

Motivations for Remitting Behaviour of Zimbabwean Migrants in Johannesburg

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Abstract. This paper explains the reasons, frequency, mode and factors affecting remitting behaviour of Zimbabwean migrants in Johannesburg. The paper is based on a study carried out in 2012 in two geographical areas of Johannesburg, Kempton Park and Tembisa. It argues that remitting behaviour is based on economic and social calculations made by migrants in terms of how they want to continue being involved in the affairs of their families in Zimbabwe and their own individual evaluations of what the future holds. It is also management of risk in the sense that migrants will remit more if they think their future in South Africa is not guaranteed. The economic circumstances definitely affect how frequent and how much one remits to their family. Remitting behaviour must be seen as a fully rational way of balancing levels of involvement in the two countries. It is also a way of assuring family members that the migrant has not yet become *umadliwa*. This paper reveals that remitting behaviour is related to the type of job a migrant has; which in turn is affected by the type of social capital directly available to a migrant. Low status jobs affect the frequency and level of remittances.

Keywords: *Johannesburg, Migrants, Malayitsha¹, Remittance, umadliwa², Zimbabwe*

Introduction

The motivations for Zimbabwean migration have been well documented and are mainly economic, while others acknowledge political disturbances as having exacerbated the already economically fragile situation. ZIMSTAT (2014) acknowledges reasons for migration as mainly economic and identifies South Africa and Botswana as the major migrant destinations for Zimbabweans. The purpose of this study is to explain remitting behaviour of migrants; why they remit (since 85% of research participants do so), how often they remit and what they remit. Remitting behaviour is explained largely as an outcome of a cost benefit analysis by individual migrants

¹ A term widely used to refer to cross-border taxi operators

² A term mainly reserved for migrants who do not remit anything to their families. They are assumed to be so much carried away by the pleasures of South Africa that they “forget” their families in Zimbabwe.