

Understanding Relationships and Remittance Flow During the Migration Period: Strength of Social Ties as a Factor Determining Remittance Behaviour

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Abstract

Remittances transferred between migrants and non-migrants play a major role in alleviating poverty and improving social and economic well-being in many developing countries. Although remittances are regarded as an outcome of migration with far reaching effects as a livelihood strategy, not all non-migrants with migrant family members are recipients of remittances. Remittances are not transferred to all non-migrant family members in the country of origin. Migrants identify particular individuals as recipients of remittances, which they send to their home countries during the migration period. Therefore, it is important to understand the determinants of remittance flow and remittance behaviour during the migration period. This study explores relationships between migrants and non-migrants and how such relations influence the flow of remittances during the migration period. A qualitative approach was employed in which 60 interviews were conducted (30 with Zimbabwean migrants in Durban and 30 with their respective family members in Zimbabwe). The study found that the strength of social ties between migrants and non-migrants plays a major role in determining remittance flows. Strong social ties allow remittances to be transferred between migrants and non-migrants. In the event that the social ties are weakened or broken, the direction of remittance flows changes as migrants find other individuals to transfer remittances to. Such findings show that the flow of remittances is determined by relationships between migrants and non-migrants. As such, initiatives to strengthen social relations should be established to ensure a continuous transfer of remittances.

Keywords Remittance flow, migration, relationships, remittance recipients, transnationalism.

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Introduction

The trends and patterns of migration have been changing over the years as migration has been adopted as a source of livelihood in many developing countries (IOM, 2015). Migrants send remittances for the upkeep of their families back home; hence, remittances are a major component of contemporary migration given their contribution to poverty reduction and improving socio-economic statuses in developing countries (Crush et al., 2005; Makina, 2014). This transfer of remittances has reduced poverty levels and vulnerability amongst remittance-receiving individuals and households. Although studies have been conducted on remittances, their effects on development initiatives and improvement on human well-being, little research has been done on the relationships between migrants and non-migrants and on how such relationships influence remittance behaviour. Given the relevance of remittances in poverty alleviation and development initiatives, it is important to explore different factors that determine the transfer of remittances during migration.

However, not every individual or household with a migrant family member receives remittances during the migration period. Therefore, this paper focuses on understanding relationships that exist between migrant and non-migrant family members that determine where remittances are transferred during the migration period. Understanding these relationships is important when analysing the dynamics of remittance behaviour and remittance flows. In this paper, remittance behaviour is understood by evaluating relationships during the migration period and how those relations influence remittance flows.

Background

Migration within Southern Africa is not a new phenomenon but has a long history dating back to the mid-19th century (Crush et al., 2005; Mlambo, 2010). During the colonial period, migration was viewed as the single most important factor tying all colonies and countries together into a single regional labour market (Crush et al., 2005). This migration tended to be circular and male-dominated. Men would migrate to work temporarily in the host community, leaving their families behind, and would return to their areas of origin at the end of their working period. However, the patterns and trends of migration have significantly evolved due to the changing economic and political landscape in the region. As economies crumble, these patterns and trends of movement continue to change with more people engaging in the migrant

labour system as a way of earning a livelihood (Crush et al., 2005; Bakewell et al., 2009; Crush & Tevera, 2010; Makina, 2013). Unlike migration in the colonial period, contemporary migration has become a major means of livelihood for many households in developing countries.

Zimbabwe experienced massive economic and political crises over the past decades, which saw the closure of many companies, retrenchment of several workers, devaluation and collapse of the local currency and increased poverty levels amongst the citizens (Zanamwe & Devillard, 2009; Crush & Tevera, 2010; Mzumara, 2012; Makina, 2013). Such economic challenges forced many Zimbabweans to emigrate and secure livelihoods elsewhere (Crush & Tevera, 2010; Mzumara, 2012; Makina, 2013). The emigration of Zimbabweans during the crisis period is described as catastrophic, as it resulted in massive brain drain and deterioration of service delivery, especially in the public sector (Chikanda & Dodson, 2013). However, this brain drain argument is criticised by other scholars who argue that migrant-sending countries also benefit from remittances sent by migrants. Thus, literature shows that remittances have varying benefits in the home country.

Like other migrant sending countries, literature shows that remittances are a major source of income for many households in Zimbabwe (Maphosa, 2007; Tevera & Chikanda, 2008; Mzumara, 2012). The high unemployment rate and economic situation in Zimbabwe compel households to rely on remittances transferred by migrant family members. Such transfers are used to improve the socio-economic well-being of non-migrant family members. Tevera and Chikanda (2008) and Maphosa (2007) highlight that households that do not receive remittances regularly are struggling to cope with the economic situation in Zimbabwe and, thus, become more vulnerable to poverty than those that regularly receive remittances. Remittances are transferred for various reasons; some are transferred for consumption smoothing (Tevera & Chikanda, 2008), while others are transferred for payment of bills and investment (Maphosa, 2007; Makina, 2013).

Changes in migration patterns have been reported in different countries and regions. Such migration experiences were reported in south-eastern Europe where Bulgarian citizens left their country in the late 1980s (Markova & Reilly, 2007). Nearly a quarter of Bulgarians left their country by 1989 towards European destinations such as the Czech Republic, Austria and Hungary, amongst others. The patterns and trends of migration in Bulgaria have changed over the years towards the tendency of temporary and seasonal

migration rather than permanent migration. Migrant remittances have proven to be a significant form of finance and livelihood income in developing countries (Markova & Reilly, 2007; Nzima et al., 2016). Officially recorded remittance flows to developing countries were estimated to have reached \$436 billion in 2014. The Bulgarian National Bank confirmed that the amount sent by migrants has steadily increased (Markova & Reilly, 2007). Literature on remittances shows that a large percentage of remittances transferred to developing countries are used for consumption and other household uses.

Although literature highlights the crucial role of remittances in improving the well-being of individuals and households in the migrant-sending country, research has not been done to evaluate and understand relationships that exist between migrants and non-migrants. Therefore, this paper assesses changes in the relationship between migrants and remittance recipients over the migration period, the causes of these changes and effects of these relationships on remittance flows. The paper extends the discussion beyond the remittance decay hypothesis; it demonstrates that there are determinants of remittance behaviour other than altruism that influence remittance flows during the migration period.

Migration, Remittances and Transnationalism

Migration for the purpose of securing a livelihood has been commonly reported in many developing countries. In the Southern African region, migration is determined by social, economic and political factors that compel people to leave their communities of origin (Maphosa, 2007). Given the economic environment in countries of origin, families spread their labour assets over geographically dispersed and structurally different markets to reduce risk and maximise the chances of securing their livelihood. Migration is adopted as a household decision to secure a better livelihood and improve families' or households' well-being (Posel, 2002; Konseiga, 2006). It is regarded as a risk management strategy or a way to avert liquidity constraints in the absence of insurance (Muzondidya, 2008; Makina, 2014).

A household or family as a unit of analysis reflects the ways in which households act as collective units in which all members are united in maximising household well-being (Posel, 2002). By so doing, the benefits of migration accrue to both migrants and non-migrants (Konseiga, 2006; Chakraborty & Kuri, 2017). Given that members in a household have different responsibilities in the family structures, the decision to migrate should be taken at a household level. Some household members are more likely to

migrate than others. Chakraborty and Kuri (2017) argue that in household migration, the characteristics of the household play a major role in influencing the migration decisions and process. Households are not homogeneous; they differ in structure and size. As such, the number of potential migrants who are able to migrate differs among households.

Regardless of the initial determinants of migration, Sander and Mainbo (2005) state that migrants from developing countries leave their families behind to secure a livelihood in their host countries, and transfer remittances back to the country of origin. According to Tevera and Chikanda (2008), remittances are the transfer of funds and goods from migrants to relatives and friends in the country of origin. These transfers can be in the form of cash, goods and even acquired skills (Maphosa, 2007). Remittances can be formal, those that are transferred through registered means like financial institutions, and they can be informal, those that are transferred through migrants' personal networks that connect them with their home countries.

Although it is difficult to measure the actual amount transferred due to the use of informal channels, the volume of remittance flows to developing countries has grown significantly in recent years (Sander & Mainbo, 2005; Maphosa, 2007; Makina, 2013; Inter Censal Demographic Survey (ICDS), 2017). Sander and Mainbo (2005) state that remittances from migrants to their families, increased from \$33.1 billion in 1991 to \$80 billion in 2002. Regarding remittance transfers by Zimbabwean migrants, the ICDS (2017) indicates a steady increase in the number of remittances transferred over the years. However, given that a significant portion of remittances go unrecorded, as they are transferred through informal channels, the actual figures could be higher than those reported (ICDS, 2017). Remittances have become the second largest source of external funding in Africa, just behind direct foreign investment (Sander & Mainbo, 2005; Maphosa, 2007). As such, they have become an important source of finance and foreign exchange for many African households and nations. There are fewer bureaucratic procedures for remittance transfer and collection than for other types of aid transfer, and remittances are transferred directly to the end user, which makes them more efficient than other forms of aid given to developing countries.

Tevera and Chikanda (2008) posit that had it not been for remittance transfers, the situation of many Zimbabwean households would have been more dire than it already was due to the economic crisis. Remittances have reduced vulnerability to hunger, ill-health and poverty for both rural and

urban households (Maphosa, 2007). Many children have remained in school due to the remittances sent by migrant family members, while others have received medical care from such remittances. Unlike the recipients of remittances, some non-receiving households rely on borrowing from money launderers whose interest rates are extremely high, making it difficult to repay the loans (Maphosa, 2007; Tevera & Chikanda, 2008; Mzumara, 2012). As a result, non-recipient households remain trapped in a vicious cycle of borrowing, as they continue borrowing to cover the initial loan (Tevera & Chikanda, 2008).

A large percentage of the remittances are used by receiving households for consumption smoothing, highlighting the precarious situation of food insecurity in the region (Maphosa, 2007; Tevera & Chikanda, 2008). However, not all remittances are used for consumption smoothing; some are invested in livestock and agricultural inputs, such as fortified maize seed and fertilizers, as well as establishing small income generating projects (Maphosa, 2007).

As mentioned earlier, in many developing countries, migration is viewed as a household survival strategy where one or more household members leave the country to secure a livelihood elsewhere (Posel, 2002; Sander & Mainbo, 2005; Bakewell et al., 2009). Therefore, non-migrant family members look forward to receiving remittances during the migration period. In some instances, family members left behind borrow money from their neighbours, intending to repay them once their migrant family members remit (Tevera & Chikanda, 2008). Such findings show that the family members left behind expect their migrant relatives to remit during the period of migration. This is supported by Maphosa's (2007) finding that migrants are motivated to remit, sometimes daily, to fulfill an obligation to their households left behind.

Study of the transfer of remittances over years shows that migrants maintain relations with the family members they leave behind. Grieco (2003) highlights that remittances are sustained as a result of migrants' participation in social networks where remittances represent the migrants' efforts to build and maintain social capital. Regardless of the time and distance that separates migrants from their families in the country of origin, there are various means by which they remain connected with their non-migrant networks (Jakubowicz, 2012). While migrants and their non-migrant family members maintain relationships during the migration period, their relationships can change over the period as they are influenced by different factors.

Migration has been identified as a phenomenon that connects areas that are geographically separated (Jakubowicz, 2012). As people continue to move from one country to another, they establish links to all the countries with which they are associated. Individuals migrate leaving their families behinds, hence the need to maintain contact with the country of origin over space and time (Bloch, 2010). Pasura (2008) states that during the period of migration, migrants maintain ties with their home country while integrating into the host country. This simultaneous integration of migrants into more than one society forms the basis of the concept of transnationalism (Pasura, 2008; Bloch, 2010).

Transnationalism entails being connected to several places at once, which, to a large extent, is a defining feature of the migrant experience (Levitt & Jaworsky, 2007; Pasura, 2008). The concept of transnationalism incorporates the kinds of activities in which migrants and non-migrants engage. Analysis of migration, under transnationalism, precedes the mere determinants of the movement of people. It takes into account the activities in which people engage after migration and the connections they establish as a result thereof. Individuals in different parts of the world are connected through transnationalism, and their actions and activities are systematic. Faist (2000) states that transnational communities cause migrants and non-migrants to be connected by strong social and symbolic ties over time and over large geographical areas. Thus, activities in which migrants and their non-migrant family members engage during the period of migration have a bearing on their relationships.

Although remittances are regarded as one of the outcomes of migration with far reaching effects as a livelihood strategy, not all non-migrants with migrant family members are recipients of remittances. Therefore, it is important to understand the determinants of remittance flows during the migration period. Thus, this study sought to explore how relationships between migrants and non-migrants influence the flow of remittances during the migration period.

Study area

This paper is based on data collected for a PhD thesis examining the familial relationships between migrants and their non-migrant family members. The study was carried out in two places: Durban, South Africa and Harare, Zimbabwe. Initial study interviews were conducted with Zimbabwean migrants living in Durban and the second phase of interviews was performed in Harare with the respective family members of the interviewed migrants in Durban. Durban is the largest city in South Africa's KwaZulu-Natal Province

and is one of the country's main seaside resort cities. It is located at the far-east side of the country, about 600 km from Johannesburg. Harare is the capital city of Zimbabwe, situated in the north-east of the country, in Mashonaland Province. As the capital city, it is Zimbabwe's leading financial, commercial and communication centre with residents from diverse cultures and backgrounds.

Research design

This paper entails a qualitative study of Zimbabwean migrant workers in Durban and their respective family members back home in Zimbabwe. Creswell (2009: 4) defines qualitative research as "a means for exploring and understanding the meanings individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem". Qualitative research uses concepts and clarifications to interpret human behaviour and social phenomena from the perspective of the people affected by the phenomena under review (Cohen et al., 2002). Hennink et al. (2010) argue that the main distinctive feature of qualitative research is that it allows the researcher to identify and understand issues from the perspective of the participants. The emphasis is on the verbal description of the phenomena in its natural setting. This study sought to explore relationships during the migration period; thus, a qualitative research design was the most suitable method as it allowed for the interpretations and meanings that people attach to migration to be explored.

Sampling

The study employed a snowball or chain sampling technique. Hennink et al. (2010) state that snowballing is a recruitment method that is particularly suitable for identifying study participants with specific characteristics or information required in the study. This sampling technique relies on personal contacts to recruit study participants. For the purposes of this research, a total of 60 interviewees were contacted in both Durban and Harare. The researcher identified migrants from Harare who then identified others who had family members in Harare as well. The process was repeated until a total of 30 migrants were interviewed in Durban, 16 males and 14 females. Out of the 16 male migrants interviewed in Durban, 75% were married, 20% were single and 5% were not married but cohabiting. One married male participant was in a polygamous relationship with three wives. Of the total number of female participants, 35.7% were married, 35.7% were widowed, 7.1% were cohabiting and 21.4% were single. Participants in Harare were family members of the migrant participants in Durban. Of the participants in Harare,

40% were parents of the migrants while 33.3% were siblings. Extended family members constituted 20% and 6.7% were hired caregivers.

Data Collection Methods

Data was collected using two types of interviews in qualitative data-eliciting methods: narrative accounts and one-on-one in-depth interviews. These two types of data collection are important when the researcher wants to elicit detailed views from the participants in a short period of time. Participants gave narrative accounts of their lives and experiences of migration that were unguided by research questions. This narration was followed by one-on-one in-depth interviews in which research questions were used to elicit the specific pieces of information required to answer the identified research questions.

Narrative interviews entail the retelling of stories from the informant's point of view (Jovchelovitch & Bauer, 2000). Hence, the stories that are told and the way they are told reflect the understanding of the person telling it, which might be different from the way the next person may relate the same story. This makes the narrative inquiry a suitable methodology since it allows for the participant's actual interpretation of the issue at hand, to be revealed.

After engaging in narrative discussions, the researcher conducted in-depth interviews with the participants. Miller and Glassner (1997) highlight that one-on-one in-depth interviews, in a qualitative enquiry, provide the researcher with the opportunity to explore the participants' point of view regarding the issue at hand. As such, people's beliefs, perceptions, feelings and emotions, as well as the meanings they attach to experiences, will be learned in the process. Given that this study sought individual meanings and perceptions, in-depth interviews were a relevant means of collecting data.

Allowing the participants to narrate their stories first then engage in interviews later allowed the researcher to elicit more information from the participants. Issues were raised in the narratives that the researcher followed up on during the in-depth interviews for further clarity, hence, obtaining the relevant information required to answer the research questions. The research design and data-eliciting methods adopted in this study ensured that participants' voices were heard. Hence, conclusions of the study are based on the information provided by the study participants.

Analysis

Data collected through qualitative methods comprise mainly of words, in contrast to the numeric nature of quantitative data. Data collected in this study were analysed using the thematic analysis method. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis is a method of identifying, analysing and reporting patterns within data. It involves identifying patterns or themes from the collected data, selecting those of special interest and reporting on them. Themes are formed around the main issues or points raised by study participants as they respond to research questions. By so doing, thematising data brings order to the collected data, and enables a better understanding.

Research findings

The major result of this study highlights that the strength of social ties between migrants and non-migrants is crucial in determining remittance flows during the migration period. Although literature shows that migrants transfer remittances that are crucial in improving the well-being of their non-migrant counterparts (Bakewell, et al., 2007; Maphosa, 2007; Tevera & Chikanda, 2008), this relationship has not been discussed in the literature. This study explored the relationships that exist between migrants and non-migrants and how these relations influence the flow of remittances during the migration period. In this paper, four sub-themes are identified and used to explain how these relationships determine the flow of remittances.

Family Tension and Remittance Flows

Family is regarded as a social unit that supports its members (Dintwat, 2010); however, results from this study show that there are inter and intra family conflicts that affect relationships within families. Such conflicts and tension compromise the potential of the family to fully support its family members, as highlighted in other literature. Participants reported different conflicts within their families that negatively affected their relationships. Such conflicts differ depending on the relationships between family members, with the main conflicts that were reported being between women and their mothers-in-law. Both migrants and non-migrant participants reported that daughters-in-law are less likely to be accepted in their husbands' families, which causes significant tension within families:

My mother in-law would tell me to my face how she wishes her son got married to someone as educated as he is. She would make me do all the

housework because she said that's all I was good at. (Mrs Chabata, a non-migrant participant)

Another widow reported that her late husband's family chased her away soon after her husband's burial. In her opinion, her husband's family had never accepted her as part of the family and they could not stay with her and her daughter after her husband's passing:

She would tell me there was no need for me to keep hanging onto the family because the one who brought me there was gone. It's like to her I was never part of the family, I was just a constant reminder of a son she once had. (Revai, a 33-year-old migrant widow)

Participants reported that in many families, the daughter-in-law is regarded as a stumbling block that disturbs the peace and unity that was always in their home. However, instead of the families blaming their sons for bringing a wife into their home, the daughter-in-law becomes the scapegoat and is blamed for disturbing peace in the family. This was highlighted by married female participants when they reported that "blood is thicker than water", as families do not blame their own sons for bringing the 'stranger' into the family. In emphasizing that daughters-in-law are treated differently from other family members, Mrs Chabata said, "Daughters-in-law are like owls, whenever people see them they think they are there to cause trouble". In Shona culture, an owl is associated with witchcraft, and as such, when people see it, they believe it has been sent by witches to do something evil. Participants emphasised that daughters-in-law are the least trusted family members.

Marotz-Baden and Cowan (1987) argue that if a daughter in-law feels accepted in the family, her feeling may contribute to the eventual success of the of family initiatives. Her unhappiness can disrupt the family success as she can connive with her husband to detach from the family. Such was highlighted in this study as female and male participants who reported in-law tensions within their families reported that they do not remit regularly. Although some in-laws try to make amends and restore the broken relationships, women in the study reported that such actions are not sincere but are part of a strategy to access remittances. As a result, some migrants refuse to send remittances home, and others reported that when their husbands ask them to send remittances home they take a portion to spite their in-laws:

Sometimes when I am sending money or groceries to my in-laws, I take a portion and give to my mother without my husband's knowledge. (Faith, a married migrant participant)

In addition to this conflict with in-laws, there are other tensions within families that affect relations between members. The study indicated that, in some instances, the way people grew up impacts how they relate in their adult life. People invest in social relations by interacting and networking with others in order to gain access to resources embedded in the network (Grieco, 2003). Participants in the study indicated that their interactions with different family members before migration determines how they feel about each other and influences their social relations after migration.

One migrant widow, Revai, and her non-grant sister, Mrs Moyo, reported that they experienced rejection from their father after the death of their mother. Their father remarried and his focus shifted to his new wife. That experience brought the sisters closer to each other, as they relied more on each other for moral and social support. Given their mother's sudden death, Revai and her sister needed their father to be with them as they grieved. Unfortunately, their father decided to remarry sooner than they expected, and that affected their relationship with him.

As such, Revai felt compelled to remit to her sister whom she regarded as her only close family member. When she migrated, Revai left her daughter in her sister's custody, and hence she regularly remits to her. Explaining the reasons for leaving her daughter with her sister, Revai indicated that she trusts her sister with her own life and she knew she was the only person she can trust with her child's life. Her relationships with her sister and father influenced her remittance behaviour. Although her father is not employed and could have an improved standard of living if she transferred remittances, Revai prefers sending remittances to her sister with whom she has a strong social bond. Literature shows that individuals who receive remittances from their migrant family members have better chances of improving their living standards (Maphosa, 2007; Tevera & Chikanda, 2008). This study has shown that remittances are transferred to every non-migrant family member. The flow of remittances is influenced by the kinds of social relationships that exist between migrants and non-migrants.

Another migrant participant, Melisa's relationship with her father adds to the argument that life experiences can have an effect on how family members relate to each other and that this relationship effects remittance transfers.

Melisa lost her mother at a young age. Although her father was still alive, he was never there for her, as he supported his new wife and never attended to Melisa's needs as a father should. Melisa stated that she resented him for the way he treated her, and she blamed him for the trauma she went through as a child. As such, she did not want to be associated with her father's house. Responding to the question on her relationship and association with her father's house Melisa said the following:

I am not a part of that household; it's for him, his wife and their children. After all, it's not like I grew up there anyway. I seriously have no attachment to that household whatsoever.

As a result of the kind of relationship she has with her father, Melisa does not remit. She believes that sending remittances indicates a functional relationship. Since she is not willing to establish one with her father, she does not find it necessary to remit.

The experiences of Revai and Melisa show that although people are tied together as a family by birth or marriage, the strength of their social ties can either be strengthened or weakened by their mutual life experiences. May (2011) posits that strong family relations are attained when members have a sense of belonging. Coordination and cooperation can be realised and family members are able to work together and assist one another in times of need. In this study, it was revealed that life experiences have the potential to determine the strength of family ties. Such social ties have a greater effect on remittance behaviour than the biological ties that exist between migrants and non-migrants.

Choice of Remittance Recipients

As was confirmed by participants, migrants remit to their families in the home country for various reasons (Bakewell et al., 2007; Maphosa, 2007; Tevera & Chikanda, 2008). The purpose for remitting was identified as the major determinant for identifying a certain individual as a recipient.

Remittances transferred for the family upkeep are sent to the person in charge of the household back home. Sibongile, a migrant participant, reported that she always sent remittances to her sister who stays with her son in Zimbabwe. Sibongile, like many other migrant participants, indicated that the people that they left in charge of the household are the current household heads. As such, they are responsible for ensuring the maintenance of the household. Stanly, another migrant participant, said,

My sister is now in charge of the household, and we always communicate, as she informs me about the situation back home. I might be the father, but I am not at home; hence, I am not aware of what happens there on a daily basis. As such, I have to rely on what she tells me. If there is a problem with the children, she is the one with first-hand information.

Such sentiments show that migrants regard the person that they left in charge of the household as the right person to send remittances that are meant for the family upkeep. This highlights the importance of both migrants and non-migrants in transnational activities (Levitt & Jaworsky, 2007; Pasura, 2008). Migrants and non-migrants engage in different transnational activities that either strengthen or weaken their relationships during the migration period and beyond. As the migrant remits and the non-migrant looks after the migrant's investments in the country of origin, their relationships are strengthened.

However, in terms of remitting to assist other extended family members, participants reported that they prefer to send the remittances directly to the actual beneficiary. There were reports that some family members tend to keep remittances that are not meant for them. In the event that remittances are sent to one family member to distribute to the respective beneficiaries, migrants reported that some intended beneficiaries do not receive their full shares:

They would keep everything and not pass it onto the right person, even when they are aware that it's not theirs. Some take a portion of the other relatives' remittance and keep it. (Tecla, a female migrant participant).

As a measure to prevent conflict and unnecessary tension between family members, Tecla and other migrant participants prefer remitting to the actual beneficiary than passing remittances through a third party.

Regarding remitting for investment, participants reported that due care is necessary when selecting recipients of remittances. Reports of misuse of remittances meant for investment were highlighted by most of the migrant participants. Migrants reported remitting for investment in income-generating initiatives and real estate highlighted high levels of disappointment after recipients misappropriated the remittances transferred for a particular purpose. It has been reported that some recipients disregard the wishes and commands of migrants and use remittances for their own benefit.

Given the economic situation in Zimbabwe, other recipients use the money send by their migrant family members hoping that they can replace it before

it is needed. However, they sometimes fail to do so. As a result, misuse of remittances becomes a source of conflict in some families. Constance is a non-migrant who agreed that she sometimes misuses remittances meant for other investment purposes:

Sometimes it is difficult because you are given \$1000 to buy bricks or other building material yet; you do not have mealie-meal in the house. You will be tempted to take a portion of the money and buy food. (Constance, a non-migrant participant).

However, she said that since she takes a small percentage of the money, she does not deem it necessary to tell the migrant about it. Instead, she buys the materials with the remaining money and does not tell the migrant.

Misappropriation of remittances meant for investment has far reaching effects on the relationship between migrants and non-migrants. In some instances, relationships completely disintegrated, and in other instances, the levels of trust between family members deteriorated during the period of migration due to misappropriation of remittances. Clever, a migrant participant, reported that he moved to South Africa in 2010 with his wife and their two children. He bought a residential stand in Harare and entrusted his young brother to oversee the project in his absence. However, Clever was disappointed by his brother, who took advantage of the trust he had in him and his absence and had inflated the prices of the building material, which ended up costing him more than necessary. Clever felt betrayed by a family member that he trusted. He reported that he had a good relationship with his brother before migration. As such, he never expected such betrayal.

For such reasons, migrant participants reported that they do not mix family remittances and those that are meant for investment:

When sending money home, I prefer sending directly to the person who is supposed to benefit from it. If it is my parents, I sent it to them directly. That's why for the construction of my house, I sent it directly to the building contractor himself. (Solomon, a migrant participant).

Solomon argued that sending remittances through a third party may delay payments and can also result in the misuse of the remittances.

However, migrant participants reported that regardless of the disappointments they experience, they find other individuals to transfer remittances to so that the projects progress. This is supported by Faist (2000),

who argues that migrants continue to engage with their countries of origin, and hence there is continued contact and interaction during the migration period regardless of the challenges experienced.

Effective Communication and Remittance Flow

Both migrant and non-migrant participants reported that where remittances are transferred, communication lines are opened between migrants and non-migrants. Results from this study revealed that there is a relationship between transfer of remittances and frequency of communication between migrants and non-migrants during the migration period. When remittances are transferred, migrants and non-migrants keep updating each other on the events that led to or resulted from the transfer of the remittance. The higher the frequency of remittance flows, the better the chances of constant communication during the migration period. Such was reported by both migrants and non-migrant participants in the study. Remitting to the extended family has opened lines of communication for many.

The study revealed that in some instances social relationships between migrants and non-migrants were weak before migration. However, after migration their relationships changed and they attribute the changes to the transfer of remittances during the migration period. Such sentiments were shared mostly by migrant participants who indicated that the levels of communication between them and family members improved after they sent remittances. They admitted that after sending remittances, they continued to talk for a certain period of time. Meaningful communication was guaranteed where remittances were transferred and that communication strengthened their relationships. Such is supported by literature on transnational space, which states that activities in which migrants and their non-migrant family members engage during the period of migration have a bearing on their relationships (Faist, 2000).

Duration and Frequency of Remitting

Although literature shows that migrants remit to their non-migrants family members during the migration period (Grieco, 2003; Maphosa, 2007; Tevera & Chikanda, 2008), the study revealed that not all migrants remit back home. The strength of social ties between migrants and non-migrants was reported as the major determinant of remittance behaviour. Results from the study did not show any relationship between time spent away from the country of origin and the flow of remittances during the migration period. One quarter of the

study participants reported that they do not regularly remit back home. They indicated that they did not prioritise remitting back home because of the relationships they had with the families. As such, their remittance behaviour was not influenced by time spent in the host country. As highlighted by Grieco (2003), remittances represent efforts by migrants to establish and strengthen relationships with non-migrants. Migrants who did not have intentions of establishing relationships with their non-migrant family members reported that they do not regularly remit. Regardless of the time they spent in the host countries, such migrants do not remit unless their relationships with non-migrant family members have changed.

The study also revealed that remittance transfers are not always consistent. Rather, migrants remit erratically, when remittances are needed. Participants who remit erratically indicated that they are not primary breadwinners to any household in the country of origin. As such, they are not compelled to remit regularly or constantly. Most of these participants either migrated with their nuclear families or were single people with no primary dependents in the home country. It should, however, be noted that there are other single migrants without children in the home country but they remit regularly for specific causes. Robert is a single male migrant who reported that although he does not have children of his own, he took the responsibility to pay tuition fees for his younger sister who is at a teacher's college:

I have been paying for my sister's college tuition for two years now and she is left with one year before she finishes. I will be happy to see her through this final year. (Robert, male migrant participant).

Such remittances that are meant for a particular cause are likely to cease once their purpose is fulfilled. However, waning of such remittances cannot be attributed to time spent away from home. Rather, the flow of such remittances is determined by the need in the home country. In the event that the purposes the remittances are fulfilled, such remittances may cease to flow.

Simba, a married migrant, reported that he migrated with wife and children to South Africa. As such he does not remit back home frequently. He indicated that although his parents were living in Zimbabwe, they were both employed and they provide for their own need. He reported that two of his siblings were working in Canada and, therefore, they assist in providing for their parents. As such, it is not his sole responsibility to provide for his parents back home.

However, he admitted that he sometimes remits to other extended family members from time to time. He used a Shona proverb which says '*ukama igasva hunozadziswa nekudya*'. The proverb stresses the relevance of food in cementing and strengthening social relationships. In the Shona culture, food is given a great significance in showing how people relate to each other. If someone does not eat another's food, it is interpreted as them being afraid of being bewitched. Therefore, to show that there is trust, people should accept the food that they are given by their relatives or neighbours. As such, Simba indicated that sending groceries and money to family members back home is an indication of his support so that they would know that he is willing to help them if they are in need of assistance. His remittance behaviour signifies his willingness to establish relationships with family members back home (Grieco, 2003).

Discussion and Conclusion

Transfer of remittances has been identified by many scholars as the major characteristic of migration in developing countries (Maphosa, 2007; Tevera & Chikanda, 2008). Literature has shown that migrants transfer remittances to their families in the countries of origin for various reasons, and that such remittances are significant to their well-being. However, little has been done to explore the kinds of relationships that exist between those migrants and their non-migrant family members and how such relationships impact remittance flow. This study explored these relationships and found that the strength of social ties between migrants and their non-migrant family members is an important determinant of remittance behaviour.

Migration is regarded as a household decision to improve family or household well-being (Konseiga, 2006). The family in the country of origin relies on the migrant family member to send remittances back home. However, as the study indicated, familial experiences sometimes hinder the flow of remittances. Tensions and conflict within families affect relationships between family members. As a result, remittance flow is hampered because migrants tend to remit to individuals with whom they have a strong social relationship. Therefore, the flow of remittances is influenced by the nature of the ties that exist between migrants and non-migrants. Remittance flows signify the existence of a relationship (Grieco, 2003). Therefore, as much as migration is regarded as a household decision meant to benefit the family, if relationships between family members are compromised, the transfer of remittances is not guaranteed. Therefore, when evaluating remittance behaviour, emphasis

should also be placed on the nature of the relationships between migrants and non-migrants.

Migrants' choices of remittance recipients are not random. Before migration, migrants had relationship with other family or household members. After migration, they use such relationships to identify recipients of remittances. As they integrate into their host communities, migrants remain invested in activities in their countries of origin in a number of ways (Pasura, 2008; Jakubowicz, 2012). The nature of the relationships between the migrants and their non-migrant family members before migration influences the selection of the recipients of remittances during the migration period. As the findings of the study have shown, migrants identified family members with whom they had strong relationships before migration as recipients of the remittances. However, when social ties are broken as a result of misuse of remittances by recipients, the direction of remittance flows changes. As a result, some migrants shift the direction of remittances and select another individual as the recipient. Such results show that remittance transfer is guided by the strength of social ties between migrants and non-migrants. When relationships are broken or weakened, remittances do not necessarily cease; rather, they change the direction and are transferred to another recipient.

Such arguments support Grieco (2003; 2004), who notes that the transfer of migrant remittances is not only dependent on altruism. Grieco posits there are other factors that determine the transfer of remittances during the migration period. Grieco (2003: 3) states that:

Remittances are not simply sent by the migrant to family members rather they are exchanged for resources accessible through the maintenance of relationships with other members, of a given social network.

Findings of this study add to such arguments as they indicate that transfer of remittances between migrants and non-migrants is, to a greater extent, influenced by relationships between migrants and non-migrants. Remittances are transferred where there are relationships or where individuals are willing to establish or strengthen relationships. When strong social ties diminish, migrants identify new recipients to whom remittances can be transferred.

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