35-39		Degree	Pentecostal			
11.Husband	60-65	2	O-level	Catholic	5	Owned	10+
Wife	60-65		O-level	Catholic			
12.Husband	40-49	2	O-level	Catholic	2	Tenant	3
Wife	40-49		Diploma	Catholic			
13.Husband	40-49	2	Degree	SDA	1	Owned	8
Wife	40-49		Diploma	SDA			
14.Husband	40-49	2	O-level	Traditional Religion	2	Owned	10+
Wife	40-49		Degree	Catholic			
15.Husband	30-34	5	Degree	no religion	0	Tenant	4
Wife-	<30		Diploma	no religion			

SDA=Seventh Day Adventist

O-level= 4 years of secondary education

The research for the thesis used a sample comprising fifteen married couples. As shown in Table 5.1, the majority of husbands and wives in the sample were middle aged. Twelve male and ten female respondents were aged between 40-59 years. Six of the male respondents were aged 40-49 years while six were aged 50-59. Seven female respondents were between 40-49 years of age while three were aged between 50-59 years. It is noteworthy that young adults

were under-represented in the sample. With regard to this group, there was only one man and three women aged 39 years and below. A small number of respondents was aged 60 years and above. Of the four respondents in this age category there was an equal distribution by sex.

For all couples, husbands were older than their wives. This is a common feature in African marriages. However, the age difference between spouses is small. While the modal age difference between partners was two years, the mean age difference between couples was four years. The distortion is due to outliers, namely three couples where the age difference between spouses of nine to ten years is more than the age ranges of most couples in the sample. Overall, eleven couples had an age difference of two to five years, six years age difference for one couple and nine to ten years age difference for three couples. In some societies a small age difference is assumed to create an egalitarian position in decision making as the woman's position in the marital unit is not as strongly subordinate as it would be when the age difference between spouses is large (Barbieri & Hertrich 2005).

All respondents had formal education. Individual level analysis showed no major differences in educational attainment between husbands and their wives. Five men and five women respectively held university degrees. In one case the woman reported having obtained her degree after migration. Investing in human capital improves the opportunity to find a better paying job. Three men and four women held post secondary school education diplomas in teaching, nursing and accounting. The remaining seven men and six women had O-level or lower secondary school education. Couple level analysis showed that the education level attained by both the husband and wife was the same in five couples. Husbands were better educated than their wives in five couples while women were the better educated partners in five couples.

The sample was religiously diverse. The majority of respondents were affiliated to seven religious groups: Catholic, Apostolic Faith, Seventh Day Adventist, Lutheran, Pentecostal, Anglican and Methodist. The exception was one couple who reported that they had no religious identification and one husband who practised traditional African religion. In nine couples both spouses belonged to the same religion while in five couples spouses belonged to different religions. The range of religious categories may presuppose that belonging to any

particular religion did not constrain the international migration of married women in the sample.

With the exception of one couple, all couples had children. Eleven couples had one to three children, two had four to five children and one couple had six children. Twelve couples were living in their own houses while three lived in rented accommodation. Two of the couples reported that the houses they lived in were bought after the wife's migration. Most couples had lived at their residences for over ten years. Whereas some empirical evidence suggests that having children can limit women's migration (Eryurt 2010; Reed, Andrzejewski & White 2010), for women in the sample this was not a major factor as the majority of youngest children at the start of their mothers' migration were aged ten years or older (Table 5.2).

### 5.3 Household characteristics

**Table 5.2 Household size and age of youngest and oldest child at the start of wife's migration**

Characteristic	Number of women
Household size (excluding migrant wife)	
1-3	10
4-5	4
6-7	1
Age of youngest child at wife's migration	
<5	3
5-9	2
10-14	4
15-19	4
20 and above	1
No children	1
Age of oldest child at wife's migration	
<15	1
15-20	4
21-29	3
30 and above	2
Only one child	4
No children	1

Households were made up predominantly of the husband and his own children. The exception was in three households where in each there was a member of the extended family. Most

household sizes were small comprising one to three members (10). Four households had four to five members. Only one household had seven members. Household size can be used as an indicator of a household's consumption patterns and its relative need for remittances. The impact of household size on remittances can be positive or negative depending on the presence of economies or diseconomies of scale in consumption (Anwar & Mughal 2012).

Children's ages reflect stages in the life cycle of families. Based on the age of the oldest child for the current union, most couples in the sample had been married for between fifteen and thirty years. Of the fourteen migrant women who had children, nine migrated when their youngest children were less than fifteen years of age. This group included three women whose children were less than five years old at the start of their migration. Some of these women had not seen their children for over ten years with several women reporting that they felt the impact of migration in their relationships more with younger than with older children.

#### 5.4 Labour market activity of respondent husbands and wives

**Table 5.3 Labour market status of respondents**

<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>Number</b>
<b>Husband's current employment status</b>	
Unemployed	6
Self employed	2
Employed	6
Retired	1
<b>Wife's employment status before migration</b>	
Homemaker	3
Cross border trader	3
Teacher	5
Nurse	1
Bank teller	1
Accountant	1
Secretary	1
<b>Wife's job after migration</b>	
Care worker	4
Nurse	4
Teacher	3
Assistant cook	2
Accountant	1
Vendor	1

<b>Link between migrant woman's current job and background training</b>	
No link	3
There is a link	1
Doing the same job as at origin	5
Had not been in formal employment before migration	6
<b>When job was obtained</b>	
Before migration	3
After migration	12
<b>How first job was obtained</b>	
Referred by own friend or relative	5
Employment agency at destination	7
Newspaper advertisement	3
<b>Time it took to get first job</b>	
Less than a month	4
A month	5
Two months	3
Not applicable: got job before migration	3
<b>Number of jobs held by migrant</b>	
One job	5
Two jobs	7
Three jobs	3
<b>Number of times migrant has changed jobs</b>	
Once	4
Many times	6
Did not change jobs	5
<b>Level of satisfaction with current job</b>	
Satisfied	5
Relatively satisfied	3
Not satisfied	6

Questionnaire results showed that only six respondent husbands were employed, six were unemployed, two were self employed and one was retired. Employment sectors of those employed were education (5) and transport (1). Before migration, nine of the migrant women were formally employed albeit in the predominantly female dominated fields like teaching (5), nursing (1), bank teller (1) and secretary (1). One had been an accountant. Of those not formally employed, three were homemakers and three were cross-border traders. After migration all the women except one who was a vendor took up full time wage employment.

After migrating the number of nurses among migrant women rose from one before migration to four after migration. This is due to some migrants (bank teller, chemistry teacher and

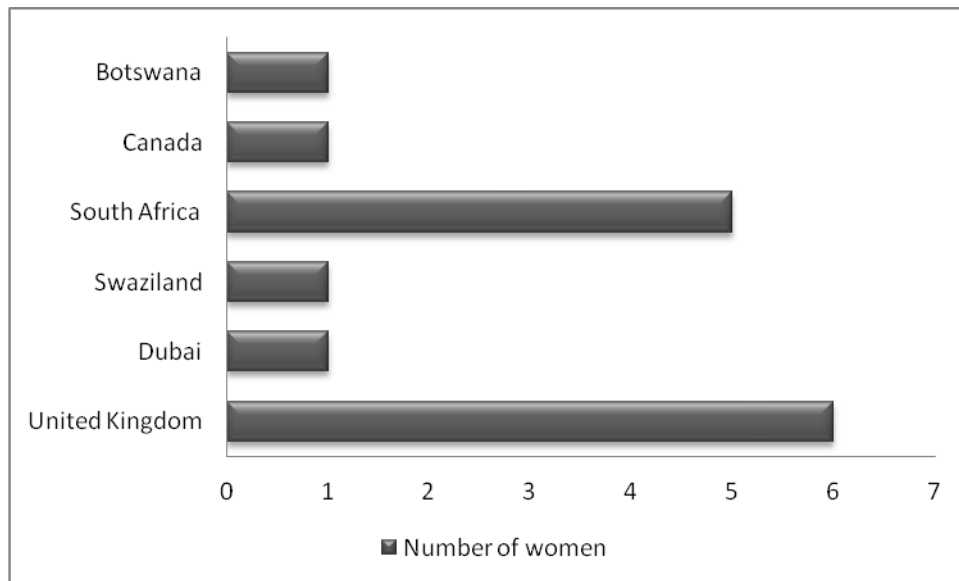
secretary) who changed career paths by training as nurses after migration. These women reported that they underwent retraining because of demand for workers in the health sector in destination countries. Furthermore, a nursing qualification guaranteed them a job after training and facilitated access to medical insurance. Women who had not previously worked outside the home shifted from an unemployed status before migration to wage employment in the care industry after migration. Demand for workers in the care sector was high and getting a job in the sector took a short time. Overall, half of the migrant women were working in low skilled jobs. Five women, comprising four teachers and one nurse reported doing the same job as before migration but for better remuneration. For three others, jobs that the women were engaged in at destination were unrelated to jobs they were doing in Zimbabwe.

Although all the women were working when fieldwork was conducted, the majority of women migrated before securing a job. Only three secured jobs before migration. These included a woman who responded to a job advertisement while still at origin. She was interviewed via Skype and secured the job. Two other women migrated after friends had secured jobs for them. Those women who secured jobs after migration got them through their friends and relatives (5) or through employment agencies (7). Once at destination most women (9) obtained their first jobs within the first month of their migration and three within the first two months after migrating.

As pointed out earlier most women migrants occupied low skilled jobs. Thus, in order to earn income for their own upkeep and to support families at origin seven women held two jobs, a day job and a night time job; three women reported having three jobs while five had one job. Only five women had not changed jobs since their first employment. Four women reported changing jobs once, while six had changed jobs many times. Women changed jobs from low to better paying ones or jobs offering better working conditions. This was true for most women regardless of whether or not they had professional training. Women also changed jobs depending on level of satisfaction with the job they had. At the time of fieldwork six women reported that they were satisfied with their jobs, three were relatively satisfied while six were not satisfied with their current jobs and were actively looking for alternative jobs. Often cited reasons for disaffection with their jobs were long working hours, job insecurity and low pay.

## 5.5 Countries of migration

Figure 5.1 Migrant women's destination countries



Women migrants were dispersed in six countries as shown in Figure 5.1. Popular destinations were the United Kingdom (6) and South Africa (5). Overall, there was pronounced intra-regional migration with seven women having migrated to countries within southern Africa (Botswana, South Africa and Swaziland) because of low transport and social costs. The United Kingdom was also an attractive destination. In light of the fact that Zimbabwe was a former colony of the United Kingdom, this suggests that past colonial ties between the United Kingdom and Zimbabwe continue to influence current patterns of migration from the country.

## 5.6 Reasons for selecting destination country

**Table 5.4 Reasons for choosing a destination country**

Major reason for choosing a destination country	Individuals	
	Husband	Wife
Husband's relatives were already at destination	1	1
Wife's relatives were already at destination	7	7
Wife's friends were already at destination	4	4
Proximity of destination to family at origin	2	2
Easy to get a work permit at destination	1	1

There was convergence between husbands and wives' accounts of how destination countries were chosen. Table 5.4 shows the major reasons why some destination countries were preferred over others. Since none of the women were pioneer migrants, a migrant woman's social networks played a key role in the selection of destination countries. Most migrants went to countries where family members, relatives or friends were already settled. Two women chose countries contiguous to Zimbabwe to allow for more frequent return visits. Swaziland was cited by one woman as a country with less stringent immigration procedures. More fundamentally, women chose countries where they had their own relatives. There was only one woman who went to a destination country where her husband's relatives were living.

## 5.7 How migrant women's migration was financed and supported

**Table 5.5 How migration was financed and supported**

Migration was financed by	Number of women
Woman's own family in Zimbabwe	2
Woman's own relatives at destination	5
Self by borrowing from micro-finance institutions	2
Both husband and wife	5
Employer at destination	1



Women's migration was financially supported by either their family members at destination or from both husband and wife's own resources. Five women reported that it was their own relatives who paid transport expenses and visa processing fees. An equal number of women reported that they and their husbands pooled their resources together and used them to meet the cost of their migration. Two migrant women borrowed money from micro-finance institutions to meet the cost of migration. The migration of two other women was sponsored by their family members in Zimbabwe. Once the women had migrated they received various forms of support at destination as shown in Table 5.6.

### 5.8 Support that women received at destination (multiple responses)

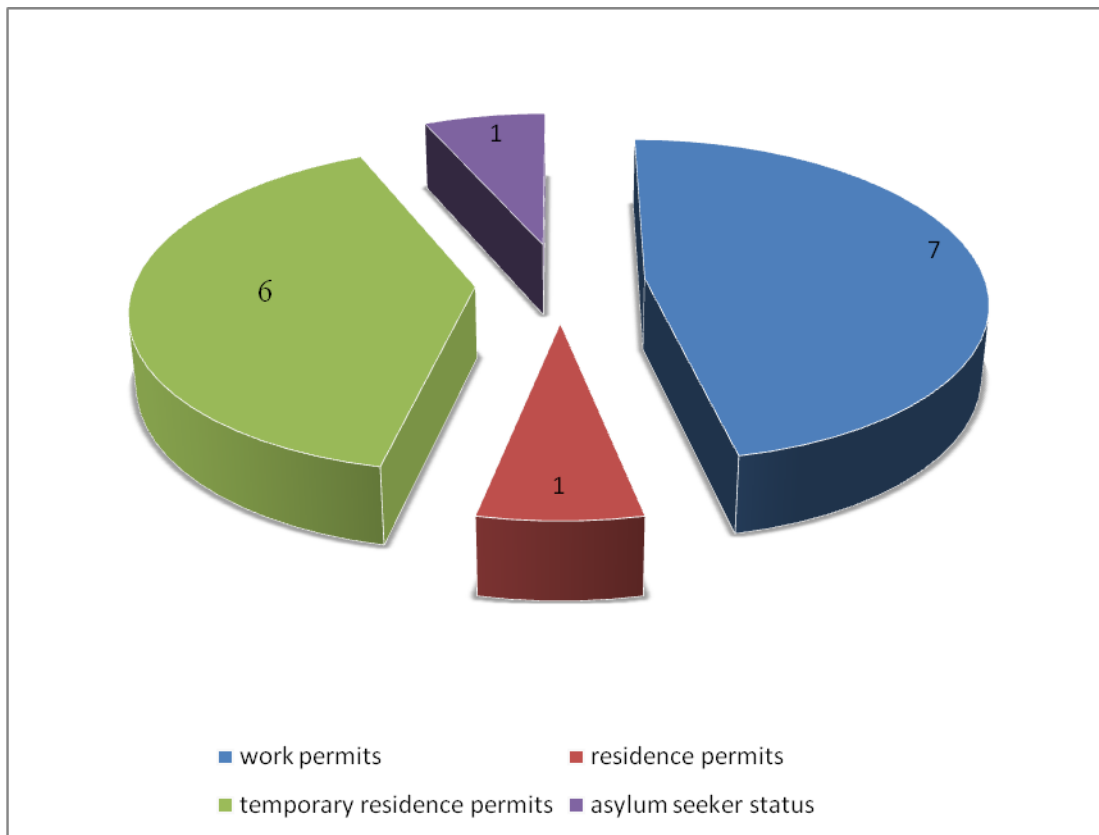
**Table 5.6 Types of support that women received from social networks at destination**

Statement	Number of women
Migrant's relatives and friends provided accommodation	12
Husband's relatives and friends provided accommodation	1
Migrant's relatives and friends helped to find a job	3
Husband's relatives and friends helped to find a job	1
Migrant's relatives loaned them money	5
Employer provided accommodation	1

During the early days of their migration, most migrants shared accommodation with family members (brothers and sisters in particular) or friends. They also got financial assistance in the form of small loans payable when they got employed and earned regular income of their own. In some cases, friends and relatives at destination used their own networks to help migrants find their first jobs.

## 5.9 Migrant women's immigration status at destination

Figure 5.2 Migrant women's immigration status at destination



A migrant's immigration status affects the type of job that the migrant can get, wages (as determined by skills level) and occupational mobility (Hill, Lofstrom & Hay 2010). A migrant's legal status can also affect opportunities for family reunion. All the women in the sample were residing legally in the countries of migration. Based on their immigration status, the women had work permits (7), temporary residence permits (6), and residence permits (1) and asylum seeker status (1). The group of women with work permits were mainly professional women comprising teachers (3) and one nurse who were working in southern African countries (Botswana, Swaziland and South Africa) and one accountant working in Dubai. At the time of their employment the women were granted three year renewable contracts. The group with work permits also included two non-professional women who at the start of their migration were working in South Africa as undocumented migrants but who later regularised their stay in that country. Women in the second group (6) were granted temporary residence in destination countries. Only one woman (living in the United

Kingdom) reported having residence status. The one exception was a woman who was living in the United Kingdom as an asylum seeker.

### **5.10 Conclusion**

This chapter tried to answer the research questions: What socio-demographic characteristics distinguish migrant wives from their left-behind husbands? What kinship and/or recruitment networks supported married women's migration? Questionnaire results showed that most migrant women and their non-migrant husbands were middle aged. Overall, husbands were older than their wives but the age differences were small in the majority of couples. While the majority of husbands and their wives had attained lower secondary school education, some men and women had post secondary school education diplomas and university degrees. There were instances where women were better educated than their husbands were. Women migrants were a mix of teachers, nurses, cross-border traders and women who had never worked outside the home. Since in some couples husbands were unemployed, retired or self employed some migrant women were the sole breadwinners for their families.

Social networks played a key role in supporting some women's migration. With the exception of one, women relied heavily on their own family members or friends rather than on their husbands' social networks. While five couples, self funded the wife's migration, family members of the wife living abroad paid travel expenses for five other women. Once at destination most women reported that family members, friends and relatives gave them accommodation, food, small loans and helped them to find a job. The next chapter will discuss the migration decision-making process and the role of husbands' immobility in wifely migration.

## CHAPTER 6

### HUSBAND IMMOBILITY AND MIGRATION DECISION MAKING IN COUPLE HOUSEHOLDS

#### 6.1 Introduction

Within marriages in Zimbabwe, men and women do not have equal access to migration. Power relations determine which spouse will migrate. The gender role expectation is that men migrate for purposes of employment so that they acquire financial resources to start an independent household. Married women's mobility on the other hand is limited by their roles of wife, mother and carer. In couples with traditional gender role beliefs, there would need to be exceptional circumstances to facilitate married women's independent migration.

This chapter explores migration decision making in couple households and the role husbands' immobility played in facilitating wifely migration. Exploring decision making is critical because, in the couples interviewed, decision making was the first step in the determination of which spouse should migrate. Indeed, it was during the course of such decision making that the decision on which spouse would migrate was reached. Thus, the decision making process is a useful first step in exploring factors which led to wives' migration. Premised on this discussion on decision making, the chapter will test the hypothesis that husbands' immobility facilitated wifely migration. In achieving this, the chapter will systematically analyse evidence from the interviews on why it was the wives who migrated instead of their husbands. Importantly, Zimbabwean society disapproves of married women's independent migration. As such, the chapter concludes with a discussion on husbands and wives' general perceptions of migration.

#### 6.2 Migration decision making in couple households

In the years after 2000, migration became a common subject of discussion among Zimbabweans. This was because there had been significant outflows of migrants from Zimbabwe to countries in the region and overseas. Furthermore, migration had become a key response to household survival. For couples in the research sample, the migration process was preceded by a period of migration decision making. With the exception of one, all migrant women in the sample had children. For this reason, migration was from the onset meant to be temporary with one spouse remaining at origin to take care of the children. So for

these couples, the migration decision making process entailed, but was not limited to, selecting one of the spouses for migration, choosing destination countries and evaluating anticipated outcomes against unfavourable aspects of migration.

As with most household decisions, marital power relations determined how the discussion on migration was framed. Since couples are embedded in their social environment the migration decision would not be influenced solely by the couple's motivations but also by what others thought of such behaviour. Couples were asked to retrospectively recall how in the pre-migration period they had talked about the migration process and the decision to have the wife migrate. I was also interested in finding out the partner who initiated the discussion on migration. According to Rubin (2013) ownership of the idea to emigrate is an important aspect among married couples as it gives an indication of a person's relative control over the idea to migrate in the early stages of the decision making process.

Generally, in the couples interviewed, the migration decision was undertaken in response to a migration trigger. Such triggers often assumed the form of micro and macro-level socioeconomic pressures. During the period of national economic instability (2000-2009), households experienced widespread poverty and financial insecurity. In four couples the discussion about the need for one partner to migrate was initiated by the husband.<sup>2</sup> HC14 is one such example.

'It was my idea that my wife should consider migration as a way out of our financial problems. It was the only way to have economic stability. The national economic situation was negative so we needed to do something to improve our situation. So I introduced the issue about migration. We talked about friends and relatives who had migrated and how well their families were doing. Why not us? My wife and I talked about it less seriously at first but we had several discussions about it after that first discussion'.

HC14 and other respondents reacted to the financial crisis by reallocating their breadwinning role to their wives as a way of enabling families to earn a livelihood. This entailed a change from keeping wives home-bound to encouraging and supporting their migration. This was

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<sup>2</sup> Respondents' analytical groups were described using abbreviations. Couple 1 is (C1), husband couple 1 is (HC1) and wife couple 1 is (WC1). Numbering was determined by the chronological order in which interviews with couples was conducted.

particularly evident in situations where husbands chose to become sedentary in order to facilitate their wives' migration. Allowing the wife to migrate increased benefits to the family compared to what would have been realised had the husband migrated. Like HC14, HC3 had also initiated the discussion about the need for his wife's migration.

'I initiated the discussion. I told my wife that migration would solve our financial problems seeing that we had no alternatives. That way we would have a regular income in forex with which to buy food and pay fees for our children. I told her we could ask her sisters abroad to assist with relocation costs. The longer we waited the more difficult life would become' (HC3).

In seven couples it was the wife who had initiated the discussion about migration.

WC1: 'My husband studied in America. He would say 'in America life was good.' So when things became difficult in Zimbabwe it all came to me that maybe going to America would solve our problems. Based on the information about America that he had told me about, I decided to act on it. So I used it (information) to start the discussion that one of us should migrate'.

HC2: 'My wife initiated the discussion on migration. She already had a younger sister in the UK. When we had financial problems we would ask her sister for money. After sometime my wife's younger sister suggested to me that my wife should migrate as a way to deal with our financial problems. I don't blame her. We had become a financial burden to her'.

In some instances the wife initiated the discussion about migration after she had talked about migration with social contacts that had already migrated, as in the following cases.

WC7: 'It was economic reasons that drove me to start the discussion about migration. So I raised the issue with my husband. Our children were in high school. I knew we were going to be unable to pay their fees. I knew a lot of nurses who had already left the country for the same reason. I had kept in touch with them even after they had migrated.

Similarly WC10 reported that:

‘When a few of my friends at work left the country I told my husband about it. Then we talked about our own financial situation. Things were getting worse and so we talked about the need to migrate because the Zimbabwe dollar was no longer worth anything. It was necessary to go out of the country and work so as to get foreign currency’.

Networks are important in migration as sources of information, among other things. They help to boost the confidence of risk-averse people. They also raise aspirations of other people when successful migrants talk about their achievements. In the sample, more wives compared to husbands had social contacts abroad. Among husbands only HC1 and HC11 had contacts in America and the United Kingdom respectively. HC1 had several uncles and aunts who had studied in America and settled in that country. HC11 had a daughter who was working in the United Kingdom after completing a degree in nursing. Thirteen wives had relatives or friends living abroad. Wives who may have found it difficult to initiate discussion on migration with their husbands sometimes only did so after asking contacts to talk to their husbands first. HC2 reported that his wife’s younger sister had jokingly suggested that instead of asking her for money he should probably just let his wife migrate to the United Kingdom. Similarly, WC3 reported that her husband had initiated the discussion about migration only after her younger sister abroad had talked to him. HC6 reported that:

‘My wife initiated the discussion. She made reference to her friend who had migrated earlier. I had had occasion to talk to her friend in the past. Furthermore, my wife already had family members that were in the UK. I am not sure whether her desire to migrate was her idea. You never know there may have been people that put the idea in her head’.

In C4 it was unclear who initiated the discussion as both partners claimed to have done so. This might be attributed to recall problems. Questions were asked retrospectively and some respondents may have had problems recalling decisions they had made five to ten years ago. Nonetheless, there was a great willingness on the part of husbands to let their wives migrate. Among wives there were some that demonstrated a desire to break norms that restrict their mobility. As men increasingly found it difficult to provide financially for their families women were prepared to take on breadwinning responsibilities for their families. They used contacts that had migrated as role models. Overall, the evidence suggested that the majority

of women, as reported by themselves and their husbands, actively engaged their partners in discussions about migration. After the initial discussion the couples discussed migration on several occasions until a final decision was made. Most couples (10) made decisions within three months following the initial discussion about migration. This showed the urgency with which couples had to find a solution to their household financial problems. WC1 explained why this was so.

‘In my mind I had made the decision instantaneously but how could I implement it without money? It took three months to raise the airfare. I did not even wait to serve the mandatory notice period that government workers must give before resigning. I just left’ (WC1).

Similarly WC6 said:

‘We had no time to think about it too much because of our serious financial situation. We made the decision in less than a month’.

This resonates with what HC11 said:

‘We were in financial difficulties, so the decision was made soon after the suggestion that she could get care work. We made the decision in less than one month’.

There was generally consensus within couples regarding events surrounding the migration decision making. Thirteen women reported that their migration decision making had been consensual.

‘Everybody was migrating and life kept getting tougher so we agreed that she should go’ (HC3).

This was echoed by HC13.

‘The economic situation was dire and survival was a challenge. One of us had to go.’

Nonetheless, in spite of this general trend, in one couple the decision making process was more fraught despite it being reported as consensual. This is captured in the interview extract below.



‘I didn’t want to argue but I didn’t like her to go. Our son was only 4 years old and I thought he needed her love. Her mother constantly nagged us about the fact that she should migrate. Eventually I gave in’ (HC9).

Only one woman made her migration decision in secret and left without telling her husband.

‘My living conditions were terrible. I was physically abused by my husband in the presence of my children and other people. I felt humiliated. I attempted suicide once by taking an overdose of malaria tablets. I stayed in hospital and was counselled. I then decided to work for myself. So I just left’ (WC5).

While the majority of women migrated because there was household financial distress, WC5 migrated to escape an abusive relationship as well as to support herself economically. As such, migration is often used as a strategy for financial risk avoidance for both individuals and households. Five women reported that they had made the final decision for their migration as reported below.

WC1: ‘I made the decision to migrate because we had nothing. Inflation made it difficult to live in Zimbabwe. In the end he (husband) realised that he had no choice so he supported my decision’.

WC4: ‘The situation was hopeless financially. If I had waited the family would have run out of food. I decided to go for the sake of the family’.

WC9: I made the decision because we had pressing money issues that needed sorting out’.

WC12: ‘I made the final decision. I noticed that my husband was sick and would not be able to work for a long time. I deliberately created emotional tension in our relationship in order to wear him down. I was insistent. I left him no room to think otherwise. It was so obvious we had no other means of survival’.

Joint decision making was reported by WC13 and WC15.

WC13: ‘Our vision for our children’s future pushed us to do this’.

WC15: ‘Both of us made the decision for my migration. There was no way we could build a future otherwise in Zimbabwe without a reliable source of income’.

In the remaining eight couples it was the husband who made the final decision. A typical response common to this group of husbands was advanced by HC3:

‘I made the final decision for my wife’s migration. Nobody else could. I am the head of the family. She had to formally ask for my permission to migrate because traditionally she has to’.

This group of husbands used culture to rationalise their dominance in decision making, often remarking that the ‘husband is the head of the family’. This is derived from the traditional gender role ideology which gives men control over women. Although the embedded social norms in Zimbabwe privilege the husband with primary decision making power, the women in the sample had participated actively in the migration decision. Several women had not only initiated the discussion but had made the final decision about their migration. The discussion above highlighted factors that shaped couples’ migration decision making process. Having noted that couples typically decided that migration was in their best interests, the next section explores how, in those cases in which the wife did not decide to migrate on her own, the decision on which spouse would migrate was arrived at.

### **6.3 Did husbands’ immobility facilitate wives migration?**

The initial hypothesis adopted in the thesis was that husbands’ immobility facilitated wifely migration. There was extensive justification on which to base this assumption. For instance, from a cultural perspective, Zimbabwe is a very patriarchal society. There are gendered social perceptions of women as immobile and men as mobile. These gender norms were likely to mediate the decision on married women’s migration. The hypothesis was also shaped by consideration of the fact that, in Zimbabwe men predominantly dominate household decision making because they are the *de facto* heads of families. Furthermore, when men pay bride price for their wives it takes away women’s self-authority over their lives. Payment of bride price bestows on the husband and his relatives rights of control over the woman. Control of a husband over his wife is perceived as a mandate of masculinity that culminates in control over his wife’s sexual fidelity. In addition, in Zimbabwe the migration of married women in the sample put two gender roles under scrutiny. Breadwinning is a man’s role while nurturing and caring for children, the elderly and the sick falls on the women. When women migrate with their husbands it is not as contentious as when they migrate alone. When married women migrate alone, society uses cultural prejudice to slander them for abandoning their

household and caring responsibilities. Given these constraints to married women's spatial mobility I hypothesised that in situations of extreme economic deprivation, as was experienced in Zimbabwe in the last decade, the independent migration of married women would be conceivable only when their husbands were unable to migrate.

Another justification for the hypothesis was also drawn from the dire social, political and economic situation that subsisted in Zimbabwe from 2000-2009. In surveys conducted both within and outside the country respondents cited a combination of extreme poverty, deprivation and unfulfilled aspirations as a driving force for their migration (Zinyama 2002; Bloch 2006; Crush & Tevera 2010). There were also historical precedents on which to base the hypothesis to the extent that it has been observed that the number of married women taking part in international labour migration increases when countries experience economic crisis. For instance, Zurabishvili & Zurabishvili (2010) and Hofmann & Buckley (2008) documented the feminisation of labour migration from Georgia and found that following the breakup of the Soviet Union, Georgia's economy collapsed. There was widespread unemployment and a rise in inflation. To support their families, women adopted temporary labour migration lasting two or more years. Traditional destinations were Russia and Ukraine but some women went further afield to do care work in Israel, Greece, Turkey, Western Europe and the United States. This was in spite of the fact that the social environment disapproved of married women's labour migration. Difficult economic conditions and availability of female work abroad made female labour migration a major source of income for many families despite the challenge that such migration posed to local gender norms.

A similar phenomenon occurred in Armenia. The transition to a market economy following the collapse of the Soviet Union caused widespread unemployment due to limited economic growth. During the Soviet era women had joined the labour force in large numbers. But, after the collapse of the socialist system, unemployment among women rose to 70% because they could not find work in the private sector. The removal of subsidies on food, utilities, transport and healthcare caused poverty levels to rise (Ishkanian 2002). The harsh economic situation caused households to adopt temporary or permanent labour migration as a coping strategy. Major destinations for Armenian migrants were Russia, Ukraine, the United States of America and Europe. Women migrated from Armenia driven by the need to find work and to support their families. To this day women comprise a large proportion of Armenians working

in the United States of America where they are employed in domestic work and care services (Gevorkyan, Gevorkyan & Mashuryan 2008).

Similar economic and social problems were experienced among the rest of the newly independent states of Ukraine, Moldova, Azerbaijan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan (Vashnov 1996). Labour migration from these countries in general and female migration in particular was crisis-induced (Zaionchkovskaya 1996). According to Dubnyak & Koshmanova (2011), Ukraine's economy is heavily reliant on remittances sent by women migrants working abroad. There are seven million women migrants out of a national population of 48 million. In western Ukraine in both rural and urban areas, most of the female population has left the country to work abroad.

In Moldova, economic and social restructuring in the wake of the collapse of Soviet Union caused high inflation, a decline in standards of living for the majority of the people and high levels of unemployment. To avert poverty, many families adopted migration as a survival strategy. The country's migration statistics show that a third of the population works out of the country. Half the international migrants are women who work for periods ranging from six to twelve months at a time in Russia. In Western Europe, Italy is a popular destination for Moldovan women seeking work in the domestic service sector because of similarities of Italian and Romanian languages (Heintz 2007). The women work for two to three years at a time after which it is possible to get papers to enable them to travel back and forth legally.

A comparable situation was reported by Aure (2011), with respect to the migration patterns of women from Russia. The dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991 caused a financial crisis that resulted in the devaluation of the rouble. Decline in industrial production caused high unemployment. Inflation soared and there were severe food shortages. To secure household income many women migrated from Teriberka on the Kola Province in Russia to work in fisheries in Northern Norway. Fisheries managers preferred married women, to younger women and men because they worked hard even though wages were low. They were also most likely to go back to their families after serving their contracts.

Even outside of Eastern Europe, crisis-induced feminisation of migration has been observed. For instance, the economic and political crisis experienced in Ecuador from 1998 to 2000 caused mass emigration from the country. The economic crisis was made worse by decline in revenue from oil, the country's major export. In 1999 when the economy contracted by 7.3%, the domestic currency was devalued by 60% causing inflation to rise to 60% (Jokisch &

Pribilky 2002). This caused severe economic hardships. Throughout the country, there was decline in family incomes. Poverty rose from 33% in 1995 to 40% in 1999 (IMF 2000:9; Herrera, Genta & Araujo 2008). Unemployment doubled in all the major cities. As a result, Ecuadorians responded to the crisis by emigrating.

Prior to 1990, migration was regional, predominantly from the south-central highlands to the United States of America. Migrants were largely male peasants. After the economic crisis migration became a national phenomenon and migrants were from all socio-economic backgrounds including professionals. An unprecedented number of Ecuadorians left the country. Spain replaced the United States of America as a major destination receiving 7 000 Ecuadorian emigrants per month in 2000. This contrasted sharply with the situation in 1994 when Ecuadorians in Spain totalled only 5 000 (Jokisch & Pribilky 2002). Apart from Spain, the former colonial power, other destinations were Italy, France, and other European and Latin American countries (Schurr & Stolz 2010).

An uncharacteristic feature of migration of Ecuadorians during the economic crisis-period was that women led and dominated the migration streams. In 1999, for example, between two-thirds to three quarters of Ecuadorians with Spanish working permits were women. According to Escrivá (2000: 215) women migrated in large numbers from Ecuador as a survival strategy. Most women found work in the domestic service sector providing such services as live-in maids, childcare and care for the elderly.

Certainly, there seems to be some support for the initial hypothesis based on these justifications. Despite this, it remains useful to test the hypothesis that husbands' immobility facilitated wifely migration in the couples interviewed. However, I must underline that as the research progressed, it became apparent that immobility was not as straight forward as had been initially assumed. In the ensuing discussion immobility is used to refer to factors in the pre-migration period that constrained husbands' migration. Such factors were analysed on a continuum from unquestioned immobility to satisfied immobility.

#### Unquestioned immobility/expected immobility

Respondent husbands were unquestionably immobile for various reasons. For instance, in three couples, husbands did not migrate because of poor health. HC3 and HC12 suffered from

debilitating physical illnesses while HC8 suffered from a mental illness as shown in their accounts below.

HC3: 'In 2000 my wife and I were driving back from visiting her parents. We were involved in a serious car accident. Our injuries caused us to be hospitalised. My injuries were worse than hers. She was discharged from hospital before I was. When I eventually left the hospital I realised that I had severe back problems. You know the state of our hospitals. I was told to go home and rest and take it easy but the pain kept coming back. So I was in and out of hospital many times a month. It was this pain that stopped me from going back to work as bending down caused me lots of pain. You can see therefore that when the economic situation became unbearable I could not have migrated. What work could I have gone to do when I had to endure such pain? Even before the economic problems our salaries were low. Children were growing up and soon would want to go to university. The government had stopped giving grants to university students. I know of course that I should be the one to fend for the family but we needed money to pay for my hospital stays so we agreed that she should be the one to go' (Wife migrated in 2002).

In this couple like in other couples, grinding poverty pushed families to make unconventional decisions out of sheer necessity. The culturally accepted norm would have been for the husband to migrate. However, HC3's immobility leveraged his wife into a position where she could be selected for migration. The family needed one spouse to go and work out of the country in order to generate financial resources to cover household expenses. WC3 confirmed her husband's reason for his inability to migrate. She also further explained the traditional constraints to a married woman's labour migration thus:

'He was ill and could not migrate. If he had said no, I would not have been here in the UK. You know that married women cannot leave home at will. If he says no you stay, if you are married. He is the head of the family. A woman must listen to her husband. If you do not, he will say you are disrespectful. He can send you away with nothing. He can stop you from seeing your children. Then you ask yourself what kind of life you will lead alone' (WC3).

WC3's remarks are an illustrative case of marital power patterns in patriarchal couple households. It also gives some indication of the gendered constraints to married women's

mobility. Two things are apparent from the interview excerpt above. First, in Zimbabwe the migration of married women is often controlled by their husbands. Second, women expect their husbands to provide for them and their children. WC3's subordinate position is related to men's socialization to be dominant and women's tendency to reinforce the boundaries of socially accepted behaviour. Thus, WC3's apparent lack of control over her movement may be due to internalised behaviours of how a good wife should behave. Culturally, a wife must defer to her husband's decisions in order to maintain conjugal harmony. The threat of divorce and estrangement from their children are some of the social mechanisms that are used to make women conform to patriarchal norms of marital and reproductive behaviour. WC3 reported that she had asked her sister in the UK to propose to her husband that the only way out of their economic difficulties was for her to migrate. She had not wanted to suggest to her husband that she should migrate for fear that he might get the notion that she was abandoning him because of his poor health. When the time to make the decision came:

‘He made it seem like it was totally his own idea. He never made reference to the discussion my sister had with him. I played along and did not want to spoil things. All what was important was that we should get a source of income soon’.

WC3 felt trapped by the patriarchal prescriptions of behaviour expected of a wife and mother and the desire to provide for her family. Even though a married woman had no overt power to make a decision about her migration she could covertly strategise and rally support of her siblings to achieve her aspiration to migrate. By doing this WC3 was able to influence the decision making process in order to get a favourable outcome without causing conflict in spousal relationships.

The second case of unquestioned immobility pertained to C12 where HC12 explained his health condition and circumstances leading to his wife's migration thus:

‘For two years I was bed-ridden and therefore could not provide for my wife and two daughters. The economy then collapsed. Some women we knew from church were leaving the country to work elsewhere. We saw that it was people working in other countries that were able to support their families. We were struggling and needed to find ways to change our situation. We talked about migration. I could of course not migrate. Eventually we thought it best that my wife goes to work in South Africa. That way she could come home when she could. It was not an easy decision for me in

poor health to look after our two daughters. If I was in good health I would not have allowed her to go. I would have gone myself. She would have been here with the children. My mother and my younger brother were not happy when I told them about our plans for my wife's migration. They just think that any woman who crosses the border is a prostitute. But they too had nothing. They were suffering like us. I did not listen to them. We just went ahead and she left. After a year my sister who is married actually asked my wife to help her find a job in South Africa. I do not know if my mother opposed her going. I only know she went. She had children to feed. So maybe our decision for my wife to go was not a bad thing. Nobody ever talked about it. My mother in the beginning said we should not give her any food parcels from my wife but as things became increasingly difficult and food shortages were severe she said she would get the food but say the food was only for her grandchildren. She lives with my late sister's two children (Wife migrated in 2005)'.

A combination of factors caused HC12 to let his wife migrate. His poor health, acute poverty and the fact that some women he knew were migrating persuaded him to acquiesce to his wife's migration. His mother's objection to his wife's migration was evidence that married women who migrated alone remained targets of moral stigmatisation. That HC12's sister subsequently migrated seemed to have vindicated his decision for his wife's migration. His sister's migration might have been spurred by sibling rivalry. The perceived migration success of one sibling could motivate other siblings to have an aspiration to migrate. It is not unusual for a mother-in-law to vilify a daughter-in-law for behaviour that she would condone in her own daughters. Disapproval of her daughter-in-law's migration was meant to re-establish control over her and retain her labour for the family.

When migration came up during several discussion sessions, WC12 reported that:

'I had expected a negative response given stories that were circulating of women who go to South Africa to trade sex for money. I have never prayed so hard for anything in my life as I did for an opportunity to go to South Africa to earn money to save the family. I tried very hard to play the good wife so that I get a positive response. I was very humble but insistent that a decision be made in view of our bad financial situation. I was the one in the past that had been involved in cross-border trade so I knew more about South Africa than he did. A man is the one who should provide for



his family. If he was not sick he should have been the one working here. I only came to South Africa to work because he could not have gone to look for work’.

In this case as in the earlier case, the wife deferred to her husband’s decision but used her knowledge of South Africa in a non-confrontational manner to steer the discussion in a direction that would enable her to leave in order to support her family. Like WC3, she considered her migration to South Africa opportunistic and reliant on her husband’s inability to migrate. These women would not have aspired to migrate if their husbands were in a position to migrate or if there had been alternative means of providing for their families. They subscribed to gender norms that regulate the mobility of women. This was supported by the fact that both women supported the notion that it ought to have been their husbands that migrated. In addition, they tried to exempt themselves from the stigma attached to women who migrate alone by presenting migration as the sole option that was available to them during the economic crisis period.

While HC3 and HC12 had physical health problems HC8 had a mental illness.

‘In 2005 I had a mental breakdown. I stayed in a psychiatric hospital for much of 2006. Thereafter, my relatives took me to live with them in the rural areas where they sought treatment for me from traditional healers. I stayed with them for 2 years. Eventually they brought me back to my house in town. You ask why I did not migrate. Am I healed? I do not know. Would going to a new environment trigger some mental illness? I do not know. I did not want to risk it. My wife went but I stayed’. (The wife migrated in 2010).

Another case of unquestioned immobility related to HC13 who was a soldier in the Zimbabwean Army. He was one of the respondents who in spite of the family’s financial difficulties were constrained from migrating by the terms of his work contract. He explained why he had not migrated.

‘I had considered migration at some point in the past because of financial problems when we had the economic meltdown. However, I was bound by the terms of my ten year military contract. I had to serve them through. Deserting the army has penalties. According to the Defence Act (Chapter 11:02) if I am absent from work without official leave my name will be placed on the away without leave (AWOL) list until my whereabouts were established. I could never come back to the country again with

the case hanging over me. If they found me I would be court martialed and imprisoned. As you can see my situation was complicated’.

The Zimbabwean army usually tracked down deserters using a combination of army officers, police and the Central Intelligence Organisation Officers (CIO). At times they liaised with their counterparts in neighbouring countries. So, those that deserted the army before their contracts were served needed to do so successfully otherwise they risked arrest if they were caught. It might not be possible for such people to ever come back to the country. Thus, HC13 decided not breach the terms of his contract. It was his wife who migrated instead.

The interview excerpts above give an indication of some of the factors that curtailed these respondent husbands from migrating. In order to tap into the financial resources associated with migration it was their wives that migrated for the benefit of the family. Migration was perceived as the only viable strategy out of poverty. Indications were that if there had been no economic crisis they would not have allowed their wives to migrate as they would not have been able to socially justify such migration. But since other women were migrating due to the economic crisis, there was safety in numbers. They tried to avert social censure by using other women’s migration as a pretext for their own wives’ migration. The exception was C8 where the husband reported that he had lost control in the marriage. His mental illness of several years had allowed his wife to take control over her life. Seeing that her husband had been incapacitated by his illness she made her own decision to migrate. From the above cases, it is apparent that as per the hypothesis, husbands’ immobility facilitated wifely migration.

### 6.3.2 Contextual immobility

Over the course of the research, it emerged that there were also instances where husbands were immobile from a contextual perspective. A common aspect in this manner of immobility was that economic need played a major role in determining who would migrate. While social pressures still meant that it was desirable for men to migrate, economic needs meant that gender roles were not seen as a hindrance to family survival. It emerged from interviews that under these circumstances, other factors of a contextual nature notably having valid passports, preferential destinations and skills, as opposed to unquestionable immobility, played a more important role in determining which spouse migrated.

### 6.3.2.1 Passports

Freedom of movement is a fundamental human right. However, to move across international boundaries one needs a passport. A passport is an official government document that certifies one's identity and citizenship (Research & Advocacy Unit 2008). In two cases, wives migrated despite the fact that their husbands were not unquestionably immobile. These respondent husbands belonged to a group of people who could not get passports because the Zimbabwe government had stripped them of their Zimbabwean citizenship. In interviews they gave accounts of their situation.

HC2: 'I am 59 years old. I have lived in Zimbabwe all my life. I was born in Zimbabwe to a Zimbabwean mother and a Malawian father. My Zimbabwean passport expired in 2000. I then applied for another one in 2001. As you know, to get a passport in our country you need a birth certificate and an identity document. For my first passport I had used a short birth certificate but for my second passport, they wanted me to first get a long birth certificate. I got this second document after spending three days standing in long queues. When I went to the passport office to submit my application I was told to renounce my foreign citizenship first. You see on the long birth certificate in the section on parents' details my father was classed as 'alien' because he was not born here. I have never had anything to do with Malawi. What foreign citizenship was I expected to renounce? Anyway, both my parents were dead. I took my father's death certificate to the Malawian embassy in Harare thinking if I couldn't have a Zimbabwean one then I could try to get a Malawian passport. An official at the Malawi embassy said they could not help me as I was born in Zimbabwe and my father was not there to support my claim. What if I had taken some other person's death certificate with a surname similar to mine? Without a passport I could not leave the country.'

HC10 had a similar problem. He too was unable to get a Zimbabwean passport. Like HC2 his parents were classified as 'aliens'. Apart from this, there was a further complication in his quest to get a Zimbabwean passport as contained in the interview extract below.

'I am 49 years old. Both my parents came to Zimbabwe from Mozambique to work on tea estates in Manicaland Province. I and my sister were born in Zimbabwe. When I tried to renew my Zimbabwean passport in 2001, I was told that dual citizenship was

no longer allowed. You see on my birth certificate my parents' nationality is given as 'alien'. I was told to renounce Mozambiquean citizenship first before I could get a Zimbabwean passport. But I have never had Mozambiquean citizenship. What further complicates my situation is that on my birth certificate the spelling of my surname was Kasipani which is different from that on my father's documents (Kachipari) so even proving my parentage was a problem. My sister had the correct spelling of our surname (Kachipari) so I could not even use her birth certificate or identity documents to help me explain my case. My father died a long time ago. Nobody at the Registrar of births and deaths offices would listen to my mother. Officials at the Mozambique embassy in Zimbabwe do not believe my story because the names on the documents were different'.

In order to apply for a passport in Zimbabwe, one needs to have a birth certificate and an identity document. In 2001 it became mandatory for those applying for passports to have a long birth certificate. The long birth certificate, unlike the short birth certificate that was issued before, has a section that captures details of the country of origin of parents of the bearer of the birth certificate. The nationality of foreign born parents is assigned the category 'alien' on birth certificates of their children born in Zimbabwe. From 2001 to May 2013 it was not possible for people with 'alien' stamped on their birth certificates to get Zimbabwean identity documents. The official government position was that people classified as alien should renounce their foreign citizenship first before they could apply for a Zimbabwean passport.

The two respondents above are part of a large number of Zimbabweans with similar problems. Zimbabwe has not yet introduced e-passports. The country instead issues 10-year passports. When a passport expires one has to apply for another in much the same way as a person who is applying for his/her first passport. A well publicised case of a person who was stripped of Zimbabwean citizenship was that of Judith Todd, the daughter of Sir Garfield Todd who was the former Prime Minister of colonial Southern Rhodesia (named Zimbabwe at independence). When she went to renew her passport in 2001, she was stripped of her Zimbabwean citizenship because her parents were foreign born. This was despite the fact that she had been born in Zimbabwe (Shoko 2013). The background to this lies in the fact that at independence in 1980, dual citizenship was acceptable under the Lancaster House Constitution. However, this changed when amendments were made to the Constitution

in 1983. Constitutional Amendment 13 of 1983 repealed Section 8 of the Lancaster House Constitution and introduced a new Section 2 to the Constitution of Zimbabwe outlawing dual citizenship. Persons holding dual citizenship were given up to 31 December 1985 to renounce their alien citizenship or risk losing their Zimbabwe citizenship.

Provisions under Constitutional Amendment 13 of 1983 were further strengthened by the amendment to the Citizenship Act in 2003. According to this amendment any person who was born in Zimbabwe and whose parents, or one of them, was born in a Southern African Development Community (SADC) country could renounce citizenship of that SADC country in order to conform to the citizenship of Zimbabwe Act (Section 2 (2)(a)). To get passports such people would have to renounce their foreign citizenship first. However, they could not renounce what they had never acquired in the first place from their so called countries of descent rendering them stateless. These are the amendments to the Constitution that caused HC2 and HC10's contextual immobility. Insertion of the amendments in the Constitution was perceived as opportunistic as it was meant to disenfranchise as many potential MDC voters as possible before the 2002 Presidential elections. Those whose parents were classified as aliens could not claim Zimbabwean citizenship. Furthermore, they could not get Zimbabwean identity documents and without a national identify card one could not register to vote. The amendments remained in force until 22 May 2013 when the new Constitution was signed into law. The new Constitution restored citizenship to people who had been stripped of their right to Zimbabwean citizenship on the grounds that one or both parents were foreign born.

Even for people not affected by amendments to the Citizenship Act, the process of getting a passport in Zimbabwe was arduous. All passports were processed in Harare, the country's capital city. All passport applications would therefore be forwarded to Harare via the provincial offices. Potential applicants from each district could only submit applications on days allocated to that district. Based on some kind of quota system, only a limited number of application forms were issued each day. To enhance one's chances of getting an application form (assuming one had the supporting documents) one had to sleep in the queue or join the queue as early as 1 am. Some people joined the queue in the early hours of the morning not because they wanted a passport but because they made a living out of selling their places in the queue. Being in the queue early did not even guarantee that one would be served as there were people who would go straight inside to be served ahead of those in the queue. They would have paid a facilitation fee to bribe workers at the passport office. According to then

co-minister of Home Affairs (Mrs T. Makone) the cost of a passport was US\$50 but could cost up to US\$300 after factoring in money to cover the many people that needed to be bribed (Seagraves 2010).

The passport vetting process was also rigorous. It was meant to frustrate applicants so that they continued to pay bribes. If there were spelling errors on birth and identity documents the application was automatically turned down. Although the official waiting period between applying for a passport and receiving it was about a month, it could be as long as three months or more unless a bribe was paid to quicken the process. Thus, for some couples difficulty in securing passports was seemingly a significant factor which played a role in determining which spouse migrated. For instance, HC10 noted:

‘I must say that, yes, my wife migrated because I could not go. I told you I had problems getting a passport. One of us had to go. It was the only way. We were in a financial emergency. We had really no choice. At least she had a sister there (UK) already. She could help her get a job quickly’.

Had husband HC10 been able to get a passport he would have migrated and not his wife. At the time of the interview HC10 was unemployed. He had hoped to migrate to escape the disempowerment that unemployment was causing him. His wife reported that had everything gone as planned she would have stayed with the children in line with conventional gender norms and definitions of motherhood. She only migrated out of economic necessity because her husband could not migrate.

Similarly, due to constraints they faced, some husbands were not able to carry through their migration projects. Following the marital pecking order, this group of husbands had assigned to themselves the responsibility of undertaking labour migration. Their wives were only considered for migration after it became clear that there were intractable obstacles to their migration. It appears therefore, that consistent with societal expectations, some husbands had actively sought to work abroad to relieve their families from financial difficulties. Some had demonstrated their commitment to migrate by undertaking the cumbersome process of acquiring travel documents. It was only after experiencing constraints to their own migration plans that their wives were considered for migration. However, while it remains true that passports contributed to ‘immobility,’ they seemingly could not entirely have determined which spouse migrated. For instance, husbands could have explored other avenues such as

illegal migration or border jumping into countries in the region. However, interviews revealed that, for risk-averse couples, it was other factors, some of which are discussed below, which determined which spouse migrated.

#### 6.3.2.2 Preferred destinations

At the time most wives migrated, Zimbabwe still utilised its domestic currency, the Zimbabwean dollar. As the dollar's value fell, foreign currency could be converted on the black market for significant amounts. Importantly, stronger foreign currencies such as the British Pound and the United States Dollar, translated to significantly more Zimbabwean dollars. Thus, some Zimbabweans were more motivated to migrate to destinations where they would earn salaries in these currencies than other destinations. This seems to have been motivated by respondents' interactions with other Zimbabweans whose family members had migrated to the United Kingdom and the United States and seemed to be faring better than their counterparts who had migrated regionally. Such couples had seen evidence that migrant households were not only insulated from the economic crisis but were also using remittances to buy real estate and to build houses. It also emerged however, that concerted efforts to migrate to preferred destinations were accompanied by attendant difficulties which played a critical role in determining which spouse migrated.

For instance, despite the desire to migrate to the United Kingdom and earn wages in GBP, most respondents were faced with the reality that UK visas were very hard to come by. Zimbabwe was suspended from the Commonwealth on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2003 for instigating farm invasions and violent seizure of commercial farms under the fast track land reform programme as well as for election tampering. The 2000 and 2003 elections were perceived by the international community as not free or fair. Before the suspension was lifted the Zimbabwean President decided to leave the Commonwealth on 7 December 2003. As a consequence, since 2003, Zimbabweans wishing to go to the United Kingdom had to get entry visas before departure and had to prove that they had financial support of institutions, friends or relatives. The reason for visiting the UK also determined the outcome of an individual's visa application. Applicants also had to provide proof of assets held in Zimbabwe. The rationale was that those with assets in the country were more likely to visit the United Kingdom and return to their country compared with those who had no assets. Another problem was that visa applications could only be lodged with the British Embassy in

Harare. When money was in short supply the 400 km return journey limited the number of times an individual could go to the relevant embassy to lodge appeals and new applications. The difficulties with obtaining a UK visa were apparent from the experiences of HC9.

‘I wanted to be the one that migrated so that I could provide for my family during the difficult economic period. My wife should have remained behind with our young son. But it was not possible for lack of a visa. You know up to October 2002 Zimbabweans could travel to the United Kingdom without visas. We were still members of the Commonwealth. In 2003 I applied for a UK visa but failed to get it. So it was not my choice not to migrate’.

HC9 lived in a rented house and could not support his visa application with title deeds to the property as expected. He did not even qualify for a six months visitor’s visa. After HC9’s visa application was turned down it was decided that his wife who had relatives in the United Kingdom should migrate instead. She used her sister and brother’s bank statements to support her visa application to the United Kingdom. Their desperate financial situation caused them to make a decision to have the wife migrate instead. C9’s experience suggested that family assistance also played an important role in determining which spouse migrated. Some respondents were unable to finance the migration on their own. In such instances, successful migration often depended on the conditions which attached to family assistance. In such cases, it was often the spouse whose family put up the funds who migrated. For instance, HC14 had actively sought to migrate but could not raise enough money to finance immediate pre- and post-departure expenses. During the interview he told me that:

‘I must say that I feel strongly that it is a man’s responsibility to provide for his family. I should have been the one who migrated but could not because there was no way I could raise money for the ticket, visa and settlement in the UK. My wife already had a brother and a sister in the UK. We asked them for help so I could migrate but they said they could only send money if it were my wife migrating. They said they did not trust me. They asked what if they sponsored my migration to the UK and then I abandoned my wife? In spite of my objections to the contrary they would not change their minds. Times were hard. In the end we decided that my wife should migrate’.



Thus, C14's decision on who migrated was largely determined by the family members funding the migration. Thus, respondents' answers suggested that, consistent with the idea of preferred destinations, it was not unquestioned immobility which determined who migrated. Rather, it was very often a matter of identifying which spouse could end up in a preferred destination. Additionally, potential migrants compared minimum wages across destinations. The common finding was that regional countries had much lower minimum wages compared with European countries, the United States of America and Canada. For this reason people strove to get visas to these countries. In the event that the husband was not successful the wife tried to migrate instead. Within the region, South Africa was the preferred destination. However, deportations from that country featured prominently in the print and electronic media making it an uncertain destination. According to the Centre for Development and Enterprise (CDE) (2007) and Leslie (2008), an average of 17 000 Zimbabweans were deported from South Africa per month in 2007. There were also documentary films shown on television in Zimbabwe of illegal border jumping into South Africa. Migrants were shown trying to scale razor wire fences, being abandoned by human traffickers and ultimately being rounded up by immigration officers. It is situations of this nature that may have caused some couples to evaluate some destination countries negatively. Knowing that their migration could be impeded caused some undocumented husbands to let their wives migrate instead.

### 6.3.3 Impeded mobility

There were two cases of husbands who had attempted to migrate in the past but their migration projects were not successful. In both instances they had failed to get permanent jobs. Based on past experience they had chosen not to migrate as outlined in the interview excerpts below.

'From 1982 to 1984, I worked in South Africa. I was barely earning enough to survive on. When you are self employed without a broad client base making money is not easy. I am a college trained electrician but few people trust a foreigner to come into their homes to repair electrical faults. So I decided I would not migrate again because there are many people with the kind of skill I have there. It was better for my wife to go because our daughter was already in the UK. She would help her to get a job. We would then use the money she sent to run the family farm. That is what happened' (HC11).

HC4 told a similar story of an aborted migration project. In 2006 he lost his job and decided to go to South Africa. He stayed there for eight months before returning to Zimbabwe. He was unable to find a permanent job. The odd jobs he was doing were few and poorly remunerated. He explained why it was his wife who eventually migrated.

‘My wife migrated in 2010. She was a trained mathematics teacher with a degree. At that time it was easy to get mathematics and science teaching posts through the South African Embassy in Harare. As long as one had proof of qualifications and valid travel documents it was not difficult to get a job. This was what my wife did. Although I was the one that was unemployed at the time I knew I would have trouble getting a job. The type of degree I have (Religious Studies) was not in demand so chances of getting a job in South Africa were zero. I had already tried before and failed. Meanwhile, our financial needs were great so we decided that since she could quickly get a job she should be the one to migrate’.

In couples where there was a strong external labour demand for skills that wives possessed, husbands encouraged their wives to migrate as explained by HC7.

‘My wife migrated in June 2009. She is a nurse. Nurses were in demand in regional countries and abroad. We decided she should go to a country in the region so she could visit when she could. I chose not to go because we weighed our options. I have only high school education. I am a class one driver. I had tried to find a job in Botswana and Namibia in 2007. It did not work out at all. Drivers are not in short supply, so for me to get a full-time job would not have been easy. I might get odd jobs with breaks in between of not having work. Furthermore, I would not earn very much compared with my wife. You know what Zimbabwe was like in those days when everything could only be found on the black market. We decided that my wife should go because she would get a job upon arrival. We would then have a regular income every month’.

The husbands cited above did professional self-evaluation and realised that they could not break into the destination country’s job market. Past migration experience had made them realise that their skills were not in demand.

#### 6.3.4 Satisfied/Preferred immobility

Ferro (2006) used the phrase 'satisfied immobility' to refer to a potential migrant's evaluation of the chance to go abroad as opposed to remaining in the country of origin. When migration was seen as presenting potential migrants with low economic returns to their labour they would choose to stay. Several husbands chose not to migrate for a number of reasons ranging from concerns about finding a job at destination, being under-qualified compared to their wives and presence of a strong regional and international labour demand for their wives' skills. Some husbands stated that compared to their wives, they had no networks to sponsor their migration. Others did not migrate in spite of the economic deprivation of their families because they wanted to hold on to their jobs in case the national economic situation improved. This must be understood in the context that Government ran an incessant propaganda campaign during the years of economic crisis where it told the nation that there would be a quick turnaround of the economy.

For couples where the major reason for a partner's migration was due to familial economic hardship, the decision of which spouse should migrate may have been influenced by considerations of which spouse had skills that were in demand at destination. Such rationality was necessary since most families desired an immediate solution to relieve the family's financial burden. There were also some husbands who had been promoted to senior posts at their work places who chose job prestige over migration even though salaries had been eroded by inflation. They did not think that migration would enable them to get comparable job postings. This was in part because skills acquired in countries of origin might not be transferable or in demand in the job market in destination countries as noted by HC15

'Two years ago I might have considered migrating but now I have a senior administrative position and a new career path. Although my job does not pay much now maybe when the economy gets better my income will go up. In the meantime my wife looks after the family. She was the one who migrated'

In the above and in similar cases, respondents were optimistic that the country would achieve economic turnaround in a short period of time. Therefore, they wanted to remain in positions that would enable them to benefit from future national economic stabilisation. HC15 had risen to a middle management position by rising through the ranks. He had acquired location specific skills. Upon migration the benefits would fall away. Migrating abroad would entail getting a minimum wage job. For this respondent migration was associated with substantial

opportunity costs as it would nullify his promotion and threaten anticipated future financial benefits. HC1 did not migrate for similar reasons.

‘In 2002 when my wife migrated my career here in Zimbabwe was well established. I did not think that migration would have helped my career. I had already attained two promotional grades. I had set my eyes on the bigger picture. I did not want to throw all that away in case the economy improved. I stood a good chance of getting promotion in the future. If I had migrated it meant that I would have had to go to another country and start at the bottom. My wife had left university in the last two years and was fairly junior in her job. We decided that my wife did not have much to lose if she had to start all over at the destination. This is why I chose to stay behind with the children and she migrated’. (Respondent had been promoted from teacher grade to Senior lecturer and Principal lecturer at a technical college).

Thus, respondent (HC1) feared unemployment and deskilling at destination. He believed migration might cause him to try and fit into different occupational strata. As a result he voluntarily chose not to migrate allowing instead his wife to migrate. It was considered that for her the opportunity costs of migration would be lowest.

Advanced age was given by two husbands as a reason for not migrating. Young, skilled and highly educated adults have better chances of getting jobs in foreign labour markets. They are more adaptable and manage the transition from origin to destination better than older people. The two respondents below were old and had only high school education. For this reason they reported that they had not considered migrating. HC6 did not migrate because he was already retired at the time of his wife’s migration.

‘I chose not to migrate even though my pension was small. You see, I had already retired when my wife migrated. I ask you, who then would hire a retired person in another country? In any case I love our home. I didn’t want to leave the people and places I know. We have three sons. It was best that I raise them myself. They would have given my wife problems if I had been the one that migrated. The other thing is that my wife already had relatives in the UK she would not be all alone in a strange place’. (67 years old, 4 years high school education).

Similarly, although HC5 was not yet retired he felt that given his relatively advanced age, it would be difficult to get a job in another country.

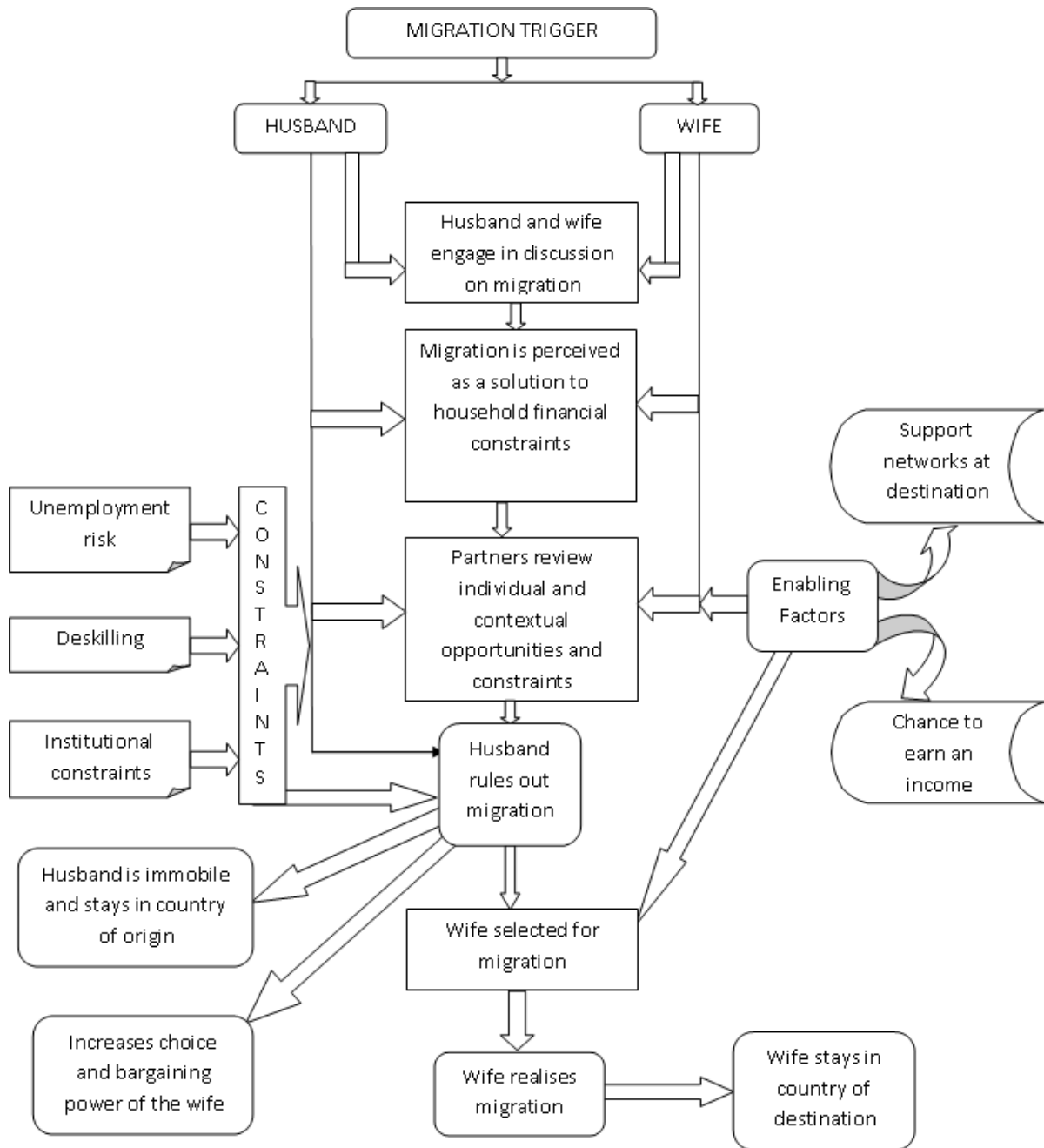
‘At over 59 years of age there were hardly any prospects for people like me with limited education. I am just a bus driver. I did not want to go. There were children to take care of. One of us had to remain to be with the children’. (Four years of high school education).

#### 6.3.5 Role played by husbands’ immobility in wife’s migration

The discussion above explained the reasons why respondent husbands in the sample did not migrate. The burden of securing household livelihoods through migration was borne by their wives. In migrant families, widespread poverty and food shortages during Zimbabwe’s economic crisis caused a shift from normative expectations of married women as mothers and wives to being primary bread winners. Research results showed that except for two couples, migration of married women was a negotiated decision. All respondents gave economic factors as push factors. Some husbands suggested or encouraged their wives to migrate. In other cases women had to strategise in order to realise their aspirations to migrate.

Importantly, the discussion above highlighted that various factors played a role in determining who migrated. Notably, while husbands’ immobility facilitated wives’ migration, such immobility was not necessarily of the unquestioned variety as hypothesised. Instead, the research revealed that it was husband immobility on several grounds which ultimately facilitated wives’ migration. This is illustrated in Figure 6.1.

**Figure 6.1 A model for explaining the link between husbands' immobility and the migration of married women**



Thus, faced with severe financial problems, couples framed the migration decision based on economic rationality rather than gender role stereotypes. While research evidence did not establish a causal relationship between husbands' immobility and wifely migration, it showed that husbands' immobility facilitated wifely migration. Some evidence of this can seemingly

be derived from the fact that most women in the sample characteristically accepted that priority for migration should be given to their husbands while accepting a sedentary role that would enable them to fulfil their maternal mandates. Their migration was a default choice after it became clear that there were intractable obstacles to some husbands' migration or in instances where some husbands had chosen not to migrate. They perceived their migration as a sacrifice they were making for their children's welfare. While husbands' immobility enabled them to justify their migration it did not assuage the guilt they carried for having committed the unnatural act of abandoning their children.

'It makes me feel bad but if I had stayed what would have become of all of us? It was the only way out of poverty. Had he chosen to migrate I should have stayed to look after the children. You know that children need their mom. It feels like I just abandoned them. The youngest was only three years old. He does not know me at all. I have not seen my children since 2002. It is difficult to have inner peace not being there with them' (WC1).

'I feel strongly that I should have remained with the children. I know he does his best to look after them but a mother must be with her children. However, we had no choice. Children have to eat and go to school' (WC7).

I must point out that it was not always possible to establish if the women's desire to stay behind with the children was a strongly held view or something the women would say to a total stranger in order to avoid social evaluation because it was a safe and socially acceptable thing to say. The women might also have felt it inappropriate to overtly show their eagerness to migrate as that would have reinforced the stereotypical view of migrant women as bad mothers. Examining the link between husbands' immobility and the migration of married women adds a new dimension to their migration. Husbands' immobility allowed marital partners to rationalise the livelihood options they made when faced with severe financial deprivation. They also used husbands' immobility to ward off criticism in a social environment where gender norms restricting women's migration conflict with the economic circumstances of many families.

#### **6.4 Perception about migration**

Respondents were asked to give a general evaluation of their migration experiences. Husbands and wives' perceptions were collected separately. It is worth noting that migrant

spouses' perceptions were shaped by how they experienced and interpreted their transnational experiences.

#### 6.4. 1 Wives' perception of their migration

Due to individual and institutional constraints the husbands in the sample did not migrate. Husbands' immobility thrust the burden of provisioning for their families on their wives' shoulders. The opportunity to migrate was relished by some but not all the women. After migrating, women who held traditional gender norms reported that their husbands ought to have migrated in line with the normative expectation of a male provider. This was rationalised in several ways, as indicated below.

'There were times when I thought it should have been better had he migrated because it was not easy for me to adapt to the new environment considering that he was not around to help me solve the problems I encountered. At the beginning I only got temporary accommodation. Finding permanent accommodation and processing the relevant documents was a problem. In some situations you are treated unfairly simply because you are a woman' (WC14).

Thus, WC14 experienced feelings of physical insecurity in the absence of her husband. She also believed that she was a victim of structural discrimination. For some women migration caused a crisis of identity. Most of the women in the sample were middle aged. According to their socialisation, a married woman's identity is rooted in traditional roles of being a wife and mother. These are the traditional gender role markers of a woman's accomplishment. Some of the women also reported that they were victims of negative social evaluation for not having fulfilled their gendered duties. In telephone conversations with acquaintances at origin they were sometimes reminded that they had chosen money over their children and marriages. Indirect criticism was received via gossip passed on by contacts both at origin or destination. WC2 reported that:

'When I came to the UK in 2004 my eldest daughter was just a little girl. This is the picture of her I still carry in my mind. Now she is married. My immigration status does not allow me to come home to visit my husband and children. I was not there at her wedding. What kind of mother does that to her little girl? I don't even know the woman that she has become'.



Women like WC2 framed their migration experiences within the boundaries of properness and acceptability. Such women were haunted by traditional notions of mothering and had not yet come to terms with transnational mothering. It is also likely that some of the women's disillusionment could be due to *ex-post facto* rationalisation of their migration. Some of them might have been victims of failed aspirations and expectations. Before 2009 any small amounts of money remitted from abroad could be changed on the black market and yield handsome rewards. Some families with members in the diaspora bought goods and assets at bargain prices because of lack of liquidity on the domestic market. However, adoption of the multicurrency regime in 2009 destroyed the black market such that it was no longer easy to be rich overnight. This made it difficult for some migrants to achieve their financial aspirations once the motivation for migration transitioned from survival to accumulation. Family members and relatives may also have contributed to this because they made persistent financial and material demands due to lack of appreciation that salaries earned abroad were relative to the cost of living in destination countries. Additionally, some women migrants might have experienced difficulties in settlement and integration as foreign-born in their host societies. As a result, they may have felt considerably isolated and disillusioned about life in destination countries (Hughes & Gove 1981; Zakar et al 2012). These sentiments were expressed by WC9 who said:

‘It’s lonely. We are sidelined in jobs. We keep improving our education out of the hope that we can get better paying jobs. It’s tough. I had not found God until I came to London. You have to put your faith in God. It is what keeps us going’.

WC9 framed her migration experience in a spiritual way in order to cope with some of the problems that migrant women encounter. They experienced discrimination because of their sex, race and cultural minority status. When they failed to achieve their migration goals as quickly as they had hoped they may have suffered from emotional dislocation out of a perceived feeling of having let down their families. Women in non-professional jobs especially suffered from job insecurity and income instability. They found it difficult to find full time employment. Their jobs were irregular, causing them to work long hours at minimum wage rates. As a result some of them struggled economically. Their lives were organised around work. Often they had to work at two or more jobs that left them exhausted. Income from one job covered their living expenses while income from the second job was for remittance money as explained by WC11.

'I work at 2 jobs, one in the morning and the other in the evening. It's the only way I can pay the bills and set aside money to send to my family. In addition, my friends and I run an informal savings club. Each month we pool together part of our savings. On a rotational basis, one of us gets the money. This is the money that we send to enable them to purchase assets back home'.

Unlike the above cases, some migrant women had embraced opportunities and challenges presented by migration despite the constraining gender stereotypes as exemplified by WC6.

'I am happy I am the one that migrated. Women have a great commitment to the family. When men migrate, they marry other women and forget about families back home. I see this happening here in the UK all the time. At times you find migrant men in relationships, what they call temporary couples. Women work very hard for the welfare of the family back home' (WC6).

Married women like WC6 perceived their migration as an opportunity to earn money in order to contribute to household income. WC1 was particularly satisfied that she was not only able to provide for her family but also to purchase assets.

'Before my migration we lived in a rented house. Things are now different. I didn't ever expect to have the things I have now'. (She facilitated the purchase of 3 houses and 2 cars).

Asset accumulation enabled migrants to diversify livelihoods thereby ensuring economic security for their families. WC1 was able to finance asset accumulation for her family thereby allowing them to achieve social mobility. Through this she was able to realise self worth and gain respect from her husband who expressed great appreciation for what she had done for the family.

For WC3, satisfaction came from knowing that her children appreciated her economic contribution to the family. A frequently mentioned reason for migration apart from economic survival was the need to provide financial resources for children's education.

'My son said, mama if you had not gone to the UK I wouldn't have gone to university. My friends dropped out for failure to pay fees at Solusi University. This is what makes being here worthwhile' (WC3).

WC4 found her migration liberating. She reported that migration had freed her from the demands made on her time by her authoritarian and controlling husband.

‘My husband wants a wife who does everything for him. He is a typical African man. He was becoming too dependent. This experience is good for him. He has learnt to look after himself’ (WC4).

#### 6.4.2 Husbands’ perceptions of their wives’ migration

Husbands’ perceptions of their wives’ migration were varied. While some husbands tended to present their wives’ international labour migration in a positive light there were a few whose views ranged from pragmatism to guilt and indifference.

‘If you do not have means to survive when there is economic turmoil, do you have a choice? Who would have paid fees for the children? It did not matter which one of us could bring in the money so it was an OK thing for my wife to migrate’ (HC11).

According to HC11, his wife’s migration was framed as altruistic. It should not be perceived as an individual endeavour but as a collective family project whose purpose was to improve the family’s income, consumption and children’s education. The same view was also shared by HC14.

‘The decision for her migration was consensual. I have no regrets. She is doing it for all of us’.

A contrasting perspective was given by HC4. His wife’s migration evoked a sense of guilt in her husband.

‘I feel bad. Normally, it is the husband who has to go. Culturally, the husband is the one who goes away to fend for the family’.

When women engage in international labour migration out of economic necessity it may threaten a man’s dignity, self-respect and masculinity. HC4 felt that he had failed to provide for his family and was worried that his economic dependency on his wife might weaken his authority over her. HC9 and HC10 reported that they had experienced emotional insecurity as a consequence of their wives’ migration.

‘I used to get really sick knowing that she was there (UK) all by herself and not knowing with whom. That was before I turned to prayer. If you pray you do not get stressed out. I give all to the Lord’ (HC9).

‘I used to find it difficult for my wife to live out there. I have now adjusted. I keep waiting for her to come home’ (HC10).

Expectancy of their wives’ unfaithfulness became a source of anxiety for HC9 and HC10. They were especially unsettled by the loss of control over their wives who were no longer emotionally and economically dependent on them. Lack of a husband’s social control was seen as bestowing on their wives great freedom and opportunity they would otherwise not get had they remained in areas of origin. For this reason, they were concerned over how their wives were spending their time in the absence of social scrutiny. Unsurprisingly, they reported having suffered from stress particularly in the early phases of their wives’ migration.

There were a few husbands who showed indifference towards their wives’ migration. Excerpts listed below were typical:

‘It’s OK I meant her to go and therefore I am OK with it’ (HC1).

‘It’s fine that she is the one that migrated. I had no regrets at the time of her migration. I have none now’ (HC11).

Such apparent indifference was observed among some husbands who had remained unemployed in the period following their wives’ migration. When talking to strangers they were likely to play down the fact that their wives’ incomes were crucial to family survival. To acknowledge their economic dependency on their wives would compromise their own conception of masculinity. Despite the contrasting views expressed by husbands regarding the migration of their wives, most of them expressed appreciation for their wives’ contribution to the welfare of their families, as explained earlier. A review of both husbands and wives’ perceptions of the migration process indicated that the decision to migrate was often mutual. The variance in perceptions shows little conflict but pragmatism. Difficulties encountered by wives were accepted as a necessary consequence of the pursuit of a better life for the family. Certainly, this does not discount the role which husbands’ immobility played in facilitating wifely migration. It suggests that husbands’ immobility was an important factor.

## 6.5 Conclusion

This chapter explored migration decision-making in couple households. It also tested the hypothesis that husbands' immobility facilitated wifely migration. When both spouses contest the candidature for migration, the odds weigh heavily against the women's migration due to male privilege. Whereas a married man can make a unitary decision to migrate, a married woman cannot since husbands control married women's mobility. The central argument in this thesis is that the migration of wives was predicated on their husbands' immobility. The research evidence suggested that husbands in the sample chose not to migrate or were constrained from migrating. Respondent husbands also reported that they had acquiesced to their wives' migration because of their own immobility a view which was supported by several migrant women.

Among couples, the husband was initially considered a candidate for migration due to culturally and structurally imposed gender role beliefs. It was only after the husband had self-excluded himself from migrating for reasons explained in section 6.3 that the wife was presented with the opportunity to migrate. Migrant women acknowledged that they would not have migrated had their husbands chosen to migrate in accordance with the patriarchal conjugal pecking order. Thus, the married women in the sample exploited the opportunity presented by their husbands' immobility to secure their families' livelihoods at a time when migration was the only optimal strategy to avert economic deprivation. While the social expectation of men is to provide for their families, the economic crisis was so severe that it weakened married women's normative immobility. Women were also encouraged to migrate because it was easier for them to find work abroad compared to their husbands.

However, due to differences in negotiating skills, bargaining power and contestations in decision-making, some women had to use a range of strategies to circumvent conjugal power and negotiate their own migration. They asked family members, relatives or friends to put pressure on their husbands to let them migrate. Women also drew upon their own social capital to harness financial resources to meet relocation costs. Other women wore down their husbands' resistance by creating friction in their marital relationships. Where decision-making was unlikely to be cooperative, one woman migrated without telling her husband. Women actively participated in the migration decision with some of them having initiated the discussion on migration. Some women made the final decision for their migration while

others made the final decision jointly with their husbands. It is noteworthy that largely, women respondents exercised some autonomy in decision making.

Although perceptions of their wives' migration varied, husbands generally portrayed their wives' migration in a positive light. Most of them were grateful to their wives for remittances which had benefited household consumption and accumulation during a time of economic crisis. Migrant women's perception of their migration also varied. Women who held traditional views on marriage and motherhood were reluctant to be the main breadwinners of their families suggesting instead that it ought to have been their husbands who had migrated. At the other end of the spectrum were women who had found migration liberating because it had freed them from the drudgery of performing reproductive tasks.

## CHAPTER 7

### ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL IMPACT OF MARRIED WOMEN'S MIGRATION ON THEIR FAMILIES AT ORIGIN

#### 7.1 Introduction

Migration is an economic and social process. Individuals and communities often use migration to improve their well being and that of their families. However, migration has consequences on spouses, children and family members who are left behind. My objective in this chapter is to examine the financial and social impact of married women's migration on their families. The chapter is organised into two parts. The first part analyses the economic impact of married women's migration on families at origin while the second part examines the social impact of their migration.

#### 7.2 Economic impact of married women's migration on families left behind

The women in the research sample for this thesis migrated as a survival strategy. Their migration was motivated by the need to send money to their families. Remittances constitute an important source of income for many migrant households. They also have a social aspect in that remittances facilitate the social mobility of some migrant households. In the short-term, remittances may be used to pay for current consumption by reducing liquidity constraints while in the long term they may be used to secure household income from volatility associated with the national economic crisis. Table 7.1 shows the contribution of migrant women's remittances to household income.

**Table 7.1 Remittances as proportion of household income**

Remittances as percentage of household income	30-40	41-50	51-60	61-70	71-80	81-90	91-100
Number of households	2	3	4	2	2	1	1

Statistics shown in Table 7.1 are for all women even though three had stopped remitting for reasons explained below. The greatest economic impact of remittances on households was that they contributed a significant proportion of household economic resources to pay for a

hierarchy of needs such as education, food, clothing and payment of utility bills as shown in Table 7.2.

**Table 7.2 Use of remittances by recipient households (multiple responses)**

Spending category	Rank order	Number of recipient households
Children's education	1	10
Assets	2	6
Living expenses	3	5
Supporting wife's parents	4	4
Supporting husband's parents	5	3
Medical expenses	6	3
Electrical appliances	7	2

Thus, the primary economic impact of migration on families was that it allowed parents to pay for children's education. Most parents had made great sacrifices to send their children to private schools, vocational training colleges and universities. Some women reported purchasing cars which they shipped from the United Kingdom so that their children could be driven to school. Education was valued by parents as a means for children to attain economic independence and social mobility. They had a general perception that having good jobs reduced children's economic dependence on their parents. Children were also in turn expected to contribute to household income in the future, thereby reducing families' reliance on migrant women's remittances. Not surprisingly, another economic impact of migration was that remittances were also used to support migrants' parents and in-laws. For instance, such money was used to purchase groceries and provide health care when necessary. In countries like Zimbabwe, where there are no welfare support programmes, parents depend on their children for income support in old age.

Generally, migrant women working in neighbouring countries preferred to buy electrical appliances in destination countries. They would then either send them to the family or bring them when next they came to visit. This explained why only a few households spent remittances on the purchase of fridges, stoves and washing machines. Thus, the impact of



migration was that it allowed families to purchase household goods which improved the wellbeing of families at origin.

Another economic impact of migration was that it also allowed families to improve their financial status in the present as well as securing their future. For instance, various women reported purchasing assets, predominantly houses, residential land and engaging in house construction, house extension, construction of perimeter walls and paving drive ways. Thus, remittances allowed couples to attain financial security by giving them the means through which to invest in real estate as insurance against future loss of income. Due to the high levels of inflation investment in housing was considered a safe investment compared with other types of investments since houses could be sold or rented out to yield income in the future. C6 also used some remittance money for farm improvements and purchase of livestock. The couple's intention was to ultimately retire to the farm while renting out their two urban houses.

There was only one case of a migrant woman who used remittances as start up capital for business formation. However, she reported that the business venture did not yield the expected result.

'I tried to establish a trucking business. So I purchased two haulage trucks and a car that my husband could use to monitor operations. Things did not work out due to poor financial management. The trucks were not properly serviced and over time broke down. It was a total loss. My husband just told me that he had stopped running the business because it was not making money. He said there was too much competition. But acquaintances in the country told me that my husband preferred spending time in a pub than running the business' (WC1).

Another economic impact of migration was that it ensured a constant source of income for households. For instance, eight husbands had not worked since their wives' migration. Among these, one was retired; two had been laid off, while two others were out of work on account of poor health. The remainder had not been able to find jobs. In fact for several households remittances were the primary source of income.

However, the economic impact of migration had not been positive for three households for various reasons. For instance, HC9, a teacher, reported that:

‘When my wife first migrated in 2001 she left our four year old son with me. She used to send money every month. She would give me a break down of how I should spend the money. But she stopped doing so because our son went to join her in 2011. The last time she sent money was end of January 2011’.

He further explained that:

‘I started getting paid in foreign currency in 2009 when the Zim dollar was officially phased out. Now she asks me to send money to support her and our son. I send her money after two or three months depending on my financial position’.

Separately, WC5 and WC8 who reported that they were emotionally estranged from their husbands were no longer sending money to them. HC5 explained the situation thus:

‘I have not received much help from my wife financially. On few occasions children ask her for pocket money when they go on school trips. She sends them insignificant amounts. I do not ask them to show me the money. It is done in secret’.

HC8 affirmed that his wife was not sending him money declaring:

‘I do not expect her to send me money. I don’t know what she does with her money. I do not know if she sends money to her children. They have not talked to me about it’.

It may also be worth noting that migration has led to limited costs being incurred by the families left behind. For instance, some remittances receiving households sent goods in the reverse direction to migrant wives as shown in Table 7.3.

**Table 7.3 Reverse remittances**

Statement	Number of husbands	Nature of remittances
Husband remits to wife	8	Money, peanut butter, groundnuts, round nuts, dried vegetables, dried mopane worms, chicken, mazoe orange crush (concentrate), rabbit meat, clothes, flowers, birthday cards, dried fish, rice (traditional) and videos
Husband does not remit	7	
Total	15	

Eight husbands reported sourcing and sending an assortment of traditional food stuffs to their wives. Food stuffs were usually dried or roasted before despatch. Such food stuffs were usually sent through friends or relatives who would have come to Zimbabwe on holiday. Alternatively, husbands with wives in neighbouring countries took and delivered the food stuffs when they went to visit their wives. Husbands gave or sent food parcels as a token of gratitude to wives who had sacrificed a lot to secure the financial well being of their families. Such nostalgic consumption reminded migrant wives of home.

For instance, on special occasions some husbands reported using courier companies to send flowers, summer clothes, birthday cards and videos of family gatherings. The account by HC6 is an illustrative example,

‘I keep rabbits. My wife was always fond of rabbit meat. She went to the UK in 2006. After five years she arranged for the whole family to meet in Botswana for a month. She could not come to Zimbabwe because she went as an asylum seeker. I tucked five rabbits under the car seats and smuggled them across the border. That made my wife very happy’.

Overall, it was remittances that migrant women sent that averted financial distress among families at origin. On account of this, migrant women assumed new social identities as primary financial providers for their families and were equally no longer financially dependent on their husbands.

### **7.3 Social impact of married women’s migration**

Zimbabwean society is very patriarchal. As such, migration through removing the wife from the family, threatened various social mores. Accordingly, married women’s migration was met with disapproval from different people who interacted with these couple households as shown in Table 7.4.

**Table 7.4 People that disapproved of wives’ migration**

People that disapproved of wife’s migration	Respondents	
	Husband	Wife
Husband’s relatives	4	8
Wife’s relatives	3	2
Friends	5	0
I don’t know	3	5
Total	15	15

Husbands reported that they were criticised the most by their own friends (5), own relatives (4) and wife’s relatives (3) for consenting to their wives’ migration. The migration of women was met with disapproval based on ingrained socio-cultural norms pertaining to a woman’s ideal role in the family.

### 7.3.1 Impact of married women’s migration on marital relationships

The impact of migration on marital relationships was quite significant. Notably, migration caused spousal separation and subjected marital relations to severe stress. Some migrant women in distant countries had lived apart from their families for periods of seven to ten years. For migrant women in neighbouring countries, separations were cyclic with migrant women coming home occasionally for visits. This helped to mitigate the effect of such separation.

However, irrespective of the duration of separation, migration of one partner was reported to have impacted the emotional well being of migrant women as well as their non-migrant

husbands. It altered established marital routines causing each partner to make some adjustments. It must be pointed out that most respondents felt uncomfortable talking about the impact of migration on their relationships. Opinions were mixed with the majority of respondents giving negative evaluations while a few said that migration had had a neutral effect on their marriages. Respondent husbands' perspectives were captured in the excerpts below.

'I long for her. I have a kind of emptiness. It makes me value her but the separation has taken its toll on me and the children. I get really lonely. I get dejected when there has been no telephone contact. It is true that I look forward to her coming back. But I wonder after staying apart for so long (9 years) whether we have not become different people. I fear that she might acquire foreign values which can complicate our relationship. I do not know if we will be able to bond together and live without conflict. When she comes it will be like starting married life all over again. Separation also affects sexual life'. (HC2 aged 59 years. Wife has not visited her family since her migration to the UK in 2004).

As described by HC2 and several non-migrant husbands, migration separated them from their partners depriving them of physical contact and affection. In spite of the separation, they had remained committed to one another by drawing strength from emotional bonds that connected them in the pre-migration period. However, migration had presented them with new challenges. HC2 was wary of the possibility that during the long period of separation they had evolved into different people which might unravel the cohesiveness of their conjugal relationship. Additionally, HC2 was uncertain as to how his wife's experience of foreign gender roles would impact on familial relationships when she eventually returned.

Migration of a partner can also cause the social isolation of the left behind partner. Some husbands reported that they avoided social occasions for fear of prejudice and stigma. Consequently, they had deprived themselves of opportunities to socialise causing low morale and anxiety as reported by (HC3).

'I miss her very much. It would be nice if she were here when children have birthdays or graduate from college. I feel isolated from society. I am like a bachelor. At church we have married couples' camp. They go on trips where they do various activities meant to bring stability to marriages. I am not allowed to take part because my wife is

not here. I have to be on my guard always when talking to women. If I talk to women people begin to question my morality and my relationship with these women. If I call my wife but get no response I get anxious. I worry about her health and about our relationship'. (Husband aged 59 years. Wife has not visited her family since her migration to the UK in 2002).

There were contrasting cases where some husbands had reported that absence of their wives had given them an opportunity to reflect on their relationships. It had made them cherish their wives more knowing that they too were making emotional sacrifices for their families. They reported that migration had brought them emotionally closer to their wives.

'I do miss my wife. It would be nice if she could stay with us. When she comes to visit it makes the parting more difficult. But I must say we have become closer and more emotionally attached. I value her and we talk a lot about our future and we make plans for children's future as well. We also consult more' (HC4). (Wife was working in a neighbouring country and visited the family occasionally).

Respondent HC6 was worried that he was getting on in years and that either partner might die before they got to live together again. For him this was a major source of concern.

'I view my wife's migration as God's intervention in our lives. Through her migration we survived the difficult economic times that the country was going through. But given my age, after being married for so many years I feel lonely. I am retired now. This is the period in my life when I should spend more time with my wife. That way I would have someone to lean on. My prayer is that we live together again before one of us passes on. It worries me a lot'. (Husband aged 65 years. Wife migrated to the UK in 2006).

Concern with spousal infidelity also emerged as an important impact associated with migration. Here, it is worth noting that while Zimbabwean society does not sanction promiscuity among men, it uses moral rules to regulate the sexual behaviour of women. Men who have extra-marital relations are esteemed for their sexual virility. Ironically, when a man has extramarital affairs it is his wife who gets the blame for his sexual transgressions. In these instances married women are blamed for failing to satisfy their husbands' sexual desires (Kambarami 2006). However, married women who have extramarital sexual relationships are

perceived as immoral and it might provide grounds for divorce. A woman who got divorced for committing adultery was considered an embarrassment to both the conjugal and natal families. The woman's family could further be asked to reimburse some portion of the bride price.

In married couple households, husbands exercise proprietary control over their wives' sexuality (UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre 2000). One way to exercise such control is to keep wives home-bound. Societal perception is that women that migrate autonomously are likely to engage in subsistence sex (Pemunta 2011). Indeed, during the focus group discussion a participant whose wife had not migrated noted that:

'If a woman migrates alone it's a challenge. You wonder what kind of life she will be living away from home. Who will monitor a woman who migrates alone? How do you know she is not living with another man? You can talk to her but you do not know if some man is in the house with her. A phone cannot tell you that'.

In some couples husbands were worried about spousal (in)fidelity. They felt that the anonymity provided by distant places and absence of social control mechanism could provide their wives with opportunities to engage in inappropriate sexual behaviour as reported by HC7 and HC9.

'I miss her and go there sometimes. We are honest with each other. I do not think that she cheats on me but then it is still a source of worry. She is a human being. She has feelings. I am scared of catching HIV. If she should have sexual relations with others it would kill me. We swore to each other that we would not risk each other's lives with HIV/AIDS. During family gatherings I am like an outcast with no sense of belonging. Everybody I know will bring their wives. It makes me feel awkward' (HC7). (Wife visited the family occasionally. She migrated in 2009).

Similarly, HC9 noted that:

'It would give me peace of mind if we were together. Our relationship is not smooth. There is too much suspicion. She suspects that I have an affair. I ask her whether there are others. I do not know what to believe. I long for her but I also know that the future is uncertain'. (Wife had never visited her family since her migration to the UK in 2001)

Overall, according to respondent husbands, migration caused loss of consortium by severing spousal support, affection, companionship and cooperation. In some instances, it had exacerbated emotional hardships and stress by putting additional tension in a marriage. Some had adopted strategies to maintain intimacy and affection across long distances. Those who could have visited their wives or their wives came home occasionally to visit. Others had to content with telephone conversations and text messaging. There were also a few husbands who immersed themselves in church associated activities as a means to cope with loneliness. This was explained in the following statements by HC12.

‘After my wife left I became more involved in church activities. I am in the choir so after children are back from school I go for practice sessions every day except weekends. It keeps me busy. Then I do not feel so lonely. When possible I also visit my wife in South Africa’. (Wife migrated in 2005).

HC8 was the only one who reported that after his wife had migrated he had an extramarital sexual partner. The couple had marital problems prior to the wife’s migration. He explained it as follows:

‘The marriage is dead, it’s broken down. When she comes home we stay in the same house but it means nothing to me emotionally. It has nothing to do with me how she spends her time. She comes and goes as she pleases. This migration has killed the marriage. I intend to live my own life. She wants to starve me of sex. She has no respect for me in the family. In a family unit a father is a father. She has a woman friend who would come and collect her to go to pubs thereby humiliating me in my own house. You should see how she dresses, not like a mature woman at all. I have nothing against her. She is fed lies by our son about me. I blame myself for the situation I am in. It doesn’t matter anymore. There is no future with her. I have a girlfriend. She does not live here because our children live here. I rent a room for her somewhere else’.

In C8, while migration did not directly contribute to marital instability, it worsened their estranged relationship. While HC8 said he was not bothered about how she spent her time when she came home for visits he was unnerved by her new found freedom and her liberal form of dress. His perception was that he had lost control over her because in Zimbabwean society married women are associated with domesticity, modesty, and subservience. Society



expects a married woman to defer to her husband in all issues pertaining to the household. Thus, marriage has remained a patriarchal institution. This was why during the interview HC8 had emphasised several times that he was the head of the family. He did not approve of his wife going to pubs at night. His perception was that such public spaces were for men. Therefore, by going to pubs his wife's morality became questionable. His views mirrored those of Zimbabwean society in general since the Zimbabwe Republic Police oftentimes indiscriminately rounded up women from bars and nightclubs and accused them of loitering for the purpose of prostitution and contravening Section 8 of the Criminal Law (Codification and Reform Law) Act, Chapter 9:23. Having an extramarital sexual partner enabled him to assert his masculinity. HC8 also described that he was under surveillance. He suspected that the couple's son monitored his activities and behaviour and passed on the information to his mother. WC8 like her husband affirmed that their marriage was dysfunctional.

'I can tell you my sister that our marriage is not a marriage. We are married in name only. There is no communication between us. We have children so when I come home I stay at our house. If I do not do that he can sell the house without my knowledge. He tried that once and I stopped him through the lawyers'.

When compared with their husbands' evaluation of the impact of migration on marital relationships migrant women predominantly expressed apprehension regarding spousal infidelity. They pointed out that since conjugal intimacy was fundamental in a marriage their husbands probably satisfied their sexual desires by finding substitute wives. Migrant women were afraid that infidelity could cause their husbands to infect them with HIV. They also did not want a situation where they were blamed for a failed marriage. This was captured in the following:

'My migration has affected our relationship. A man cannot stay without a woman. I do not know what is happening. I fear HIV. I leave it up to God. My husband is under pressure from his relatives to get himself another wife because they say I have been gone for a long time. He feels emotionally insecure and this causes loss of trust. People say things and it strains the relationship. Britain is difficult and stressful. I get lonely and I cannot get comfort from just talking to him' (WC3). (Aged 59 years, has not been home since 2002).

Similarly, WC7 noted that,

‘Living apart has affected us. We are not close unlike couples that live together. My greatest concern is HIV. There is always that fear that when I am here he is having affairs with other women. It’s difficult to know the truth. It’s a source of worry. I come home sometimes and he also visits but you always wonder if there are things he is not telling you about. It’s stressful’ (WC7). (Wife worked in a neighbouring country).

WC3 and WC7 like women and men in Zimbabwe have been socialised to think that men have an ‘innate predisposition that makes them desire many sexual partners’ (Anarfi 1993). In fact the rapid spread of HIV infection in sub-Saharan Africa has been attributed to such cultural norms about masculinity. On account of these normative beliefs migrant women were sceptical about their husbands’ fidelity causing anxiety in their marital relationships.

Furthermore, some women also noted that a significant impact of their migration on marital relationships was that long periods of separation made it difficult to sustain strong husband-wife emotional bonds. For instance, WC1 explained that,

‘The main problem is that there is emotional distance. I feel that there is a lack of closeness. Phoning is expensive. When I talk to my husband we spend most of the time talking about issues like how money I sent was used, progress made with house construction and children’s welfare. We do not really talk about ourselves or our feelings for each other. So getting emotionally close is a problem’ (WC1). (Wife has not been home since 2002 when she migrated to the USA).

From accounts given by non-migrant husbands and their migrant wives, maintaining long distance marital relationship presented formidable challenges. Separation due to migration compromised marriage ideals of companionship and intimacy. While men’s coping mechanisms were explained above, migrant women reported that they worked at two or more jobs to make more money as well as to avert loneliness by keeping busy. In addition, they phoned home as often as they could in order to maintain a presence in their families. They reported that they kept telling themselves that theirs was a worthy sacrifice for their families and that they would go back as soon as they had achieved their household financial targets.

With the permanent return migration of some migrant wives imminent as shown in Table 7.5 most respondent husbands expressed desire for their wives to return. However, they were

aware that the women coming back would be different from the ones that left. They did not know the extent to which their wives had imbued foreign value systems, attitudes and practices and how these would influence conjugal spousal expectations. As a result adjustments by either partner were deemed necessary in order to cope with their changed personalities. HC14 explained the need for adjustment thus:

‘Getting married means spouses live together. If not marriage loses meaning. It would be nice if my wife came home for good. However, I am now also used to staying alone. I can go anywhere without consulting anybody. It’s like being single again. When she comes back I would need to adjust. It might take a while. It can also cause conflict’.

While non-migrant husbands had lived an independent life without the oversight of their wives similarly, migrant women would have learnt to be self reliant and assertive. For both spouses there might be a crisis of expectations relating to lifestyle choices and divergent thinking regarding gender roles.

**Table 7.5 Year of wives’ permanent return**

Year	2013	2014	2015	Date unknown	Husband emigrating	Total
Number of women	3	2	2	6	2	15

In spite of the difficulties associated with spousal separation due to migration, the majority of couples reported stability in their marital relationships. The exception was in two couples where migration was perceived as having accentuated the level of pre-migration marital distress.

### 7.3.2 Impact of married women’s migration on gender roles

As explained earlier, a social characteristic of Zimbabwean society rooted in its patriarchal nature is that society expects a married woman to submit to her husband’s discipline and control. She is not expected to assume an independent existence. One way in which this is secured is through gender role separation. Women in general and married women specifically are assigned to the domestic sphere. Even where they have domestic help the expectation of a

good wife is that she would continue to cook for her husband and wash his clothes and not let the maid usurp these responsibilities. A woman's worthiness as a wife comes under scrutiny once the maid starts doing all household chores. Indeed some men physically abuse their wives for letting the maid take over such responsibilities. They refuse to eat food prepared by a maid and in some situations have actually married the maid to spite their wives whom they accuse of knowing too much about human rights and equal rights.

Culturally, a married woman who was deemed incompetent in carrying out her wifely responsibilities was sent back to her natal home to be inducted on how to carry out such duties effectively. This turn of events was considered a major cause of embarrassment to the woman's natal family. In addition, such incompetence could also cost a woman her marriage or be used as an excuse for a man to find another woman who could look after him 'properly'. To avert this, women were socialised to work very hard to please their husbands so that they did not embarrass their families. The cultural role of a married man was to provide and protect his wife and children. Male leadership of families and households was taken for granted and was highly esteemed.

Women were necessarily expected to perform their various reproductive tasks. In addition, they were to be at the bidding of their husbands. A woman's identity was enmeshed in that of her husband and her children. If she worked hard and performed her domestic chores diligently she was praised and held in high regard. In fact part of the lobola was meant to have compensated her natal family for the loss of her labour. Essentially, a married woman was seen as being the glue that kept her conjugal family together. So when married women migrated alone for economic reasons they were seen as encroaching public spaces reserved for men, thereby posing a threat to normative gender roles.

Given this social context, migration of married women exerted pressure on traditional gender roles within families by creating tension between women's cultural gender roles and their desire to provide economically for their families. For instance, one focus group participant observed that:

'Migration tears families apart. It's bad for a woman to leave her home. In our culture the mother is supposed to look after the home, children, her husband and his parents. 'Musha mukadzi'. (This is a Shona saying translated loosely to mean a wife makes a home). A woman has to be there to support her husband physically and emotionally.

If she migrates she denies her husband his conjugal rights. It's a license for him to have other women. Can you then blame him? If she chooses not to come back he would have wasted his time waiting for nothing. Real men do not allow a situation where they lose control over their wives'.

Thus, migration changed the normative order in a marital relationship (Galvin 1997). Migrant families had to reconfigure gender roles. For instance, when women in the sample migrated, the majority of husbands (12) assumed sole responsibility for child care.

Several reasons were given for leaving children in the care of their fathers. Most women reported that their in-laws had opposed their migration, often saying that a mother should not abandon her children and husband. Under the circumstances it was difficult to ask them to look after their children because of strained relationships between migrant women and their in-laws. Such women reported that they did not bid their in-laws farewell when they left, preferring their husbands to tell them afterwards. WC1 like several others reported that she had a frosty relationship with her in-laws over her decision to migrate.

'My husband's parents and his sisters did not want me to go America at all. They told me they were not prepared to look after my six children if I insisted on going. It was never my intention to ask them to do so anyway. My husband and I decided that the children would live with him and I would help monitor things. My own parents live in a rural area. You cannot take children raised in an urban area and make them live in a rural area. It would be difficult for them to adjust. In any case they would have to walk long distances to school. Due to lack of electricity they would be forced to do their homework by candle light. There is also too much work in the rural areas, fetching water and fire wood, looking after cattle and working in the fields. I would also not have an opportunity to talk to them often'. (Oldest child was 16 years old and youngest was 3 years old when she migrated in 2002. After training as a nurse in the United States of America she went to work in Canada).

Another common sentiment expressed by migrant women was that remittances could best benefit their children if they stayed with their fathers. The money would be used for the welfare of their children without creating a social obligation for migrant women to support several other people. They also preferred this arrangement because they wanted to protect their children from possible abuse, discrimination and exploitation by relatives who might see

them as no more than a source of money. Since the children had never stayed with these people before, migrant women did not know the quality of care they would receive. In the event that children were ill treated they might be threatened or punished for telling the truth about the reality of their living conditions. WC3 summarised it thus:

‘People back home think that in the diaspora it is easy for us to make money. They always send requests for money to do this and that. I left my children in the care of my husband because if you leave them with relatives there is no guarantee that the money you send will be spent on your children. We hear stories where children do not go to school because money was spent by relatives for their own purposes. They will also lie to you and say the school demands money for this and that when it is not true’.

Some migrant women felt that children helped to evoke a husband’s sense of responsibility to them and to the family. If children had gone to live with relatives elsewhere then the husband would have ‘too much freedom’. According to WC14:

‘If you send the children elsewhere you have dispersed the family unit. It’s a license for your husband to do as he likes. He can even have another wife. Children can at least remind him of you. Maybe if they are there he might not spend the money on other women since children need provisions but there are no guarantees.’

HC6 explained their choice for him to live with the children thus:

‘I have four sons. Boys can be mischievous. You don’t want somebody to raise them. If they turn out to be bad you cannot blame other people. So I chose to raise them myself, give them guidance and discipline. It is important to supervise their school work and be their friend and comfort them so that they do not miss their mother too much’.

Some couples felt it would traumatise the children if emotional bonds with both parents were severed by sending them to live with a third party. They preferred a situation where one parent was at least there to ease the pain of children seeing their mothers leave. It was only in two couples that child care was outsourced to either the husband or wife’s parents. One couple had no children at the beginning of the wife’s migration.

Apart from caring for their children, husbands performed household chores by themselves (3) or with the help of children (7). In the remaining households it was children who did domestic chores. In these households part-time workers were hired to do gardening and to cut the grass during the rainy season. Many husbands reported that in the beginning doing domestic work was not easy. They had always relegated that responsibility to their wives most of whom were not in formal employment. After their wives had migrated, they reported that they would often fret over what the children should eat and what clothes they should wear. They would consult their wives often about these domestic issues. However, they had since adjusted to their care responsibilities and have had to cut down on leisure activities. They spent more time at home waiting for children to come home from school, supervising homework and making sure that the children were clean and healthy. HC4 reported that he had never had to clean the house, cook for himself or wash his own clothes before his wife's migration.

‘Before I got married, I used to do domestic work for myself. I was working in town and living alone. Nobody minded. But when my wife left, it was a bit difficult. I was self conscious wondering what people would think. I started by cleaning my own bedroom. I would then ask my daughters to clean the rest of the house. I especially did not want to be caught cooking by my friends. But now I do not care. I cook for visitors even. I bought a hoover and a mop. I found that I clean the house better than my girls. They do it quickly so they can watch television. I do not expect my daughters to prepare meals all the time because sometimes they are busy with school work. So I cook for them too’.

However, some husbands reported that raising daughters presented them with unique challenges for which they had no prior training. When their daughters reached the age of menarche HC10 and HC12 did not know how to talk to them about it. Culturally men were not involved in those issues. It had always been a woman's business. When confronted with the problem, they turned to their neighbours' wives for assistance.

‘I have two daughters. There are things girls tell their mothers, things they find difficult to tell me. This is when I wish their mother were here. I sometimes have to ask neighbours to help my daughters with issues they cannot talk to me about’ (HC12).

Another problem was when teenage daughters brought their boyfriends home. Some respondent husbands like HC4 reported that it embarrassed them to be introduced to their daughters' boyfriends. Their dilemma was whether to approve or disapprove of the relationships. In Zimbabwean culture, girls would meet their boyfriends at aunts' houses. Fathers were only involved when the relationship was serious and the daughters wanted to be married. Similarly, a married woman pregnant for the first time and for whom bride price was paid for is sent to her natal home to await the birth of her baby. In conformity with this tradition HC5 reported that the couple's teenage daughter came home to have her baby.

'It is the mother's responsibility to look after her daughter when she is pregnant for the first time. She has to monitor her condition because she has experience with these things. But my wife was not there when my daughter went into labour. I was there at home with her all by myself and then took her to hospital when she was in pain'.

The above account presented illustrative examples of the impact of married women's migration on gender roles in the conjugal family. Out of necessity, many husbands had to perform tasks traditionally deemed feminine. Some of the husbands reported that they had not performed such tasks post marriage to their wives.

### 7.3.3 Impact of migration on conjugal family's stability

Families fare better when all members get to interact, share experiences and ideas. Ideally, this occurs when there is constant contact and communication among them. The majority of migrant women in the sample had children whom they left behind upon their migration. Distance between origin and destination countries meant that these women could not perform their reproductive roles. However, communication with the family at origin helped migrants to relieve stress, share affection, offer solidarity and support to their loved ones. During such telephone conversations they had an opportunity to communicate in their own native language which reinforced their sense of being. However, occasionally phones were used to spread malicious gossip with potential to create marital distress and disaffection in migrant women's families. Transnational gossip could be initiated at either origin or destination.

Despite this, many respondents reported that modern communication technology had made it possible for migrants to communicate with their families in real time at reasonable costs. Among respondents, communication with families at origin took several forms ranging from



voice conversations, e-mails and text messaging. Communication software like ‘whatsapp’ has made text messaging more interactive. The mobile phone in particular had made migrant wives accessible to their families at all times. It allowed them to have private individual communication with different members of the family. Keeping in close contact with their families reduced loneliness and helped them to maintain a virtual presence in their families. For those women who had not been able to visit their families since their migration, it was the only mechanism that allowed them to maintain emotional connections with their husbands and children. They also used such communication to monitor how remittances were used. The majority of migrant women had children so they used various forms of communication to supervise their children’s health, education and nutrition. They also exchanged photographs and videos of weddings, graduation, birthday parties and funerals. Videos of funerals of close relatives allowed migrant women to have emotional closure.

Out of the response options provided in Table 7.6 migrant women preferred the mobile phone for communicating with their families. Unlike fixed phone lines, mobile phones allowed migrant women to phone from anywhere and to receive calls at any time.

**Table 7.6 Mode of communication with family (multiple responses)**

Mode of communication	Number of women
Phone line	4
Mobile phone	15
E-mail	1
Computer chat	1

Most women reported that they were in regular contact with their families. This was considered important because some of the women (8) had spent seven to thirteen years in destination countries, four had spent four to six years and three had spent one to two years. The majority of women (8) talked to their families every day as shown in Table 7.7. Migrant women who were working in remote areas in some host countries sometimes experienced communication problems hence communication was sporadic and dependent on telephone network quality.

**Table 7.7 Frequency of communication with the family at origin**

Frequency of communication with migrant woman	Number of women
Daily	8
Once a week	3
Twice a week	1
Once a month	1
Sporadically	2

Despite the beneficial convenience of allowing for timely communication with migrant women there were also associated problems. Mobile phones could not replace a mother's physical interaction with her children. Some of the women had been gone for a long time such that telephone communication could not fill the emotional void in their children some of whom had since grown up and had their own families. Furthermore, children could choose what information to share with their mothers. Some of the telephone conversations assumed the form of intelligence gathering with migrant women asking a series of questions about who did what, who went where and who came to visit. Some children used telephone conversations to make demands for fashionable clothes, phones and shoes. These demands were triggered by unrealistic perceptions of the lives migrant women lived in global capitals. Such perceptions were fuelled by images of destination countries captured on television and in films.

Importantly, children and husbands could selectively choose what information to share with the migrant. In other words, in spite of the regularity of telephone contact there were some things that migrant women were not told about. A telling case was that reported by HC10.

'We have three children, a boy and two girls. The eldest is now working in Harare. My oldest daughter is in high school at a Catholic boarding school. I have been called to the school many times. She has problems. She misses classes. She goes to town without permission to see her boyfriend. I have tried to guide her and make her know that it is important to have an education. It has not worked. When talking to her mother I did not mention any of this because she will be very worried. She will also think that I am not doing a good job with the children. I also did not want to spoil my

wife's relationship with her daughter. If her mother disowns her maybe she will do worse things. But now that she has been expelled from school I will need to tell my wife'.

Culturally, those living far away from home are not told everything that happens. This is meant to protect them from being emotionally distraught. They are told about deaths because of the cultural belief that if they were not told something bad or inexplicable would happen to them. They were also told about major but not minor ailments.

Phones are a double edged sword. They are also used for surveillance and spreading malicious gossip. My interview with HC7 took place on 31 October, 2012 at 2 0'clock in the afternoon. His two daughters were at home at that time. Before starting the interview he called his eldest daughter aged 21 years who was a final year student at a teachers' training college and introduced me to her thus:

'As part of her studies she is doing a project that requires interviewing a number of people. She [Me] works with your uncle at the university. She has come to interview me also about her school work.'

After the interview while walking me to the gate he told me:

'It was necessary to introduce you to my daughter because you never know what children talk to their mothers about. I did not want her to think that I bring women they do not know to the house. There are times when I go to visit my wife. When relatives find out that I have been away from home they actually phone her to establish whether I am with her and not with somebody else'. (Wife was working in a neighbouring country).

HC9 also reported that he was under constant surveillance from his mother-in-law.

'I do not have a fixed line telephone in the house. All communication with my wife is by mobile phone. Sometimes the network is poor and my wife cannot reach me. She then phones her mother who has a fixed line telephone in her house. Afterwards my mother-in-law will phone me and pretend that she wants news about the welfare of her grandson. She will then ask me about my whereabouts at such and such a time and why my wife could not reach me. Eventually when I get to talk to my wife it always

seems like I have to explain my movements and why she could not reach me on my mobile phone. It spoils things for us with my wife always suspecting that I have girlfriends'. (Husband was 49 years old. Wife had been away since 2001).

Another example of how telephones were used to spread gossip was revealed when I interviewed HC10 on 3 November, 2012. His explicit instruction to me then was not to phone his wife until he had talked to her first. He explained it thus:

'Since she went to the UK she is highly suspicious. She tells me she hears from people that I have girlfriends. I tell her it's not true and she won't tell me who these people are who feed her lies. I have my suspicions. I think it's her mother. So if you phone her before I explain your purpose she will wonder how you got the number so I will tell you when you can phone her after we have sorted out things'.

He eventually contacted me and I was able to interview his wife. Similarly, WC3 told me that two years after migrating to the UK she got an early morning call from her husband who sounded distraught. The substance of the conversation made her cry for days on end.

'My husband told me he had received an anonymous call from London from a woman who said she was my friend. This woman told him that I had been pregnant but had had an abortion. Can you believe that? I did not listen to my husband any further. I was just crying and crying. After two days when I was feeling better I went to my doctor, got all my medical history and faxed the documents to my husband. I told him to take them to any doctor in Gweru so he can explain whether or not that anonymous caller was telling him the truth'. (Husband was 59 years old. Wife migrated in 2002).

A similar issue which proved to be important for the stability of the family unit related to the regularity with which migrant women came home to visit. Often, this depended on several factors ranging from their immigration status, distance, cost of travel and type of job. Women working in neighbouring countries were more likely to have visited their families one to five times during the course of their migration than women migrants working overseas. Seven migrant women had not visited their families at all during the course of their migration. For migrant women who got the opportunity to visit their families the average period of stay was 1 month as shown in Table 7.8.

**Table 7.8 Number of visits**

Number of visits	Number of migrant women	Average duration of each visit (months)
None	7	-
1	1	1
2	2	2
3	1	1
4	1	1
5	2	1
<5	1	1

Periodic visits were valued for reducing protracted separation of families. Migrant wives used such visits to ‘replenish relationship capital with family and friends’ (McCann, Poot & Sanderson 2008). For husband HC6 the family reunion had occurred almost a year to the date of interview.

‘My wife went to the UK in 2006. She cannot come to Zimbabwe on account of her first immigration status as an asylum seeker. Last year in December 2011 she arranged for the whole family to meet in Botswana. She had rented a very nice house. All of us went: me and our two sons and her two grand children whom she had not seen. Both boys married after she migrated. We stayed for a whole month. It was good to be together as a family’.

December was the most preferred month for annual visits. Migrant women with school going children also scheduled visits during school holidays in order to spend more time with their children. However, some migrant women preferred to forfeit travelling, preferring instead to save the money or to send the money and bide the time when they could come home permanently, as WC11 explained.

‘At home there is always need for money. There is also need for me to save for when I return home. A cheap return ticket from the UK is almost seven hundred pounds and then I will be home for only a month. I tell myself I will go home soon. It is only two

years before I retire. I will at least have a pension here then I will go home. Ticket money can pay for my son's university fees'.

A month's visit is however not long enough as explained by WC14.

'When I come home it's a hectic period. There is so much travelling to do. Our relatives are scattered around the country. There are my parents and his parents to visit in the rural areas in places that are far apart. Then there are my brothers and sisters as well as his and other relatives. I set aside a week for visits. The remainder of the time I devote it to my children and my husband whenever possible. Sometimes we have to go to some place away from home so we can have quality time together'.

#### 7.3.4 Impact of migration on financial relationships in migrant families

Financial relationships in a family are linked to how families relate. Migration created a situation where there needed to be financial arrangements made by the spouses over long distances with one spouse entrusted with ensuring that money earned and then sent by the other would be utilised for the agreed purposes. Some migrant women exercised control over the money they remitted by selecting people other than their husbands as recipients when they thought remittances were not being utilised properly as shown in Table 7.9.

**Table 7.9 Recipient of remittances**

Recipient	Number of couples
Husband	8
Child	3
Wife's friend	1
Does not remit	3
Total	15

Recipients of remittances were related to the migrant in several ways. Slightly over half of the migrant women (8) sent remittances (money) to their husbands. This is not surprising because the majority of migrant women left their children in the care of their fathers. The remainder of the women sent the money to their children (3) and a friend (1). Three women had stopped sending remittances. Women who sent money to their husbands reported that

they trusted them and were certain that they would use the money for family welfare. For example WC3 said:

‘I trust my husband; this is why I send money to him. He knows what their needs are and so he spends the money accordingly’.

Although it seemed like WC3 was not interested in details about how the money she sent was used, in reality she had a rough idea of how the money was going to be spent because the amount remitted was based on household needs which she always discussed with her husband before sending the money. Money for emergencies for example, hospitalisation, funerals, weddings and children’s school excursions was sent separately as per request. The modality of determining how much money was remitted for groceries was more explicitly explained by HC2.

‘My wife asks for a list of groceries that we need each month. She uses the list to determine whether children are eating the right kind of food. Also because the country uses multi-currency the amount we need can vary slightly so me and the kids check the prices for the items first and then give an estimate of what the groceries will cost. She then uses this as a guide. She normally sends more than what the groceries will cost. She sends the money to our daughter who then takes some of the money to pay her university fees and her monthly upkeep as agreed with her mom. She then gives me the rest. It was my idea that the money be sent to our daughter. That way all the children know exactly how much was sent and how it was spent without creating suspicion that I waste the money’.

In the two cases cited above, emigrant wives liaised with their husbands to determine how much money to send to their families. They had some degree of control over the amount required and expenses. That was a standard procedure for most couples irrespective of whom the remittances recipient was. In most cases families generally considered suggestions made by migrant women when spending remittances. This ensured that remitters were not upset and conjugal relationships were not strained. HC2 wanted the children to know the amount remitted and how it was used because children could be used for surveillance. HC10 explained it in this way:

‘When she sends money and you are not working she thinks you are misusing the money. I am under constant surveillance from the children, her relatives and her friends over how I use the money. She constantly compares the money she sends to the salaries teachers get. Her friends are teachers. She always says to me why do you want more money when teachers survive on less?’

HC10 was the recipient of remittances from his wife. However, he felt that his wife was also using remittances as a mechanism to control him. He considered that using children and other people to verify how money was used was demeaning to himself. Furthermore, he was embarrassed to have his mother-in-law taking stock of groceries in his house. Accordingly, his relationship with his wife was strained because of this constant surveillance. Teachers were among some of the most poorly remunerated workers in the country. Therefore, he felt that his wife’s desire to draw comparison between the amount she sent and what teachers were getting was inappropriate.

When some migrant women were dissatisfied with how the money they sent home was used they switched recipients. WC1 started off by sending remittances to her husband. However, when children reported that their father was spending the money on alcohol she stopped sending money to him.

‘Initially I sent money to my husband but when children reported that he was misusing it I now send it to my daughter. As soon as I transfer money to her I then send a common text message to my husband and the rest of the children so that everybody knows that I have sent some money. I tell them how much it is and what it should be used for. The purpose of the money will have been decided by me and my husband beforehand’.

Thus, in situations where migrant women sent money to their husbands, they devised mechanisms to ascertain how the money was used. When remittances money was sent to the family *via* other people it reflected some mistrust between spouses that remittances would benefit the children. HC6 explained why the money was sent to someone outside the conjugal family thus:

‘When my wife sends money she phones me to say how much she has sent. The money is not sent to me directly. She sends the money to her friend. We then take all



the bills to her. Her friend then pays the bills and gives us the change. According to my wife this is done so that I do not misuse the money. The only time she sends money directly to me is when I need to go to the optician or for other specific things like that’.

HC4 disapproved of certain aspects of his wife’s remitting behaviour. This caused tension and misunderstanding in their relationship.

‘We disagree as to whether she should give her father money. Her father never raised her, never lived with her since her birth. I do not see why he should ask her for money. Such expenditure is unwarranted’.

As indicated by HC4’s comments not all wives could successfully negotiate to send money to members of their natal family. To get around it some women understated their incomes and used the difference to remit to whoever they liked without making disclosures to their husbands.

‘Sometimes I have to work during weekends or work long hours to earn money to send to my parents. It is easier to send a lump sum to my parents once in a while. My husband was unhappy when I wanted to send regular amounts. He thought I was trying to buy separate assets for myself elsewhere so now I do not tell him when I send them money’ (WC13).

Culturally, it is assumed that it is a son’s role to look after his parents. Single women can also look after their parents. However, a husband has control over a married woman’s income making it difficult for her to send or give money to her parents without his consent. It is not obligatory for a son-in-law to look after his parents-in-law.

#### 7.3.5 Impact of married women’s migration on relationships with the extended family

In Zimbabwean society marriage is not just between a man and a woman. It also unites two families. A married woman is expected to look after her husband, children and in-laws. Mothers-in-law in particular wield a lot of power over their daughters-in-law especially in the early stages of the latter’s marriages. If the relationship between a daughter-in-law and her mother-in-law was acrimonious it led to a lot of name-calling. It was not uncommon for a

mother-in-law to pressure her son to divorce his wife. To prevent such conflict young women were schooled to work very hard to earn the respect and trust of their in-laws.

Thus, women's labour migration courted disapproval from some members of their natal and conjugal families and friends. Wifely migration was seen as conflicting with a woman's role as a wife, mother and carer. When women migrated it deprived in-laws of care and labour. They were reported to have created friction between their sons and their migrant wives as reported by WC3:

'My husband's relatives do not approve that I came to the UK. My mother-in-law and one aunt in particular said I should come back or else let my husband get himself a wife to look after him. They disapprove of the fact that I have been away from home for so long. They say I am no use to my husband and the whole family. They say I don't deserve to be called their daughter-in-law because I don't perform any tasks expected of a daughter-in-law at weddings, funerals or any other family occasions. My mother-in-law said she does not want the family name to be associated with any shameful things I am doing here. They also say I am a bad example to my daughters who can also run away to any country. These people influence my husband. They tell him to get another wife. He is under tremendous pressure'. (She migrated in 2002 and has not come home to visit).

WC8 told her mother-in-law about her desire to migrate but was advised against migrating thus:

'Do not abandon your own children and husband. If you did not want children why did you have them since now you want to run away? Everybody in Zimbabwe has money problems. Come and live with us in the rural areas if life in town has become difficult. But maybe you already have a boyfriend living where you want to go and work. Maybe this is what you came to talk to me about'.

Thus, traditional norms that restricted married women's labour migration served the purpose of retaining their labour and keeping them under their in-laws' supervision so that they did not acquire unbecoming behaviour and attitudes. Some migrant women had been discouraged from migrating by in-laws who evoked cultural stereotypes that married women migrants were bad mothers and unsuitable wives whose virtue was suspect. By choosing to migrate the

women in the sample were perceived as having reneged on their reproductive, household and family responsibilities. For this reason, they had lost their status and place in the family.

HC10 explained why his mother and sister disapproved of his wife's migration.

'My sister and my mother did not like my wife to go to the UK. My mother's health is not good so I and my sister would take turns to stay with our mother at different times of the year. So by planning to let my wife go the burden of looking after our mother would fall predominantly on my sister. She was not happy with this. So she was opposed to the idea. After talking to her on my own several times she realised that we were serious. She then offered to give us part of the airfare as a loan. I kept my wife out of these discussions to protect her so that they would not think she was feeding me with ideas. I wanted them to know that I too was convinced that it was the only way out of our problems. However, when the time to buy the ticket came my sister did not give us the money. We discovered that she never meant to. It was her way to derail our plan seeing that she could not convince us by her arguments. We had to find money from other sources.

My mother was opposed to my wife leaving for different reasons. She said she would be embarrassed if her only daughter-in-law left. She thought maybe our marriage was not strong that is why my wife was leaving. She said she would be ashamed to explain to her relatives why her daughter-in-law was living in a far away country by herself and why I was left to look after the children. She did not think it was a good thing at all.'

When migrant women were discouraged from migrating by their own family members it was most likely to be their fathers.

'My father feared that my migration would lead to marital problems or divorce. He was afraid that I might never come back home to my family. I guess he worried that in the event that I abandoned my husband he might have to pay back part of the bride price although I cannot say for certain that this was his reason' (WC11).

However, migrant women reported that family members, relatives and friends who had already migrated were more sympathetic. They had given them information regarding immigration regulations and offered financial support. To reduce the emotional trauma

associated with disagreements over their decision to migrate some migrant women simply left without telling their family members.

WC3 reported that:

‘I did not tell my parents that I was going to the UK. After the arguments with my husband’s parents I said I would just leave without telling anybody else. In any case I had heard stories about people that had gone to the UK but had been deported. I was told that if you were not able to answer questions that you were asked by immigration people at the airport you will be returned to Zimbabwe on the same aeroplane that had taken you there. So, in case I was sent back all that arguing would not have been worthwhile so I said I would wait and see if I can get past the immigration people. It was only a week later that I phoned and told my parents that I had left. That way there was nothing they could do about it’

Similarly, WC2 had left without telling her parents. When she later informed them that she was in the UK, her parents vented their disapproval on her husband.

‘They told me that if she should to die there they would have nothing to do with it. They told me that for anybody crossing oceans certain rituals should be performed in order to appease the spirits. If not the ancestral spirits will keep asking for the whereabouts of the person who has left. This can cause the person to be sick’ (HC2).

Respondent husbands also reported having been criticised by members of their own family for letting their wives migrate. For instance, HC6 reported that he had been called names by his relatives and friends. One of his uncles had come all the way from his rural home 130 km away from Gweru to confront him over news of his wife’s migration. After a lengthy discussion he was reported to have said:

‘I see that you are not normal at all. You are stupid to have let your wife go. Your wife must have used voodoo on you to make this happen. I never trusted your wife’s mother. Maybe she is the witch who did this to you. A real man would not do what you did with your eyes open. If your wife comes back will you allow her into the house? You will have the same trouble controlling her like you have with controlling a mule’.

Due to strong disapproval expressed by some members of their families some husbands with migrant women reported that they found family gatherings particularly difficult to endure because then they were at their most vulnerable. On such occasions they were keenly aware of their emotional loss due to the absence of their wives. At the same time the public absence of their wives was a subject of conversation, derision and humiliation. HC10 expressed his personal frustration thus:

‘You cannot even ask for a glass of water from a sister-in-law without her giggling away and telling you on top of her voice that you cannot send her on errands because she is not your wife. She will also tell you that she is overwhelmed with work that all daughters-in-law should be sharing. She will also claim that the skin on her face is getting dark from cooking over open fires for those without wives while my wife is getting a light skin by living in Europe. So unless it’s a funeral or other very important occasions I resolved to stay away’.

In spite of the dire financial situation that was experienced in the country, some members of migrant women’s extended families disapproved of married women’s migration. Such disapproval was rooted in cultural norms related to motherhood and marriage. A daughter-in-law’s labour was to be retained for the benefit of all family members. There was also scepticism regarding married women’s morality and discipline if they migrated. Irrespective of the person who disapproved of migrant wives’ migration, the common observation was that in some respects their migration was a source of anxiety to themselves, their husbands and members of the extended family. It also strained relationships between migrant households and some members of their extended families.

#### **7.4 Conclusion**

This chapter examined the economic and social impact of married women’s migration on their families. Research evidence suggested that women migrated to secure livelihoods for their families. Their migration was triggered by economic instability in the country. Accordingly, the majority of migrant women became the primary or only source of household income. The women remitted money regularly which was used largely for children’s education, payment of bills and purchase of property. While remittances money was sent mainly to husbands, some migrant women sent the money to other people. Amounts remitted depended on the needs of the family. Some women exercised control over the money they

sent by giving instructions on how remittances should be used. Women who gave instructions on disbursements of remittances reported that they did so to ensure productive and meaningful use of the money. They often went to great lengths to make sure that instructions were followed by asking their children, family members or friends to monitor how their husbands were using the money.

Migration of married women caused changes in family dynamics. Women upstaged men to become breadwinners causing role reversal. The majority of men assumed child care responsibilities and performed domestic chores that they had never done before their wives' migration. Migration also affected marital relationships because the majority of women had lived apart from their husbands for several years. This inevitably had taken an emotional toll on spousal relationships. Migration had impacted on marital relations by causing loss of companionship through prolonged periods of physical separation. Some husbands were anxious that they would not be able to adjust to married life after their wives' permanent return. They were also wary about the extent to which their wives may have been influenced by foreign cultures and how this would play out in their relationships and domestic routines. There were also suspicions of infidelity by both husbands and wives leading to suggestions that either partner might be infected with HIV/AIDS. Among members of the extended family, married women's migration had met with general disapproval. While negative sentiments about married women who migrate alone were likely to persist in the broader society, economic imperatives would determine the extent to which such sentiments would obstruct their migration.

## **CHAPTER 8**

### **CONCLUSIONS**

#### **8.1 Introduction**

The purpose of this chapter is to synthesise the research findings. The initial hypothesis on which the thesis was predicated was that the migration of married women is often possible when there is husband immobility. It is from this hypothesis that specific research questions were formulated notably: What socio-demographic characteristics distinguish migrant wives from their left-behind husbands? What kinship and/or recruitment networks supported married women's migration? Does husband's immobility allow women to circumvent conjugal power and negotiate their own migration? How do non-migrant husbands explain their immobility? Do married women have autonomy in migration decision making? What factors led to the decision for the migration of the wife rather than the husband? How do husbands feel about the migration of their wives? In the remainder of the chapter I present information on the overview of the thesis, research limitations, the thesis's contribution to knowledge and areas for further research and policy recommendations.

#### **8.2 Overview of the thesis**

The thesis commenced with the identification of the research problem followed by a discussion of the historical context of migration from Zimbabwe. To explain key drivers of contemporary migration from the country, I gave a situational analysis of the socio-political and economic environment in the country after the year 2000. I used a married couple household where the wife had migrated alone as the unit of analysis. This gave me an opportunity to collect data on married women's migration both at origin and destination. To get information at origin I conducted face-to-face interviews with migrant women's husbands after which I conducted telephone interviews with migrant women at destination. Responses to research questions obtained over the course of the research exercise using this research approach were analysed in chapter 5, 6 and 7 as highlighted below.

In chapter 5 the socio-demographic characteristics of migrant wives and their husbands were compared. Empirical findings suggested that the majority of migrant women were middle aged. While they were generally younger than their husbands the age difference was one to three years. With the exception of one, all couples had children. Overall, couples had attained

secondary school education. In some couples, women were the better educated of the spouses. Some husbands were either unemployed, self employed or retired. In these households, money sent by migrant wives was essential for the household's financial well-being. Migrant women were predominantly employed in care services, teaching and nursing. Destination countries were chosen based on prevailing immigration policies and currency strength versus the weak Zimbabwe dollar. For example, before 2002 Zimbabweans did not need a visa to enter the United Kingdom. Additionally, having a wife's own networks in the destination country encouraged migration by reducing financial and emotional costs.

In Chapter 6 I tested the hypothesis that husband immobility yields favourable negotiated outcomes for wifely migration. Indeed, by their own admission several husbands and wives acknowledged that wives were considered for an opportunity to migrate because some husbands had tried and failed to migrate, had no travel documents, were less qualified than their wives or did not have networks to sponsor their migration. Many women had exercised agency in the migration decision making with more wives than husbands having initiated the discussion that resulted in their own migration. Overall, the analysis indicated that there were cases of joint and wife sole decision making. Where decision making was protracted some women asked people related to their husbands or to themselves to mediate. Only one woman had migrated without telling her husband.

Chapter 7 examined the economic and social impact of married women's migration on their families at origin. Research evidence showed that women migrated as a livelihood strategy. Migrant women sent remittances regularly and husbands were the majority recipients of remittances. In a few cases women sent money to their daughters, sons and friends. Remittances were used to pay school fees, purchase assets (houses, land and cars) and for general upkeep. In several households remittances were the only source of income.

Generally, women retained control over how remittances were used. They decided on the recipient of remittances and gave instructions on how the money should be spent. Overall, migration enabled migrant women to provide economic security for their families. Most husbands appreciated their wives' contribution to family welfare. However, the physical separation of spouses put a lot of relationships under emotional stress. Respondents reported loss of consortium as a major problem. There was also gender role switching. In the absence of their wives several husbands took over child care roles and performed domestic chores.



### **8.3 Limitations**

When I wrote the proposal for this thesis, I had set a minimum sample size of 30 couples. However, events in the field disabused me of this notion. Firstly, married men with a migrant wife were difficult to find. Secondly, recruitment of migrant women depended on initially recruiting the husbands. Thirdly, I had not reckoned with the high refusal rate to be interviewed. Altogether I contacted 60 couples. Of these, some husbands refused to be interviewed while others were prepared to be interviewed but would not give their wives' contact details. In some cases, while husbands were willing to be interviewed it was the wives who refused to participate in the research. Migrant women who refused to be interviewed were upset that a complete stranger was able to contact them without their prior consent. They considered it an invasion of their privacy. Generally, couples that refused to be interviewed were mainly those where the migrant woman's status at destination was clandestine. For this reason they did not want to divulge migrant women's countries of destination or any information surrounding their migration. Questions pertaining to decision making and remittances were considered intrusive. Due to these problems my sample was whittled down to 15 couples where both the husband and the wives were prepared to be interviewed.

Though the size of the final sample would suggest that results of the analysis cannot be generalised to the macro level, the thesis yielded important insights about migration decision making in couple households where the wife migrates alone. For example, it was noted that the decision for wifely migration was generally consensual and influenced by institutional factors (access to passports and visas), age and disability. In some cases the decision for the wife to migrate while the husband stayed behind was determined by wife's access to family members, relatives or friends who could pay relocation costs.

A minor limitation was that the sample was made up of women with urban residence yet the majority of the population (65%) lives in rural areas. It is unclear whether women from rural areas would have behaved in like manner or taken comparable decisions. Lastly, the research for this thesis was retrospective. Most women had made their decisions to migrate seven or more years before the field work. Accordingly, their answers to questions on migration decision making required recall of events that had happened in the past. As a consequence,

this may have caused *ex-post facto* rationalisation of events. I tried, however, to minimise this by comparing husbands' and wives' answers to the same questions.

#### **8.4 The thesis' contributions to knowledge**

The women that migrated were part of an estimated three million or a quarter of the total population of Zimbabwe who had migrated during the country's economic crisis period (2000-2009). Therefore, I investigated a pertinent and contemporary issue which has ramifications on the family and the nation. In fact, the government of Zimbabwe has identified migration as one of the major challenges that the country is experiencing. In this regard, the thesis's contribution to knowledge is both of a methodological and substantive nature.

##### **8.4.1 Methodological contributions**

The thesis used empirical findings to explain the association between husbands' immobility and the international migration of married women. Cognisant of the fact that the labour migration of married women impacts family dynamics, I adopted an approach where I studied their transnational experiences at destination as well as in their family contexts at origin. This made it possible to situate discussions on migration decision making in couple households and to assess the extent to which migration had impacted gender roles and empowered the migrant women.

The research for the thesis was not solely about the migration of married women. It was also about how non-migrant husbands experienced the migration of their wives. Hence, not only did the thesis's sample comprise married women it also included their husbands. In order to provide a balanced perspective, husbands and wives' responses to questions were pooled together, compared and contrasted for almost all variables that were investigated. As a result, it was possible to perform the analysis at different levels such as total sample, wives only and husband only sample analyses. Furthermore, the thesis used data generated locally by the researcher. This infused insights and perspectives for the analysis that could not have been discerned by researchers from outside the country without experiential knowledge of the reference period of the research.

##### **8.4.2 Theoretical contributions**

In Zimbabwe, the international migration of women in general and married women in particular, is understudied. This is despite the fact that migration is a pertinent issue both because of the large numbers of Zimbabweans who migrated in the last decade and because Zimbabwe is now predominantly a migrant sending country. The few studies on migration from Zimbabwe focus either on cross-border movements, are commissioned studies on the extent of the brain drain, or, are on migration and remittances. There are research gaps, for example, on family migration where only the wife or mother migrates. This thesis adds to the gender and migration literature especially the feminisation of migration.

#### 8.4.2.1 The role of husbands' immobility in wifely migration

A further contribution that the thesis makes is to examine the association between husbands' immobility and married women's migration. Although in the migration literature it is widely acknowledged that the number of people who migrate is less than the number of those who do not migrate, the role that immobility of one partner in couple households plays in the decision on which spouse migrates is under-researched. Therefore, an additional contribution to knowledge made by this thesis is to provide insights on immobility generally and more specifically when a husband's immobility is regarded as grounds for examining the wife's migration. Thus, by studying husbands' immobility and its impact on wifely migration, the thesis adds a new dimension to the study of the determinants of married women's migration which has not been sufficiently explored in the literature on international migration.

While the research evidence was not of such a nature that a clear causal relationship could be established between husbands' immobility and wifely migration, it did establish that at least the husbands' immobility facilitated wifely migration. Zimbabwe is a patriarchal society. When the candidature for migration is contested by both spouses the odds weigh heavily against women's migration due to male privilege. Research evidence found that when husbands are constrained from migrating for whatever reason, their immobility acts as pedestal from which their wives can launch their migration projects. This is especially so when families are subjected to severe economic hardships as experienced in Zimbabwe since year 2000. Under these circumstances, husbands' immobility served a number of functions. It was used as a justification for wifely migration and a justification to counteract obstruction of wifely migration by in-laws or members of the extended family. Married couples also used husbands' immobility to obviate societal disapproval and justify wifely migration by

emphasising the mutual benefit that would arise from such migration. Husbands' immobility was also used by migrant women to assuage the guilt they may have felt over leaving their children behind. They used their husbands' immobility to rationalise their choice to migrate by saying that there was no other option out of their families' financial difficulties.

Another addition to knowledge which the thesis makes is that, contrary to the dominant perspective in African migration literature of women as the left behind or associational migrants, this thesis presented evidence of men as the left behind. This underscores the fact that this is another area that has not been sufficiently researched. To sum up, a combination of husbands' immobility and acute poverty created exceptional circumstances that facilitated wifely migration.

#### 8.4.2.2 Migration decision making

There is evidence in migration literature to suggest that in developing countries, husbands dominate household decision making. With regards to migration decisions, men have been observed to select themselves as candidates for migration. However, the thesis provided evidence of some women who made their own decisions to migrate. The majority of the women actively engaged their husband for a decision on migration to be made. Several initiated the discussion and once their husbands had excluded themselves from migration, some of them had made the final decision for their migration.

Although extended families are common in African societies, literature on the role of the extended family in international migration decision making is limited. The thesis extends scholarship in this area. I found evidence that authority figures in the extended family including in-laws wield control over the younger generation. They also influence migration decisions. For instance, one son-in-law who did not want to let his wife migrate was harangued by his mother-in-law until he gave in to her demands that his wife be allowed to migrate.

The choice of which partner would migrate was also influenced by which partner had resources. The majority of women had contacts working outside the country that were prepared to sponsor them while only two husbands had contacts. A contribution to knowledge with regards to networks was that friends and relatives of women migrants working abroad had encouraged them to migrate. This is borne out by an illustrative example in the thesis

where a married woman's kinship networks refused to sponsor her husband. They opted instead to sponsor her. They were afraid that her husband might abandon her. This is consistent with migration literature that says husbands and wives do not necessarily share the same networks.

#### 8.4.2.3 Empowerment of married women through migration

Studies that have investigated the impact of migration on women's empowerment concur that paid labour is a major force for women's empowerment. The thesis found evidence that extends existing knowledge that wifely migration increases migrant women's control over household financial resources. Following their migration, the majority of migrant women became the *de facto* primary income earners in their families. This was empowering because during the pre-migration period many of them had never worked for pay. They participated in the labour market only after migration. Several women had acquired new qualifications and correspondingly new skills so as to raise their income thresholds. Thus, migration had empowered them by creating conditions where they had access to their own financial resources that facilitated their financial independence from their husbands.

The majority of women had left their children in the care of their husbands. To ensure that remittances were used effectively to benefit their children they discussed with their husbands the monthly financial requirements of their families first before determining the amount they sent. They also participated in decision making on savings and investments. In some instances they asked children and other people to relay information to them relating to how remittances were used. In exceptional cases, where husbands had proved incompetent to manage remittances they channelled the money indirectly to their families through other people. There was one instance where a migrant woman understated her income so that she could use the undeclared portion of her income to remit to whoever she wanted to after her husband had objected to her desire to send money to her father. These are important theoretical insights that the thesis adds to the literature on gender and migration.

While some women had relished the personal freedom that migration had bestowed on them and were proud of their financial achievements, others experienced varying degrees of disempowerment in the domestic sphere. They felt that migration had compromised their maternal role as they were not consulted when their husbands made non-financial decisions. A few felt emotionally estranged from their husbands, children and members of the extended

family. It must be pointed out that none of the women have returned to Zimbabwe yet. Therefore, their ability to maintain their social and economic status in their families, their bargaining power in key household decisions including access and how household financial resources are allocated and equitable sharing of domestic responsibilities with their husbands on a sustainable level was not determinable at this stage. I can only point out that most husbands were wary of how much change wifely migration would cause to the household power structure when their wives eventually returned.

### **8.5 Areas for further research**

Most husbands indicated that migrant women would return to Zimbabwe within the next couple of years. This would present researchers with opportunities to follow up the same migrant women during the period following their return and adjustment stages. Importantly, most migrant women reported that they would want to start their own businesses upon their return. Follow up research would enable an assessment to be made of the projects that the women would set up. Furthermore, it would also be insightful to conduct a detailed analysis of how migration would have affected the women's status post their migration. Since the social impact of migration in Zimbabwe remains understudied, research targeting return migrants would shed light on sustainability of the impact of their migration on gender roles. It may also be necessary in follow up research to target specific subgroups of women such as migrant women from rural areas and professional women.

### **8.6 Policy recommendations**

Migration's role in development and poverty reduction is well documented in the literature. At policy level the government of Zimbabwe should continue to actively engage Zimbabweans in the diaspora. To reduce continued use of informal remittance channels, government should formulate a holistic regulatory framework on remittances in order to encourage competition among money transfer service providers. Government should also engage destination countries so as to safeguard the rights of Zimbabwean migrants.

To attract investment from Zimbabweans living and working in other countries, the government should continue to rollout and actively support programmes to empower migrants while they are still working abroad. For example, Zimbabweans who are working in other countries could be eligible to invest in designated projects under the indigenisation and

economic empowerment programme. This could be facilitated by allowing them to partner government or the private sector in these projects.

Additionally, they could also be encouraged through vigorous outreach campaigns to invest in the domestic capital market at competitive interest rates or in real estate and help reduce the national housing backlog. Such initiatives would ease the financial problems associated with their return migration and reintegration. In the long-term, the ideal situation is where Zimbabweans in the diaspora return to the country permanently. However, given the country's critical shortages of skills, in the-short term, they could be encouraged to take part in knowledge and skills transfer through the Zimbabwean human capital programme through creation of virtual knowledge networks. In this way, skills gaps in the health and education sectors and several other productive and service sectors of the economy could be reduced.

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## APPENDIX 1

### ETHICAL CLEARANCE



Department of Sociology  
College of Human Sciences  
8 August 2012

**Proposed title:** HUSBAND IMMOBILITY AND THE INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION OF MARRIED WOMEN FROM ZIMBABWE AS A HOUSEHOLD SURVIVAL STRATEGY

**Principal investigator:** Crescentia Madebwe (Student number 4730-001-9)

**Reviewed and processed as:** Class approval (see paragraph 10.7 of the UNISA. Guidelines for Ethics Review)

**Approval status recommended by reviewers:** Approved

The Higher Degrees Committee of the Department of Sociology in the College of Human Sciences at the University of South Africa has reviewed the proposal and considers the methodological, technical and ethical aspects of the proposal to be appropriate to the tasks proposed. Approval is hereby granted for the candidate to proceed with the study in strict accordance with the approved proposal and the ethics policy of the University of South Africa.

In addition, the candidate should heed the following guidelines:

- To only start this research study after obtaining the necessary informed consent
- To carry out the research according to good research practice and in an ethical manner
- To maintain the confidentiality of all data collected from or about research participants, and maintain security procedures for the protection of privacy
- To work in close collaboration with her supervisor and to record the way in which the ethical guidelines as suggested in her proposal has been implemented in her research
- To notify the committee in writing immediately if any change to the study is proposed and await approval before proceeding with the proposed change
- To notify the committee in writing immediately if any adverse event occurs.

Regards

Dr Chris Thomas  
Chair: Department of Sociology  
Tel + 2712 429 6301



Open Rubric

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## APPENDIX 2

### CONSENT FORM

Dear Participant

My name is Crescentia Madebwe. I am a DPhil student in the Department of Sociology at the University of South Africa (UNISA). As part of my studies I am doing research on the topic: **Husband immobility and the international migration of married women from Zimbabwe.** I would like you to participate in the research. All the information you provide will be treated confidentially and used only for academic purposes. Subsequent analysis will take place without the identification of individual persons. Your participation in this research is voluntary. You have the right to discontinue the interview at anytime.

Yours Sincerely

-----

Crescentia Madebwe (218 Philip Road Ridgmont, Gweru; E-mail [cmadebwe@yahoo.com](mailto:cmadebwe@yahoo.com); Mobile 0772418157)

Please select the appropriate statements below.

I agree to be audio-taped. Yes-----No-----

I understand that you will turn the recorder off at anytime I ask. -----

I have read and understood this consent form. I agree to participate in the research. I understand that I may withdraw my consent at any time during the interview.

Participant's Name-----

Signature-----

Date-----

**APPENDIX 3**

**QUESTIONNAIRE FOR NON MIGRANT HUSBAND**

Topic: Husband immobility and the international migration of married women from Zimbabwe

Questionnaire number.....

Date of interview.....

Where interview took place.....

Name of respondent.....

Respondent's place of residence.....

Phone number.....

Year when wife migrated.....

**Wife's contact details**

Country where wife is now living.....

Wife's E-mail address.....

Wife's Telephone Number.....

Wife's Mobile Number.....

Most appropriate time to contact wife.....

Suitable day (s) of the week to contact wife.....

## A. Socio-demographic characteristics

### 1. Age

Age (years)	Please put $\surd$ tick mark beside the right answer
Less than 30	
30-34	
35-39	
40-49	
50-54	
55-59	
60-65	
More than 65	

### 2. Duration of marriage

Duration of marriage (years)	Please put $\surd$ tick mark beside the right answer
Less than 5	
5 -6	
7-8	
9-10	
More than 10	

### 3. Level of Education

Level of education	Please put $\surd$ tick mark beside the right answer	Indicate professional qualification if any
University Degree		
Diploma (Specify)		
Certificate (Specify)		
Advanced level (A-level)		
Ordinary level (O-level)		
Primary		
No education		

### 4. Religion

<b>Religion</b>	Please put $\surd$ tick mark beside the right answer
No religion	
Traditional religion	
Presbyterian	
Pentecostal	
Methodist	
Anglican	
Catholic	
Muslim	
Other	

### 5. Size of household

Size of household	Please put $\surd$ tick mark beside the right answer
1-3	
4-5	
6-7	
More than 7	

### 6. Number of own children

Number of children	Please put $\surd$ tick mark beside the right answer
None	
1-2	
3 -4	
5-6	
7-8	
More than 8	

### 7. Domestic chores

Domestic chores are done by	Please put $\surd$ tick mark beside the right answer. More than one answer is possible.
Hired help	
Husband	
Children	
Other (specify nature of relationship)	

### 8. Main source of household income

Main source of household income	Please put $\surd$ tick mark beside the right answer
Husband's income	
Remittances from wife	
Other (specify)	

**9. Remittances as proportion of household income**

Remittances as proportion of household income (percent)	Please put $\surd$ tick mark beside the right answer
Less than 10	
10-20	
21-30	
31-40	
41-50	
51-60	
61-70	
71-80	
81-90	
91-100	

**10. Household income before wife's migration**

Household income before wife's migration was	Please put $\surd$ tick mark beside the right answer. More than one answer is possible.
Inadequate	
Adequate	
More than adequate	
Better than others	
Worse than others	

**11. Residence tenure status**

Residence tenure status	Please put $\surd$ tick mark beside the right answer
Owned outright	
Owned with mortgage	
Tenant	

**12. Duration of stay at residence**

Duration of stay at residence (years)	Please put $\surd$ tick mark beside the right answer
1-2	
3-4	
5-6	
7-8	
9-10	
More than 10	

**13. Duration of wife's stay abroad**

Duration of wife's stay abroad (years)	Please put $\surd$ tick mark beside the right answer
1-2	
3-4	
5-6	
7-8	
9-10	
More than 10	

**B. Wife's migration information**

14. Who initiated the discussion about migration?.....

.....  
 .....

Did you talk about which one of you should migrate?.....

.....  
 .....

. How long did it take for a decision to be made for your wife's migration?.....

.....  
 .....

. How did your family decide that your wife should migrate?.....

.....  
 .....

15. Why did you decide that way?.....

.....  
 .....

16. Was decision making consensual or conflictual?.....  
.....  
.....  
.....
17. Who made the final decision that your wife should migrate?.....  
.....  
.....  
.....
18. What role did you play in the decision making process for your wife's migration?  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....
19. Did your wife at any time during the decision making process ask for your permission to migrate?.....  
.....  
.....  
.....
20. What role did other people play in the decision making process for your wife's migration?.....  
.....  
.....  
.....
21. a) Are there any people who disapproved of your wife's migration?  
Yes.....No.....
- b) If yes state who disapproved of your wife's migration  
.....  
.....
- c) Give reasons why they disapproved of your wife's migration.....



- .....  
.....  
.....
22. What factors led your family to decide what country your wife should go to?.....  
.....  
.....
23. What role did family members, other people or institutions play in your wife's migration?.....  
.....  
.....
24. Why did your wife migrate?.....  
.....  
.....
25. Did you and your wife set a time frame for her to work abroad before returning permanently to Zimbabwe? Yes.....No.....  
b) If yes indicate number of years .....
26. What is the expected date for your wife's permanent return to Zimbabwe?.....
27. Did your wife migrate with other members of the family?.....  
.....  
.....
28. Prior to your wife's migration were there family members or friends who had migrated to the same country where your wife is now living?.....  
.....  
.....

**C. Husband's migration history**

29. a) What is your country of birth.....

b) Have you ever migrated? Yes.....No.....

c) If **yes** what is the year of your first migration?.....

d) What was the reason for your first migration?.....

.....  
.....  
.....

e) What was the destination country for your first migration?.....

f) What was the duration of stay in the country of your first migration?.....

g) (i) During your first migration were there any periods of return home?  
Yes.....No.....

(ii) If **yes**, how many times did you return home during your first migration.....

.....  
.....  
.....

(iii) How long was the duration of each period of return.....months

h) Why did you return?.....

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

i) List by year and country of destination any other migration you undertook after your first migration

Year.....

Country.....

**D. Why husband did not migrate**

30. Since your wife's migration have you ever considered migrating?.....

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

31. Did you voluntarily choose not to migrate?.....

.....  
.....

32. Why did you not migrate instead of your wife?.....

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

33. In your opinion was your wife's migration only made possible by your non migration?.....

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

34. How do you feel about your wife having migrated and not you?.....

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

35. Is the migration of a married woman who leaves behind her husband and children considered appropriate behaviour?.....

.....  
.....  
.....

36. Have you been criticised by other people for letting your wife migrate alone?.....

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

37. (a) Have you visited your wife since her migration? Yes .....No.....

(b) If yes indicate number of visits and duration of visits.....

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

38. Do you intend to migrate in the next 12 months?.....

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**E. Remittances**

39. When did your wife last send money?.....

40. How often does she send money?.....

.....  
.....

41. To whom does your wife send the money?.....

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

42. How significant is the financial support you get from your wife?.....

.....  
.....

43. Does your wife give you instructions on how you must spend the money?.....

.....  
.....  
.....

44. For what important purposes have you used the money you have received from your wife?

Purpose	Please put $\checkmark$ tick mark beside the right answer. More than one answer is possible	Rank the purpose for which money sent by wife is spent on a scale 1-8. (1=most money is spent for that purpose; 8 =the least amount is spent for that purpose)
Living expenses		
Assets (Specify)		
Appliances (specify)		
Children's education		
Medical expenses		
Supporting own parents		
Supporting wife's parents		
Other (Specify)		

45. (i) In your opinion, has your wife's migration improved the financial status of the family?

Yes.....No.....

(ii) Explain

.....  
 .....  
 .....

46. a) Has your expected economic value from your wife's migration changed over the course of time that she has been away? Yes.....No.....

b) If yes (Explain).....

.....  
 .....  
 .....

c) If no (Explain).....

.....  
.....  
.....

47. a) Do you send money or goods to your wife?  
Yes.....No.....

b) If **yes**, when was the last time you sent her money/goods?.....

.....

c) How was money or goods sent?.....

.....

.....

d) If you have sent your wife money give reasons for sending her money.....

.....

.....

**F. Social impact of migration**

48. Did migration affect the spousal relationship between you and your wife?.....

.....

.....

.....

...

49. How do you rate your level of satisfaction with your wife's migration on a scale of 1 to 10 where 10 signifies delighted and 1 is total dissatisfaction.....

.....

.....

50. What are the positive outcomes that you associate with your wife's migration?.....

.....

.....

51. What are the negative outcomes of your wife's migration?.....

.....

.....

.....

52. What is your greatest anxiety regarding the impact of your wife's migration on your relationship?.....

.....  
.....  
.....

53. Have you experienced any problems in your relationship with your wife following her migration?.....

.....  
.....

54. What challenges do you face as a result of the migration of your wife?.....

.....  
.....  
.....

55. How do you cope with your wife being away?.....

.....

## APPENDIX 4

### QUESTIONNAIRE FOR MIGRANT WOMAN

Topic: Husband immobility and the international migration of married women from Zimbabwe

Questionnaire number.....

Date of interview.....

#### **Migrant's contact details**

Name.....

E-mail address.....

Telephone.....

Mobile.....

Most appropriate time of day to contact migrant.....

Suitable day (s) of the week to contact migrant.....

Country of migration.....

Year of current migration.....

Number of years living abroad.....

Country of birth.....



**A. Migration history**

1. Indicate past migration experience

(a) Before current migration had you migrated before? Yes.....No.....

(b) If **yes**, what is the year of your first migration?.....

(c) What was the reason for your first migration?.....

(d) What was the destination country for your first migration?.....

(e) What was the duration of stay in the country of your first migration?.....

(f) During your first migration were there any periods of return home? Yes.....No.....

(g) If **yes**, how many times did you return home during your first migration.....

(h) How long was the duration of each period of return.....months

(i) Why did you return?.....

(j) List by year and country of destination any other migration you undertook after the first migration

Year.....

Country.....

**B. Socio-demographic characteristics**

2. Age

Age (years)	Please put $\checkmark$ tick mark beside the right answer
Less than 30	
30-34	
35-39	
40-49	
50-54	
55-59	
60-65	
More than 65	

### 3. Age difference with husband

Age difference with husband (years)	Please put $\checkmark$ tick mark beside the right answer	Indicate whether younger or older than husband
1-2		
3-4		
5-6		
7-8		
9-10		
More than 10		

### 4. Duration of marriage

Duration of marriage (years)	Please put $\checkmark$ tick mark beside the right answer
Less than 5	
5 -6	
7-8	
9-10	
More than 10	

### 5. Education level

Level of education	Please put $\checkmark$ tick mark beside the right answer	Indicate professional qualification if any
University Degree		
Diploma (Specify)		
Certificate (Specify)		
Advanced level (A-level)		
Ordinary level (O-level)		
Primary		
No education		

### 6. Religion

Religion	Please put $\checkmark$ tick mark beside the right answer
No religion	
Traditional religion	
Presbyterian	
Pentecostal	
Methodist	
Anglican	
Catholic	
Muslim	
Other	

### 7. Number of own children

Number of children	Please put $\surd$ tick mark beside the right answer
None	
1-2	
3 -4	
5-6	
7-8	
More than 8	

8. (i) Age of youngest child at start of your migration.....  
(ii) Age of oldest child at start of your migration.....

### 9. Occupation before migration

Occupation before migration	Please put $\surd$ tick mark beside the right answer
Professional (specify)	
Government employee	
Private sector employee	
Self employed	
Home maker	
Other (Specify)	

### 10. Household income before migration

Before your migration household income was	Please put $\surd$ tick mark beside the right answer. More than one answer is possible
Adequate	
Inadequate	
More than adequate	
Better than others	
Worse than others	

### 11. Type of visa

Type of visa	Please put $\surd$ tick mark beside the right answer
Resident	
Asylum seeker	
Student	
Tourist	

### 12. How migration was financed

Migration was financed by	Please put $\checkmark$ tick mark beside the right answer. More than one answer is possible
Self	
Husband	
Both Husband and wife	
Own family in Zimbabwe	
Husband's family in Zimbabwe	
Own relatives abroad (Specify)	
Husband's relatives abroad (Specify)	
Own friends abroad (Specify)	
Husband's friends abroad (Specify)	
Loan (Specify)	
Employer at destination	
Other (Specify)	

**13. Support for your migration at destination**

Support for your migration at destination	Please put $\checkmark$ tick mark beside the right answer. More than one answer is possible
Your own relatives/friends initially offered you accommodation	
Your husband's relatives/friends initially offered you accommodation	
Your own relatives/friends helped you find a job	
Your husband's relatives/friends helped you find a job	
Your own relatives/friends loaned you money	
Your husband's relatives/friends loaned you money	
Indicate any other forms of support you had for your migration at destination and from whom ..... ..... ..... ..... .....	..... ..... ..... ..... .....

**14. Number of return visits to Zimbabwe since migration**

Number of visits	Please put $\checkmark$ tick mark beside the right answer	Give year and duration of visit(s) in months
None		
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
More than 5		

### 15. Regularity of contact with family

Regularity of contact with family	Please put $\checkmark$ tick mark beside the right answer
Daily	
Once a week	
Once a month	
Sporadically	
Other (specify)	

### 16. Mode of communicating with family

Mode of communicating with family	Please put $\checkmark$ tick mark beside the right answer. More than one answer is possible
Phone line	
Mobile phone	
E-mail	
Computer chat	
Letters	

### 17. Child care arrangements

When you migrated you left your children in the care of	Please put $\checkmark$ tick mark beside the right answer. More than one answer is possible
Husband	
Husband and domestic help who is not a relative	
Husband and domestic help who is a relative (Specify nature of relationship)	
Husband's parents	
Your parents	

Husband's sister	
Your sister	
Your brother	
Husband's brother	
Other (Specify relationship)	
Indicate whether satisfied or dissatisfied with child care arrangements (give reasons)	<p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>

**C. Migrant's occupation at destination**

18. What is your current job/occupation in country of destination?.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

19. What is the relationship between your current job and background training that you have?.....

.....

.....

20. Did you get your first job before or after migration?.....

.....

.....

.....

21. How did you find your first job?.....

.....  
.....  
.....

22. How long did it take to find your first job at destination?.....  
.....  
.....

23. Are you satisfied with the job that you have?.....  
.....  
.....

24. Do you have one job or do you hold multiple jobs at the same time?.....  
.....  
.....

25. Did you have to change jobs at any time during the period you have been abroad?.....  
.....  
.....

**D. Migration information pertaining to current migration**

26. Who initiated the discussion about your current migration?.....  
.....  
.....

27. Did you make the decision alone and only informed your husband about your decision to migrate afterwards?.....  
.....  
.....

28. Did you talk about which one of you should migrate?.....  
.....  
.....

29. How long did it take for a decision to be made for your migration?.....

- .....  
.....
30. How did you and your husband decide that you should be the one who should migrate?.....  
.....  
.....  
.....
31. Why did you decide that way?.....  
.....  
.....  
.....
32. Was decision making consensual or conflictual?.....  
.....  
.....  
.....
33. Who made the final decision for your migration?.....  
.....  
.....  
.....
34. What role did your husband play in the decision making process for your migration?.....  
.....  
.....  
.....
35. Did you at any time during the decision making process ask your husband for permission to migrate?.....  
.....  
.....
36. Did you at any time during the decision making process ask other people to talk to your husband about your desire to migrate?.....



.....  
.....  
.....

37. a) Are there any people who disapproved of your migration? Yes.....No.....

b) If **yes** state who disapproved of your migration.....

c) Give reasons why they disapproved of your migration.....

.....  
.....  
.....

38. Do you consider that it ought to have been your husband who should have migrated and not you?.....

.....  
.....

39. What factors led your family to decide what country you should migrate to?.....

.....  
.....

40. Why did you migrate?.....

.....  
.....  
.....

41. Did you migrate with other members of the family?.....

.....  
.....

42. Prior to your migration did you have family members or friends who had migrated to the same country where you are now living?.....

.....  
.....  
.....

43. Are you satisfied with your stay abroad?.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

44. a) Did you and your husband set a time frame for you to work abroad before returning permanently to Zimbabwe? Yes.....No.....

b) If **yes**, indicate number of years .....

45. a) Do you intend to come back to Zimbabwe? Yes.....No.....

b (i) If **yes**, when do you intend to return permanently to Zimbabwe?

.....  
.....  
.....

b (ii) What are your future plans upon return to Zimbabwe?.....

.....  
.....  
.....

c) If **no**, give reasons.....

.....  
.....  
.....

46. (a) Since your migration have you sponsored the migration of any family members?

Yes.....No.....

(b)(i) If **yes**, specify nature of the relationship.....

.....  
.....  
.....

(ii) Specify type of support given.....

.....  
.....

.....  
.....  
.....

**E. Why husband did not migrate?**

47. Did your husband voluntarily choose not to migrate?.....  
.....  
.....

48. For what reasons did you migrate instead of your husband?.....  
.....  
.....

49. In your opinion was your own migration only made possible because your husband could not or preferred not to migrate?.....  
.....  
.....

**F. Remittances**

50. What is your motivation for remitting?.....  
.....  
.....

51. When was the last time you sent money home?.....  
.....  
.....

52. How often do you send money home.....  
.....  
.....

53. To whom do you send the money?.....  
.....  
.....

54. Do you give instructions as to how money should be spent?.....

.....  
.....  
.....  
55. What proportion of the money you earn do you send home?.....

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

56. For what main purposes was the money you sent used for?.....

.....  
.....  
.....

57. Have household financial aspirations been met through your migration?.....

.....  
.....  
.....

**G. Social impact of migration**

58. How do you think your migration has affected your relationship with your husband?.....

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

59. What is your greatest anxiety regarding the impact of migration on your relationship with your husband?.....

.....  
.....  
.....

## APPENDIX 5

### QUESTIONS FOR A FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

Topic: Husband immobility and the international migration of married women from Zimbabwe

#### **A. Attitudes towards the migration of married women**

1. What are your views regarding the migration of married women?
2. Is the migration of a married woman who leaves behind her husband and children considered appropriate behaviour for a woman?
3. Were you criticised by other people for letting your wife migrate alone?

#### **B. Migration decision making**

4. Who initiated the discussion about your wife's migration?
5. How long after discussing migration was the decision finally made?
6. Was decision consensual or conflictual?
7. Who made the final decision concerning the migration of your wife?
8. What factors led you to decide that your wife should be the one to migrate?
9. What role did you play in your wife's migration decision making?
10. What reasons made you decide what country your wife should go to?
11. Did your wife at any time during the decision making process ask for your permission to migrate?
12. Can a married woman make a decision to migrate by herself and only inform her husband after she has made such a decision?

#### **C. Reasons for your wife's migration**

13. Why did your wife migrate?
14. What priorities did you set with regard to your wife's migration?
15. Was this achieved?

#### **D. Link between husband's immobility and wife's migration**

16. Have you ever considered migrating?
17. At the time that your wife migrated had you considered migrating yourself?
18. Why did your wife migrate and not you?
19. In your opinion did your wife migrate only because you could not migrate yourself?
20. To what extent was your inability to migrate instrumental in enabling your wife to migrate?

21. Are you likely to migrate in the next 12 months?

**E. Contact between migrant wife and husband/family**

22. Do you have regular contact with your wife?

23. How regularly are you in contact with your wife?

24. What means of communication do you use to contact your wife?

25. How often has your wife come back to Zimbabwe to visit since her migration?

26. Have you or your children visited your wife abroad?

27. Have any of your children migrated and are living abroad with your wife?

**F. Remittances**

28. Did your wife's migration improve the material wellbeing of the family?

29. How often does your wife send money?

30. To whom does she send the money?

31. What are some of the major purchases you made with money sent by your wife?

32. Who makes the decision as to how the money that your wife sends is spent?

33. How significant is the financial support you receive from your wife?

**G. Social impact of migration**

34. After your wife migrated who does the domestic tasks?

35. In what ways has migration changed your relationship with your wife?

36. Have you experienced any problems in your relationship with your wife following her migration?

37. What challenges do husbands face as a result of the migration of their wives?

38. What is your greatest anxiety regarding your wife's migration?

39. How do you cope with your wife being away?

40. After the introduction of a multicurrency regime in Zimbabwe do you still feel that your wife's migration is necessary?

41. How long has your wife been away?

42. Did you set a date for your wife's permanent return to Zimbabwe?

**H. Assessment of the value of wife's migration to the family**

43. Has your wife's migration been worthwhile?

44. What are the positive outcomes that you associate with your wife's migration?

45. What are the negative outcomes of your wife's migration?