



The socio-economic effects of cross-border migration on Zimbabwe's border lying communities - A case study of Beitbridge and Plumtree

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Abstract

Zimbabwe has in the past decade (since the year 2000) undergone what some commentators have called 'the largest migration event in the region's recent history...' driven by deteriorating economic conditions. This paper seeks to assess the nature and magnitude of the emigration patterns and the implications that this migration has on the demographic structure of the communities and on various socio-economic sectors. A specific focus is made on education and agriculture. The study uses a mixed-methods approach to investigate the effect of migration on border lying communities in Beitbridge and Plumtree specifically focussing on the demographic structure of the communities, agriculture and education. The paper concludes that outward migration in the areas studied in this paper has fundamentally altered the age structure of the population with important implications for population growth rates, business, politics, agriculture and education. The paper argues that chronic food insecurity, high failure rates in schools and declining population growth rates may be partly attributed to the migration phenomenon. Contrary to common belief that migrants improve their former households' welfare through remittances, the paper concludes that most of the non-skilled migrants originating from these rural areas often struggle to meet their own survival needs.

Keywords: Migration; Border lying areas; Remittances; Demography; Education; Zimbabwe

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1. Introduction

Zimbabwe has in the past decade (since the year 2000) undergone what some commentators have called ‘the largest migration event in the region’s recent history...’ (Polzer et al., 2010:30). It is estimated that the country has had in excess of 3 000 000 people who have emigrated to a foreign country in the last decade alone (Zanamwe and Devillard, 2010). These migration patterns have largely been driven by economic factors especially the disintegrating economy in Zimbabwe for the past two decades. Makina (2012:368) states that ‘over the years, Zimbabweans have responded to the crisis by emigrating in large numbers, to destinations varying from nearby Southern African countries to others as far away as New Zealand, Australia, Canada, the UK and the US.’ While Zimbabweans are distributed in several countries around the world the UNDP (2010:10) estimates that ‘South Africa alone houses over two thirds of the Zimbabwe Diaspora.’ As Makina (2010:35) also states, the vast majority of international migrants are people moving from a country of a lower GDP to a country with a higher GDP and better economic opportunities. Such levels of emigration have a significant effect on the demography of a country currently estimated at 12 000 000 (Zimbabwe 2012 Census). Although, all areas in Zimbabwe have been affected by these trends in emigration, it is commonly believed that border lying areas have been the most affected due to their proximity to the receiving countries. This study seeks to assess the nature and magnitude of the emigration patterns and the implications that this migration has on the demographic structure of the communities and development outcomes on poverty, agriculture, food security and children’s education. The common view in migration literature has been that international migration leads to increased remittances being received by the sending countries which improve their quality of life.

This study is an exploration of the socio-economic effects of cross border migration on Zimbabwe’s border lying communities. The research specifically focuses on Beitbridge and Mangwe Districts which are both border lying districts in Southern and South Western Zimbabwe respectively. The study of the migration-development interface can no longer be side-lined in Zimbabwe due to the large numbers of people who have gone out of the country especially in the last two decades. As noted earlier, it is estimated that between 3 and 4 million Zimbabweans left Zimbabwe in the last two decades (Makina, 2010; UNDP, 2010). Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency (2012:1) argues that ‘There is now a greater awareness that development affects migration and migration influences development’. Zanamwe and Devillard (2010) highlight that lack of information on the nature of migration patterns and their effects on Zimbabwe remains a stumbling block in policy formulation to maximise on the benefits of migration and minimise on the negative impacts of the phenomenon. Studies in migration in the past two decades have tended to portray the phenomenon of migration as a beneficial economic activity resulting in increased incomes for migrant households. According to Hildebrandt and McKenzie (2009) official estimates showed that as of the year 2009 migrants from developing countries were sending an estimate of \$315 billion dollars to their countries. This figure was more than three times the official development assistance received by developing countries in the same year. These figures portray cross-border migration as a positive development for developing countries. I argue in this paper that this glossy picture of cross-border migration tends to overlook the negative effects of this phenomenon on the migrant sending communities. This paper examines the holistic socio-economic status of

border lying rural communities with high numbers of migrants in the Diaspora. The study examines a total of 108 migrant households in Beitbridge and Mangwe areas to understand the socio-economic effects of cross border migration on selected development sectors.

Migration data is important for evidence based policy making. This is particularly important in areas where migration trends have been very high as in the selected study areas. As the Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency (2012:36) notes, 'The size of Zimbabweans living in the Diaspora and their distribution by country remains unknown due to lack of documentation'. No official statistics have been produced to this regard as yet'. This leaves a critical gap in development planning and policy making.

2. Literature review migration and remittances

Most studies have been dedicated to the understanding of the impact of remittances on development in developing countries (Maphosa, 2007; Adams Jr. and Page, 2005; Passop, 2012). Adams Jr. and Page (2005:1660) particularly conclude that '...international migration and remittances have a strong, statistically significant impact on reducing poverty in the developing world.' Passop (2012:3) argues that findings '...underline the importance of remittance flows from South Africa to Zimbabwe.' The underlying assumption of these studies is that migration brings about positive benefits as it leads to financial inflows for poor households and nations. These studies have therefore focussed on how such remittances may be maximised as development finance (Maphosa, 2012). In his paper entitled 'Impact of migration to South Africa on rural livelihoods in southern Zimbabwe', Maphosa (2007) argues that 'Zimbabwean migrants working in South Africa ... transfer significant value to their communities of origin in the form of remittances. This is the most important source of income for many households in the southern districts of Zimbabwe.' While Maphosa's observation is correct, no known study has to-date studied the negative impact of the exodus of people from the southern districts of Zimbabwe. The UNDP (2009:49) in the Human Development Report argues that 'The majority of movers end up better off – sometimes much better off – than before they moved. The gains are potentially highest for people who move from poor to the wealthiest countries, but this type of movement is only a small share of total flows.' The argument sustained in this report is that migration is beneficial for people who migrate to countries with greater wealth. However, there is limited research assessing the negative consequences of migration on the sending regions. In the same UNDP (2009) Human Development Report cited above it is further stated that '... the concern that communities lose out when people move needs to be explored' (UNDP, 2009:71). This is one of the main objectives of this paper. The regions under study appear to have had the highest exodus of people out of Zimbabwe into South Africa and Botswana largely because of their proximity to the two countries that share their border with Zimbabwe.

3. The decision to return home

In understanding the long term effects of cross border migration, it is important to have an appreciation of the decisions that the migrants make about whether or not to return to their countries in the long or short

term. The decision to return affects other decisions such as long term investments in the home country and the maintenance of social relations. Makina (2012) conducted a survey in South Africa where 4654 Zimbabweans who live in that country were interviewed on whether they would return home if the economy and politics stabilised. The findings were that 66% or two thirds of the respondents said that they would return. This leaves 34% of Zimbabwean migrants in South Africa who may not be considering returning to Zimbabwe. There are socio-economic consequences for this state of affairs. Further research is required to understand what characterises people who would return and those that would not return in order to understand what specific consequences of such decisions would occur in the sending country.

4. The demographics of emigration in Zimbabwe

In another study carried out by Makina (2007) in Johannesburg in 2007 it was found out that 80% of migrants from Zimbabwe living in that country were between the ages of 20 and 40 years. The study further established that there were relatively few people under the age of eighteen years that were migrating to South Africa. The same applied to the age group over the age of 50 years. This means that the group most affected by this type of migration is the economically active age group. This too could have important implications for the sending country in many ways.

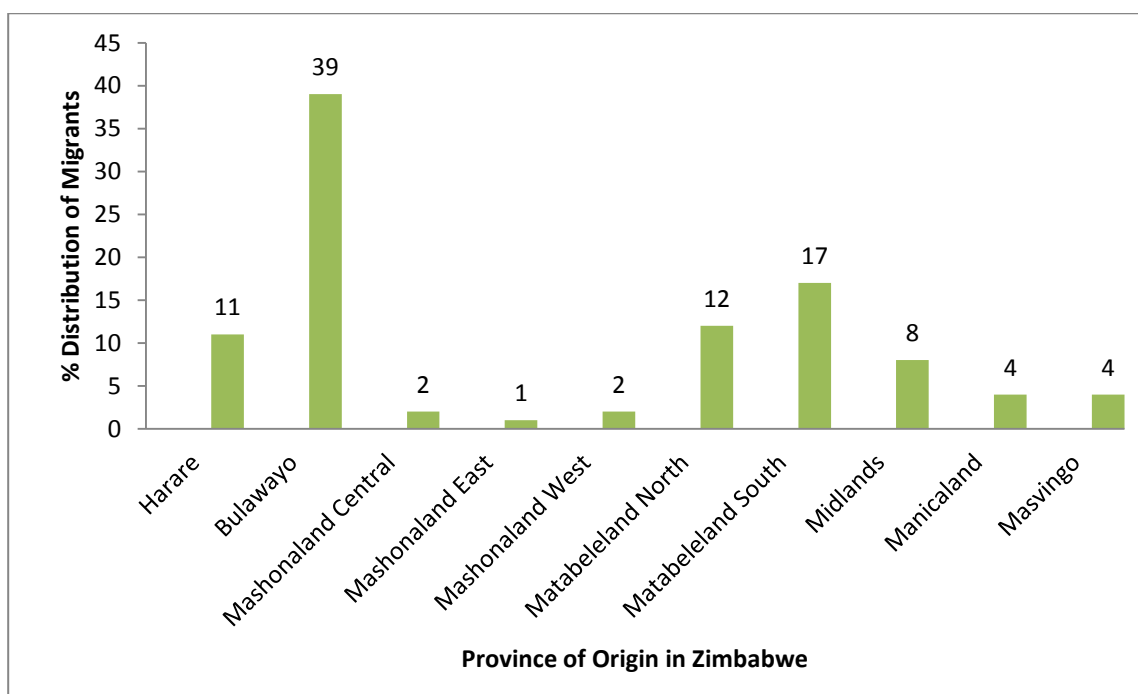


Figure 1. Column chart Showing Makina's (2007) Zimbabwe Migrant Distribution in central Johannesburg (Source: Graph by author, figures by Makina, 2007)

Makina's (2007) study further established that there was a variation in terms of areas sending migrants and the number of migrants leaving from each area in Zimbabwe. The chart below shows that the regions most affected by cross border migration are the Southern parts of the country closest to South Africa. These are Bulawayo, Matabeleland South and Matabeleland North. These regions have had a longer history of migration to South African mines compared to the other regions of Zimbabwe. This may be also partly attributed to the historical cultural ties that the southern part of the country shares with Zulu, Xhosa and Sotho tribes of South Africa. Migrants from the southern districts of the country find it relatively easy to integrate into the South African cultures.

5. Research methodology and pilot study

The study employed a mixed methods approach in data collection and analysis. First, a pilot study was conducted where the researcher visited local community leaders to carry out interviews in order to have an appreciation of emerging issues concerning cross border migration in these areas. Both in Beitbridge and Mangwe, the researcher spoke to local council members, kraal heads and headmasters. This pilot study was used to draft questions for focus group discussions and survey questionnaires that were to be used in the main study.

6. Focus group discussions

In the main study, the focus group discussions were carried out with local community leaders, teachers and health personnel in order to understand the general impact of the phenomenon in affected areas. Two such focus groups were carried out in Beitbridge and in Mangwe. Due to the emergence of education as another of the most affected areas, one focus group discussion was held in each study site with teachers from both secondary and primary schools. Another focus group discussion was held with students in each study site.

7. Structured questionnaires

Structured questionnaires were also administered to sampled households mostly to gather quantitative data on the nature and magnitude of the emigration in different households as well as to gather data on the effects of the migration patterns. Specific data collected using structured questionnaires included the numbers of people that had migrated, where they had migrated to, their frequency of visits, the place of residence of the household head, and the effects of these migrations on selected socio-economic issues such as agricultural production and children schooling.

The study applied a multi-stage cluster sampling technique to draw the study population. At district level two wards were purposely selected from each district, and then two villages were purposely selected from each ward. Lastly a systematic random sampling technique was used to select a total of 108 households on

whom questionnaires were administered. Twenty seven questionnaires were administered in each village using a systematic random sampling procedure. In view of the limited number of units studied, the findings of this study should be viewed as indicative of the phenomenon under study rather than representative.

8. Findings

8.1. Magnitude of movement and destination countries for the migrants

In order to appreciate the magnitude of migration statistics in the study sites, it is important to start by pointing out that the total number of people enumerated in the study sites who stayed in the households that were surveyed was 548 from 108 households. This gives an average count of 5 people per household. In terms of migration destinations, South Africa was by far the most preferred cross border migration destination. A total of 83 household respondents from the sample of 108 pointed out that they had at least one household member who was in South Africa. This translates to approximately 80% of the surveyed households having at least a member who was in the Diaspora, mainly in South Africa or Botswana. Statistical analyses show that in both survey areas there was an average of two individuals in South Africa per household. The total number of people enumerated from the 108 households who had migrated to South Africa was 183. The second most favoured foreign destination was Botswana. A total of 18 households pointed out that they had at least one member who had migrated to Botswana. The total number of people counted to have gone to Botswana was 44 from the households that were enumerated. A total of 245 people were counted to have migrated to a destination outside of Zimbabwe. This brought the combined tally of the households' members including cross border migrants to 793. Figure 2 below shows the distribution of the population in the two sites of study.

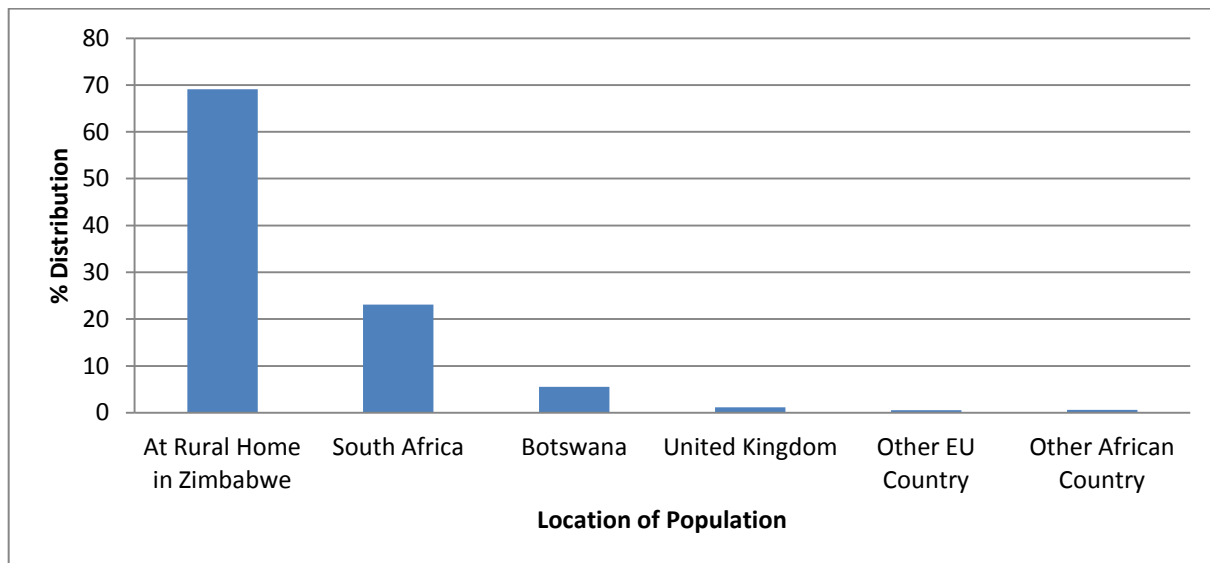


Figure 2. Chart showing population percentage distribution of total population as a result of migration (N=793) (Source: Survey data)

The statistics above show that of the total potential population in the survey areas of 793, only 69% was at home. This means that 31% of the population had migrated to South Africa, Botswana, or another country. Such levels of migration have naturally had a marked impact on the structure of the population. The pie chart below shows the distribution of the population that remains in the area of study compared to the population that has migrated.

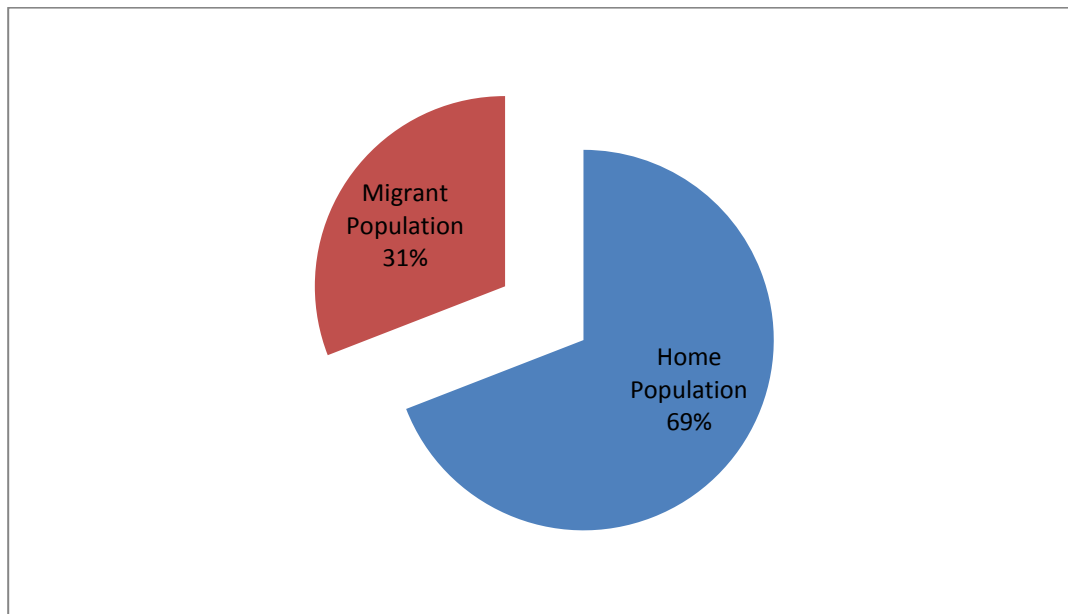


Figure 3. Chart Showing the Proportion of Emigrated Population to the Population at Home (N=793) (Source: Survey data)

Such a spatial distribution of the population has several important demographic implications. Firstly, due to the high numbers migrating, the population growth rate in the regions most affected by migration in the country have either slowed down or was reduced altogether due to the aggregate reduction resulting from the movement of people to destinations in the Diaspora. Secondly the population growth rate is reducing because it is the reproductive age groups that migrate. Most of these people proceed to have children in the Diaspora who become foreign nationals by birth. However, it should be noted that some of their children are sent back home to be kept by their grandparents while the parents work in the Diaspora. A study by Coleman (2006) about immigration in Europe pointed to the fact that huge population movements immigrating into Europe had the capacity to change the long term racial and ethnic outlook of the receiving populations. He argued that '...migration has become the driving force behind demographic change in many European countries, both directly and indirectly through the natural increase of populations of immigration origin' (Coleman, 2005:405). This argument underscores the immense power that migration has in changing the structure of national populations. While Coleman's study was concerned about destination countries in Europe, this paper is considering the sending regions in Zimbabwe. The overarching impact of migration on

Zimbabwean communities is therefore the reduction of the aggregate population and birth rates in sending regions. When asked about how migrants make reproductive decisions and decisions about their children, one participant in a focus group discussion in Mangwe commented that;

I have three children in South Africa my son. The first one migrated in 1996. The other two also followed around year 2000. They all used to visit us frequently. However, ever since they got married it's now a different story. The first born girl was married to a Zimbabwean man. They come usually for Christmas and new year holidays. My two boys both married South African girls. It has been a couple of years now since they last visited us. I hear that they both have children now but I have never seen them. It pains me a lot. I wish they had not migrated. But what could I do. I couldn't keep them here. There are no jobs and the rains don't fall. At least they can look after themselves there. Life is hard here. I am left with my wife and this nephew of mine. (Participant in a focus group discussion in Mangwe)

The citation from the focus group discussion above shows some of the decision pathways that migrants must exercise about having children in their countries of destination. It is clear that further studies in the areas of destination would be necessary in establishing the reproductive decision making processes by migrants in South Africa and Botswana in order to fully appreciate the demographic impact of such migration.

9. The distribution of migrants by provinces and its demographic implications

It will be noticed that according to a survey highlighted earlier on done by Makina (2007) in Johannesburg, Bulawayo had the highest proportion of immigrants in Johannesburg at 39%, followed by Matebeleland South at 17%, Matebeleland North at 12% and Harare at 11%. All these top migrant sending provinces had the slowest population growth rates when compared with other provinces in Zimbabwe. Bulawayo was the most affected as it recorded a negative population growth rate of -0.5% between 2002 and 2012 according to the 2012 census results. There is a glaring correlation between the number of migrants leaving a province and the rate of population growth for the said provinces. Further studies will be required within Zimbabwe to compare local regional variations in terms of the magnitude of migration. This particular study focussed on border lying areas. Further in land survey studies should reveal a clear picture of local provincial variations. The chart below shows population growth rates in different provinces in Zimbabwe according to the results of the 2012 National Census.

It is evident from the statistics presented above that if the current rates of outward migration are sustained, some communities are threatened with total depopulation in the long run. As Gillet (2005:82) states "Total migration results in entire communities ceasing to exist, at least for a period of time, although re-inhabitation may take place if circumstances change sufficiently for this to happen." If the current poor performance of the Zimbabwean economy is not reversed, it is evident that the economically active age

group will continue to migrate from Zimbabwe in search of economic fortunes. The full consequences of the migration phenomenon may only be experienced in the years to come.

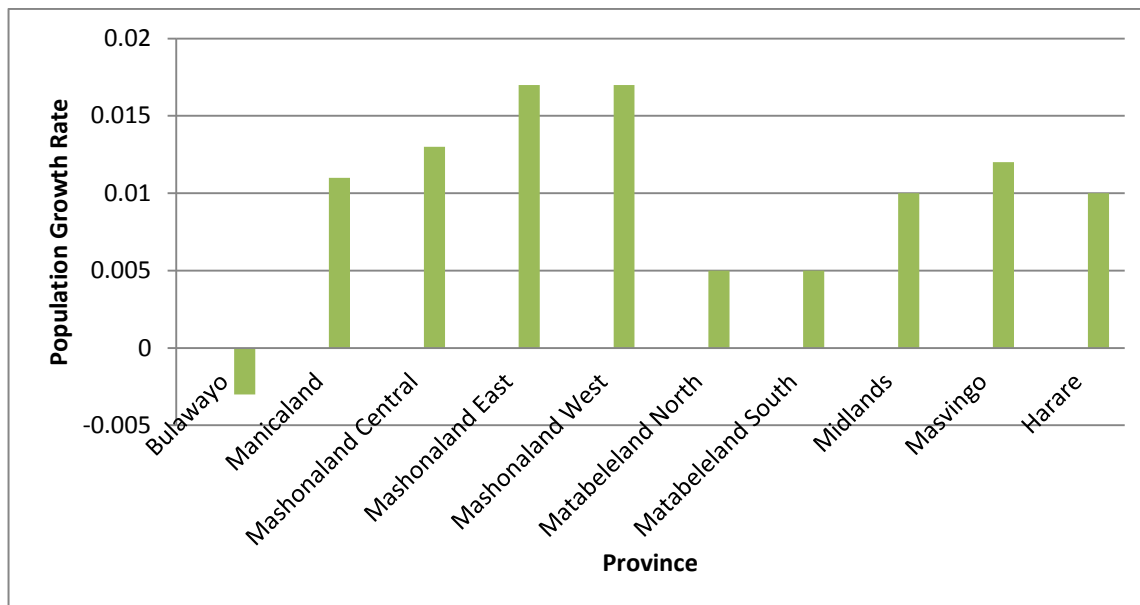


Figure 4. Chart Showing Provincial Population Growth rates 2002 - 2012 (Source: Graph by author, statistics by Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency, Census 2012: Preliminary Report, Available online at www.zimstat.co.zw/dmdocuments/CensusPreliminary2012.pdf)

Scholars generally agree that the Zimbabwe's massive migration has been largely driven by the economic downturn that the country has undergone in the last two decades or so. The effect of this has been that most migrants were economic refugees. This economic exodus attracts a particular calibre of people. Evidence from focus group discussions showed that the people who migrate to foreign countries are the economically productive age group seeking to make a living. These are mostly people in their late twenties who would have failed to get a job to sustain a stable income. It further emerged from the focus group discussions that males were more likely to migrate to a foreign country in search of employment than females. This was so because, in Ndebele culture, as is the case with most other African cultures, men are expected to be bread winners and to do everything within their power to ensure that the family has a livelihood. It was noted that in many instances these migrating young men were living behind their spouses. This was resulting in increasing cases of infidelity on both spouses and the likelihood of spreading HIV and AIDS. The charts below show the population structure of the survey population. It will be noticed from the two charts that follow that the most affected age groups by migration are the ages between 30 and 59 years. This is in line with Makina's (2007) findings that 80% of the migrants surveyed in Johannesburg were between the ages 20 and 40. There is an evident gap in the population structure of the survey area as a result of emigration as shown by the graphs below.

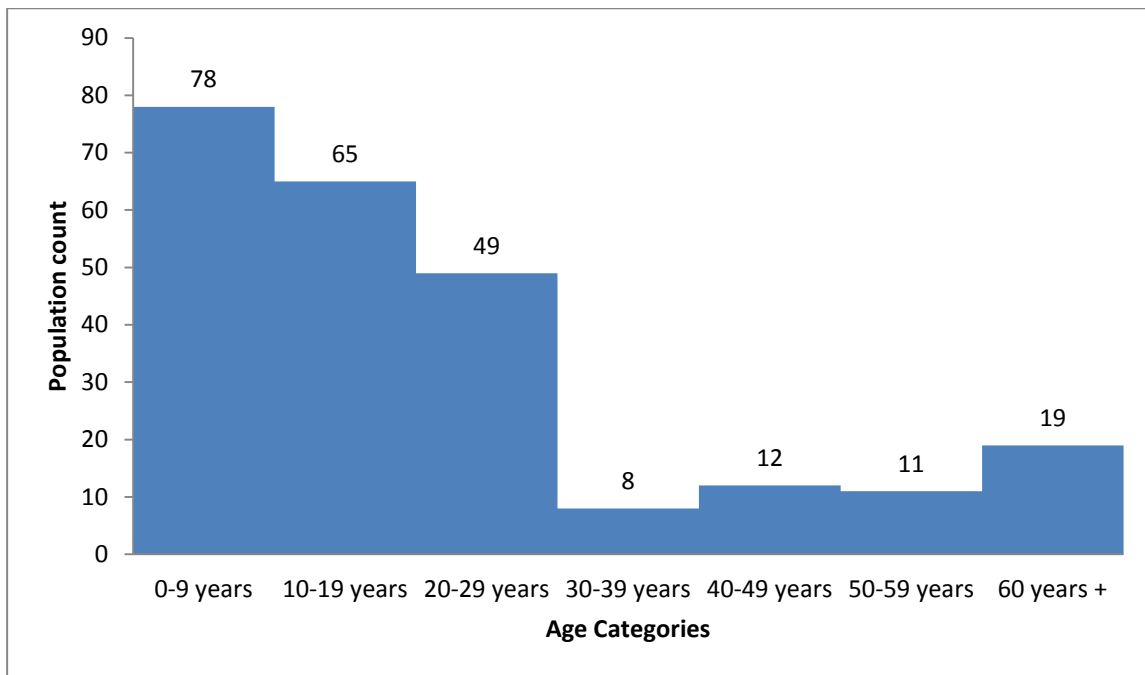


Figure 5. Chart Showing the Population of Males in Surveyed Households (Source: Survey data)

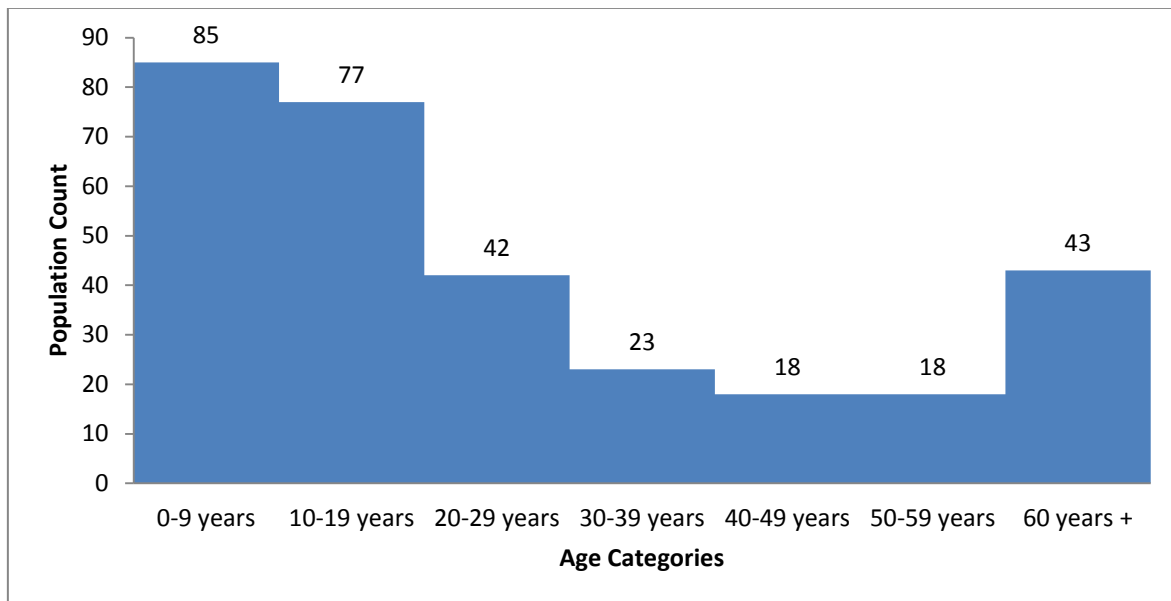


Figure 6. Chart Showing the Population of Females in Surveyed Households (Source: Survey data)

10. Implications of the emerging demographic structure on fertility and population growth

As already highlighted above, migration appears to be affected especially the most economically active age group. This age group (20-50 years) is also the most significant one in terms of the population growth rate as it is the most reproductive age group. An exodus of this group from an area begs the simple question raised by Fargues (2006:7),

What would have been recorded numbers of births and deaths if no migration had taken place? This is the question to be solved. Because migration is a selective process and because it changes the course of life, its statistical interference with fertility and mortality is a complex one.

Findings from focus group discussions showed that migration was affecting reproductive patterns in a number of ways. First in the case of married partners, in some instances, males migrating to South Africa and Botswana chose to leave their families in the rural areas in Beitbridge and Mangwe. This meant that the husband stayed in South Africa and the wife stayed in Zimbabwe. The two would often see each other during the holidays. In some instances this would happen once at Christmas and New year holidays. This group of people continued to reproduce although the distance between the spouses often led to cases of marital infidelity and violent domestic clashes between spouses. Another arrangement was whereby the male first migrated to South Africa. Upon finding reliable employment, they would send for the wife who would join them in South Africa and possibly find a job or settle in as a housewife. In most instances children would remain behind with dire consequences for their welfare as will be discussed under children's education later. These children often remained in child headed households. It was however noted that it was mostly the well-to-do migrants who mostly kept their children with them in South Africa. Those who were either unemployed with low paying jobs preferred to send their children back to Zimbabwe to stay with their grandparents. This trend probably accounts for a population with many children below the age of 18 years and elderly people over 50 years, but with no corresponding number of reproductive adults.

In instances where single males migrate to South Africa, several scenarios were reportedly possible. In most circumstances they would find a Zimbabwean partner whom they got married to in South Africa. They would have children there and often visit their relatives in Zimbabwe on major holidays. It was also reported that in some instances, they would get married to Zulu or Xhosa women. The common perception was that such men mostly did not bother to return home or even visit relatives. They would have children in South Africa and settle there. In all circumstances, it is evident that such migration has negative long term effects on the affected areas.

These statistics also have an important bearing on political matters such as voting trends which may be modelled along age structure patterns. The statistics imply that where political party support is age group based as has been the case with Zimbabwean politics in the last two decades, the party with the support of the age group of people over fifty years is likely to have an edge of a party supported by middle aged people. The average age of household heads was 56.87 years. This suggests that most household heads in the survey sites were elderly people who were either approaching the retirement age of 60 years or past that age. This

suggests that young people were not building homes in the rural areas in Beitbridge and Mangwe. This might be partly attributed to cross border migration to South Africa and Botswana, and also to rural urban migration although the latter appeared to be less pronounced.

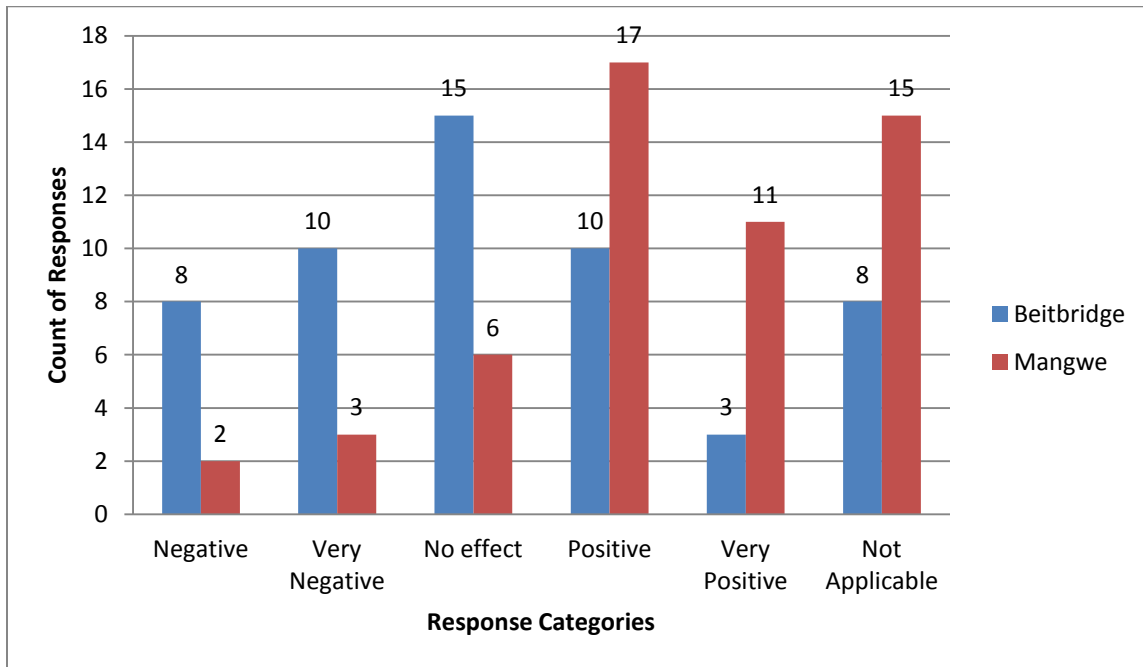


Figure 7. Chart Showing Responses on the effect of emigration on Children’s Education

11. Effects on agriculture

The study revealed that agriculture had generally been negatively affected by the exodus of able bodied people to South Africa from the sites studied. Household respondents were asked to say how cross border migration had affected agricultural productivity in their households. They were given six responses from which to chose (very negative, negative, no effect, positive, very positive, and not applicable – for households with no emigrants).

The majority of respondents felt that cross border migration had not affected agriculture in the study sites. Figure 8 shows the responses of household respondents about the effects of cross border migration on agriculture. In both sites the responses pointed to the fact that migration was either not affecting or negatively affecting agriculture. This was particularly stronger in Beitbridge where it was pointed out in focus group discussions and in in-depth interviews that able bodied people in the area either migrated in the long term to go and find jobs in Johannesburg or those that remained behind rendered their labour on a seasonal basis to farms across Shashe river in South Africa for cash. This meant that little agricultural activity took place in Zimbabwe.

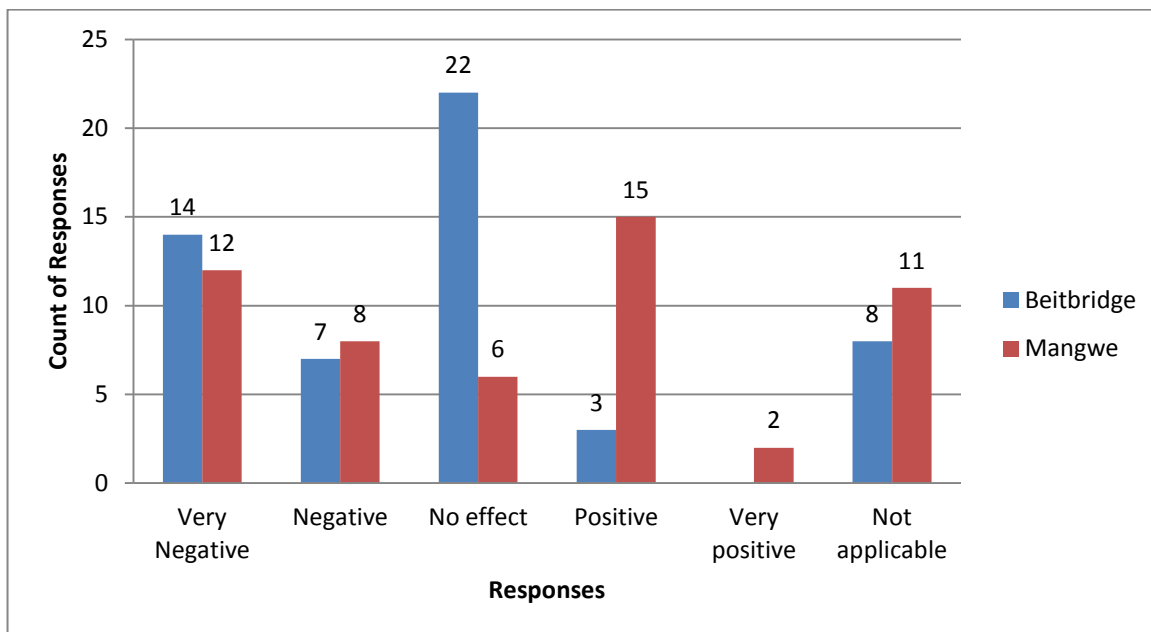


Figure 8. Responses about the effects cross border migration on agriculture in two districts of study

The greatest impact of migration on agriculture and food security is through the expatriation of able bodied people who are required as agricultural labour. This has the potential to produce food insecurity. Chronic food insecurity suffered by the southern regions of Zimbabwe may, amongst other factors, be attributed to the large scale emigration suffered by the region over the last two decades. This has left behind elderly people with limited ability to engage in exerting agricultural activities. Crush et al (2006) argue that

Logically, if migration deprives rural areas of labour and impacts negatively on production, then it is likely to increase the food insecurity of rural populations. In Central Mali, for example, absent young men were sorely missed, especially by the smallest households, and remittances were seen as poor substitutes for that young man's labour.' (Crush, Frayne and Grant, 2006:25)

This was coupled with the fact that Beitbridge is a generally very dry area lying in Region V of Zimbabwe's natural farming regions which is the driest with rainfall averaging less than 350 mm per annum. As a result, focus group respondents noted that there was limited agricultural work happening in the area due to the rock granite outcrops and poor weather conditions aggravated by climate change. Villagers largely survived by buying meal-meal and other food stuffs from South Africa. Responses from Mangwe varied somewhat from those in Beitbridge. In Mangwe, more respondents felt that cross border migration had no effect on agricultural production. A total of 17 respondents said that emigration had either 'positively' or 'very positively' affected agricultural production. This may be attributed to two key factors. Firstly, seasonal migrations to South Africa are less common or absent because the District is farther away from the South

African border. Secondly the soils and rainfall patterns are greatly more favourable, making agricultural returns more easily recognisable from investments. Migrants could make up for their absence by hiring agricultural labour and sending money for seeds and fertiliser requirements.

12. Effects of migration on children’s education

According to McKenzie and Rapoport (2006:1) ‘The implicit assumption in most of the existing studies ... is that migration only affects educational outcomes through remittances ... migration by household members six or more years ago may still result in higher household wealth today, influencing the ability to pay for schooling later on.’ In short this argument maintains that parents who migrate get better economic opportunities which enable them to send remittances for their children’s education. According to this view, migration is beneficial for children’s education. In this study, findings concerning the effect of migration on children’s education differed between individual households and the focus group discussions with teachers. Household questionnaire respondents felt that the migration of household members was positively affecting children’s education. This was so mainly because the migrants were sending money for school fees for their children and other relatives that remained behind. The findings from the household questionnaire are presented in the Figure 9.

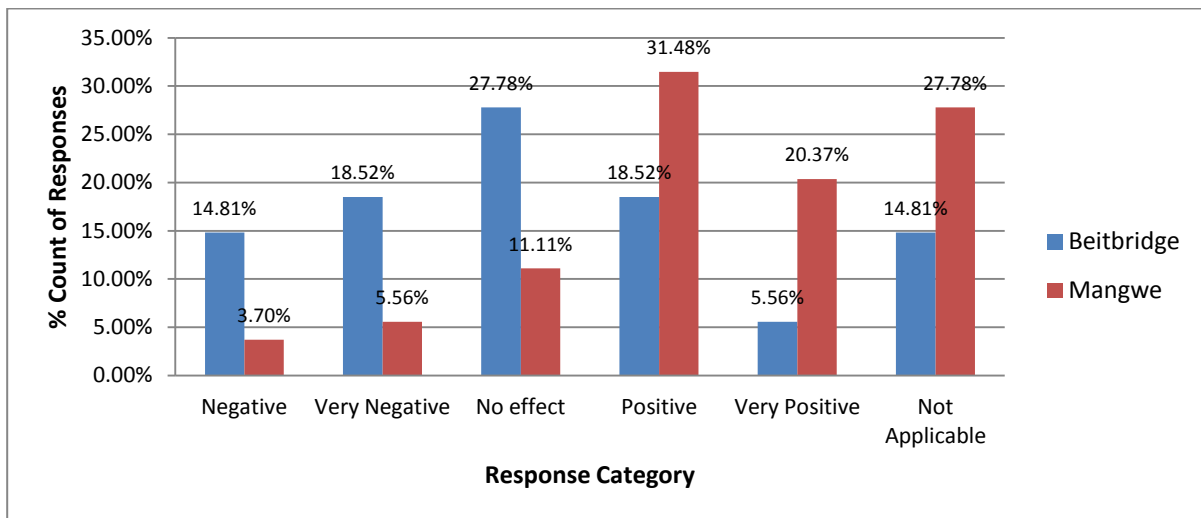


Figure 9. Responses on the effect of migration on children’s education (Source: Survey data)

In Beitbridge, the most respondents to the household questionnaire said that cross border migration had no effect on children’s schooling. The ‘not applicable’ category referred to households that did not have

migrants outside the country. Findings from focus group discussions showed that many children were out of school due to poverty. The migration of relatives across the border was not helping to improve the situation because most migrants earned meagre incomes hardly adequate for their own sustenance in South Africa. Therefore many migrants were non-remitting. Over 50% of the respondents in Mangwe felt that cross border migration was 'positively' and 'very positively' affecting the education of children. As stated earlier own this resulted from the fact that migrants would normally send money for the education of children. In Beitbridge only twenty four percent of the respondents felt that cross border migration was 'positively' and 'positively' affecting children's education. It is not clear why there were such discrepancies.

Further research is necessary to establish why this is so. The differences of perception from household respondents may be attributed to geographical location and possibly the nature of migration patterns. Most household respondents lamented that the migrants were not sending anything at all for their children's education and upkeep. While studies on migrants have generally portrayed them as doing well and sending remittances in the case of Zimbabwean immigrants in South Africa the wages earned are so low some of them even fail to sustain themselves in the country of destination, let alone their depends at home. Interviews with household respondents revealed that many migrants in South Africa were either unemployed or earning too paltry salaries to make a difference at home. This is in line with findings by Polzer et al (2010) that '... many families in Matabeleland in the south of Zimbabwe had lost all their productive household members to migration, often without receiving any regular remittances in return. The most common comment on the impact of the diaspora was that 'people come back dead.'" (Polzer et al, 2010:30). These findings are corroborated by Makina (2007) whose findings in a survey in Johannesburg found out Zimbabwean immigrants wages were distributed as follows:

Table 1. The distribution of earnings by Zimbabwean migrants in Johannesburg (Makina, 2007)

Monthly Gross Earnings	% Respondents
R1000 or less	21%
R 1001 – R 2000	38%
R 2001 – R4000	27%
Over 4000	14%

Table 1 shows that most migrants do not earn enough to be able to sustain themselves. The migration equals remittances hypothesis therefore appears to be unfounded in the case where this study was conducted. Most of the emigrants were unskilled rural people who often landed on very low paying jobs which limit any remittances. The following excerpt was taken from a lady in Beitbridge whom we will call Majohn to protect her identity;

The typical story of a household with emigrants:

I have six children who are in South Africa my son. All of them went a long time ago. Three of them went over ten years ago. The other three younger ones went in the last five years. All of them are in Johannesburg and Pretoria. They started working in the farms here across the river in South Africa. Then after collecting some money they moved further into Johannesburg and Pretoria. The one who went a long time ago died there in South Africa but the other five are alive. In terms of sending money, they send us when they get it here and there but its usually long intervals. But as you can see I am weaving these brooms, I have to try and find my own money. What they send is not enough. The ones that send money send school fees for their children. The others are not sending anything at all. They cant even buy their own children tennis shoes! This probably means they are not getting anything where they are. Only one girl X knows that there is mum at home, the rest don't care much. Two of my children sent their children back here to be kept by me. But I am struggling to sustain them because they rarely send money and when they send it is not enough to pay school fees and buy food. I hear that the other two now also have children there, three children in total. But I have not been able to see them. I hope I will see them some day. As far as farming is concerned, they do not help me at all, I have to see for my self what I do with farming if we are lucky to have the rains falling. (Interview excerpt from MaJohn (not real name))

As pointed out earlier own, focus group discussions with teachers in Beitbridge pointed out that pupils management was a major challenge due to migration. Teachers noted that in cases where both parents migrated to South Africa, children remained in child headed households. It was estimated by teachers in the focus group discussions that as much as 60% of the pupils in Shashe Secondary School in Beitbridge could be coming from child headed households. It was noted that such pupils were difficult to govern because they also viewed themselves as adults due to the fact that they were responsible for their own lives. One teacher said: 'behaviour wise we have a problem because those kids are fathers and mothers at their homes' (Teacher in a Focus Group Discussion in Beitbridge). The visiting patterns of migrants made pupils supervision from home extremely difficult if not impossible. Most migrants were reported to be visiting home only on major holidays as shown in the chart below. Teachers pointed out that students were only being monitored from school which was inadequate.

Teachers in the focus group discussions were unanimous that migration had an overall negative effect on the education system. The long history of cross border migration in the study areas had created a perception that migration was a more important livelihood option compared to education. Nearly all pupils had a close relative who had migrated to South Africa in the short history of their family. Some of these relatives were important reference points because although they had failed at school, they usually came back driving giving the impression that pupils could still make it in South Africa even if they did not pass their ordinary level examinations. This perception had been particularly reinforced by the decline of the Zimbabwean economy since the 1990s. Teachers in all focus group discussions both in Beitbridge and in Mangwe pointed out that

the poor state of their welfare due to low salaries had encouraged the perception of students that education was not beneficial. For example a teacher in one Focus group said:

I remember when I was encouraging them one day to learn and to pass. They said to me, if we pass what will we get since you passed but you are walking and not driving.... (Teacher in a Focus Group Discussion).

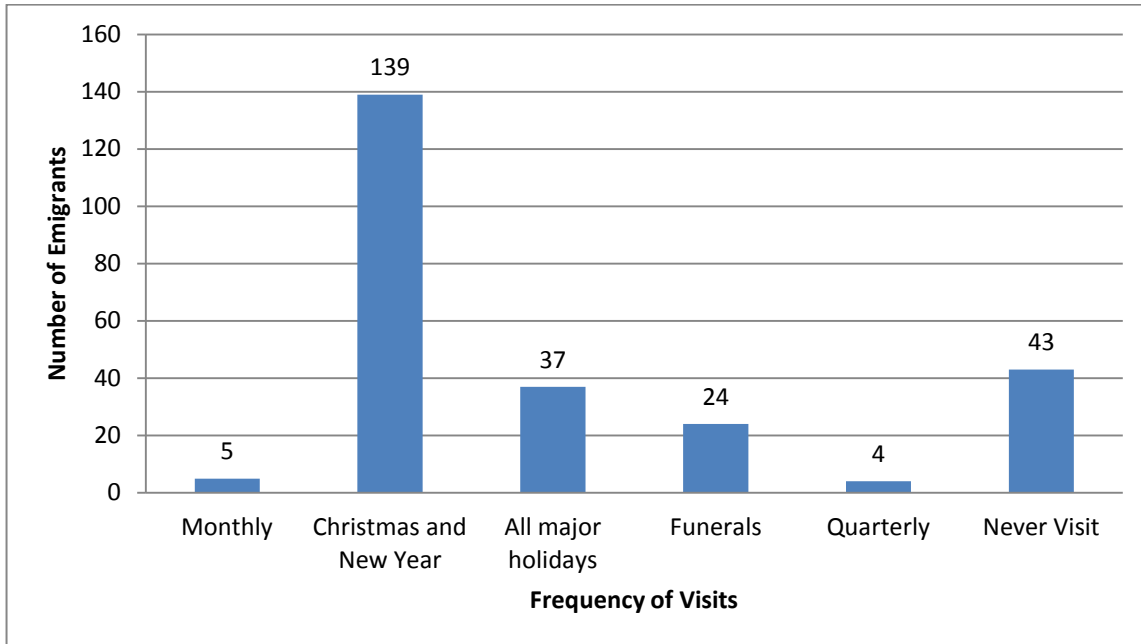


Figure 10. Chart Showing Emigrants frequency of visits to their Rural Homes (Source: Survey data)

13. Conclusion

The study concludes that the broad effects of cross border migration on border lying rural areas in Zimbabwe may not be as rosy as has been painted in migration literature, especially literature relating to remittances. The study established that most people who migrate from rural communities in the areas studied are mostly non-skilled labourers who often struggle to earn a living for themselves once they are in South Africa. This limits the amount of remittances they can send. Therefore a large majority of migrants are non-remitters or seasonal remitters. In general communities left behind have to fend for themselves by engaging in income generating activities to buy food and sustain children at school. It should be noted that remittance patterns may be different from skilled migrants who leave from urban areas. A comparative study with urban sites might reveal a different and fuller picture of the interplay between migration and development. It was noted that the population age structure had been significantly altered as a result of emigration. This alteration has

resulted in a depressed population growth rate for the regions that send the highest numbers of migrants when compared to low senders.

It may be concluded that Bulawayo's negative population growth over the last ten years may be largely attributed to outward migration as supported by evidence from Makina (2007). It is evident that if the outward migration trends are not stopped, some areas might eventually become depopulated in the long run judging by the current pace of migration. Agriculture has variedly been affected in the two sites studied. In Beitbridge, respondents felt that agriculture had been negatively affected by migrations because of reduced active agricultural labour coupled with poor climatic conditions. The situation was different in Mangwe where respondents pointed out that out migration was assisting them hire labour for agriculture and buy seeds through remittances.

In both study sites, education was reported to be negatively affected from a teachers' point of view. Many pupils were left in child headed households with no adult supervision at home leading to truancy and low pass rates. Pupils were generally uninspired to pass because of the common perception that if they fail they would go to South Africa. This had negatively affected the education system partly leading to a demotivated teaching force that was incapable of rallying pupils to pass. This paper concludes that migration is silently depopulating some areas in the Southern part of the country leading to negative population growth rates as evidenced by Bulawayo. The long term effect of this trend has not been fully appreciated but it can be seen in the destruction of the education system and the chronic food insecurity affecting some of the communities.

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