

**The experiences contributing to young  
adults' consideration of emigration**

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## ABSTRACT

It is a topic of discussion that finds its way into almost every setting in the South African context. Is leaving South Africa not the best option available to us? From old to young it seems many South Africans, are contemplating leaving the shores of South Africa in search of opportunity elsewhere. The purported reasons behind this exodus, or even just the thought going into the possibilities, are repetitive in the literature. Crime, affirmative action, standards of living, concerns regarding political and economic security for the future are all referred to. What is undeniable is the great loss of skills that is occurring as most of these people leaving are graduates. I wished to try and understand the experiences of some young adults who are currently contemplating, or in the process of emigrating.

The focal question in this research is: “what experiences are fuelling the ‘brain drain phenomenon amongst our young adults?” The intention of this study is not in any way to find extrapolative answers, but instead to understand and describe the personal experiences of a select few. Therefore a Phenomenological approach was used in order to describe these participants’ experiences as closely as possible. The respondents were asked to write a ‘full’ response to the open ended question. This technique of data capture falls within the semi-structured interview framework, but allowed for the participants to provide a description of their experiences with the least possible opportunity for influence. It was of great importance that their descriptions be their own in order for the researcher to gain a proper understanding of their experiences. These descriptions were then analysed through thematic analysis. The themes that were identified seem to describe the ‘experienced meaning’ that the participants have formed rather than the physical experiences of such ‘reasons’ as discussed in the literature. Themes such as victimization, regret, insecurity, crime, fear, the need for freedom and job security were identified. For South Africa to turn this brain drain around it will be necessary for policy makers to take into consideration and act upon the physical experiences but also the experienced meaning that people form.



## **KEY WORDS**

'Brain drain'

Bracketing

Description

Emigration

Experience

Experienced meaning

Perceptions

Phenomenon

Phenomenological approach

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## Chapter 1: Phenomenon

### 1.1 Introduction

“[Psychology] has few boundaries, and aside from the canons of sciences and the ethical standards of a free society, it should not have any imposed upon it, either by its practitioners or its critics” (Reber, 1995, p.617). It is a discipline that reaches into almost any field of study that man is involved in. If man is involved then Psychology is involved (Bentley, 1924), as psychology is often defined as the “‘science of mind’, ‘the science of mental life’, ‘the science of behaviour’” (Reber, 1995, p.617).

Human experience falls under the realm of psychological study as indicated by Bentley (1924, p.1) through the statement “[o]ur common experiences are continually suggesting the physical sciences, the sciences of matter and energy, of life and of the constitution of the earth; but just as much do they constantly hint at things ‘psychological’”. He reiterates this point by later suggesting that we are constantly surrounded by contexts or scenarios that we experience that have the potential to be psychological in nature but can only really be included into psychology if regarded by a trained observer (Bentley, 1924). It is then, through the process of observation, that everyday experience or individual experience can be viewed and understood in psychological terms. It is the researcher’s quest to understand the individuals’ experience because it is only by this that the fundamental nature of the person can be appreciated (Brownrigg, 2007).

The aim of this particular study is to highlight the current experiences of a small number of individuals through a phenomenological study, but with the greater objective of adding volume to the voice of Psychology as it discusses the topic of ‘brain drain’.

Emigration of skills is, and will continue to be, of major importance to the development of South Africa as a country and as an economic power, and is thus a phenomenon that has to be confronted. It is however, human experience leading individuals to make decisions that perpetuate the phenomenon. It is therefore of grave import that Psychology lends its voice in attempting to understand such phenomena in order for ways to be found to deal with them. It is possible, that if sufficient emphasis is directed at this phenomenon and commonality is found on key experiences that government policy may change in such a way that it may make staying in South Africa a better prospect for the future.



It is perhaps necessary at this juncture to provide definitions of some of the crucial terms that will be used in this report:

Emigration - The word Emigration could be defined as the movement from one country to another with the purpose of settling there ([wordnet.princeton.edu/perl/webwn](http://wordnet.princeton.edu/perl/webwn)). Effectively, any person who leaves the borders of South Africa, who has the intention of working and living in another country, for a prolonged period of time will be referred to as being an emigrant.

Brain Drain - According to a definition provided by the United Nations, a ‘brain drain’ is a one-way movement of skilled individuals from those countries often said to be developing or third world to developed or first world countries, benefiting only the country receiving the skilled individuals. However there have been those who experience this definition as “univocal” and suggest that the term is much more multi-dimensional in nature. Effectively they pose that the term ‘brain drain’ should refer to all loss of skills from one country to another whether either of them is ‘developed’ or ‘third world’ (<http://sansa.nrf.ac.za/documents/brown.pdf>).

The employed definition for ‘brain drain’ in this study will be - any mass loss of skilled individuals from one country to another, with the intention of using these skills in the receiving country, whether it is permanent or for an undetermined period of time.

Many young adults living in South Africa look into the possibilities available to them to move overseas, and to make a living in a foreign country. Many of these individuals have researched the job markets related to their fields of study extensively in an attempt to see which countries may be viable options to consider for their futures. They have researched the immigration requirements and laws, the costs of living, the job possibilities for their significant others and so forth (Crush, Pendleton & Tevera, 2005). What may be the reasons behind such efforts? Thus, this study will attempt to understand the experienced meanings (perceptions) that have brought those that participate in it to their current positions.

## **1.2 The Phenomenon: The ‘Brain Drain’**

According to Crush *et al.* (2005) there is a problem of very serious proportions, relating to the loss of skilled individuals from many countries, but particularly South Africa. They suggest that South Africa is losing skills at an alarming rate to its global competitors to make their point. A good deal of these ‘lost skills’ are being carried away by young adults who have finished their tertiary education and feel that countries overseas will provide them with greater opportunities. For example doctors and nurses that are leaving at a surprising rate;

Information Technology (IT) specialists; financial managers and accountants; engineers and so forth (Crush, McDonald & Williams, 2000).

While this study will look at the experiences of a very small number of young adults, the loss of skilled and trained individuals is felt across the board of the employable age brackets. Many feel that the situation is so critical that the term 'brain drain' has been employed, amongst others such as, the 'new great trek' or the 'exodus' (van Rooyen, 2000). The former Minister of Education Professor Kader Asmal makes use of the term 'brain drain' in reference to the loss of skilled individuals, or as he states it, "many of our home-grown skills have been exported in recent years."

([http://education.pwv.gov.za/Media/Speeches\\_1999/Sep99/BrainDrain.htm](http://education.pwv.gov.za/Media/Speeches_1999/Sep99/BrainDrain.htm))

He states that a 'brain drain' does exist in South Africa, but that it should be put into perspective, relating it to other countries experience of similar situations, as well as with the South African situation during Apartheid

([http://education.pwv.gov.za/Media/Speeches\\_1999/Sep99/BrainDrain.htm](http://education.pwv.gov.za/Media/Speeches_1999/Sep99/BrainDrain.htm)).

The Financial Services Agreement (FSA) contact 1997-98 survey makes use of the term 'brain drain' in their description of the situation in South Africa. The key statement used to capture the survey results was "[e]migration continues to drain South Africa's dwindling pool of key specialist skills and top management personnel..."

(<http://www.dispatch.co.za/1998/03/17/southafrica/BRAIN.HTM>). Brown, Kaplan and Meyer (2001) suggest that although there are certain professions that have been hit harder than others by this migration of skills, the overall impact is that between an eighth and a fifth of all South Africans with tertiary education are living and plying their trade outside of South African borders.

During the year 2008 there has been regular reference to the emigration of skills and the loss of skilled graduates, in parliamentary speeches, and in the media. To add to the voice of the former Minister of Education Kader Asmal, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, who was Vice-President at the time, stated that the skills shortage in South Africa is in fact massive and very much a concern (<http://www.workinfo.com/Articles/braindrain.htm>). The Eskom crisis with the rolling blackouts of 2008, the political upheaval surrounding Jacob Zuma and his corruption charges, the development of the Congress of the People (COPE) party as a break-away party from the ruling African National Congress, and the upcoming 2009 elections are all further fueling thoughts on emigration.

The situation is one of very grave significance to the further development of the country, as the skilled and tertiary educated population of the country is needed in order to keep South

Africa globally competitive. The young adults that are receiving tertiary education, and that are developing skills, should be the next wave to bolster development, however many of these individuals are the ones being lost (Crush *et al.*, 2005).

### 1.3 Emigration statistics

The maintenance of accurate statistics concerning emigration has not received the attention that it should have. Although there are statistics to refer to, they are in many cases viewed as being inaccurate or as under estimating the number of emigrants. Furthermore, in the past five years statistics have not been compiled at all. Therefore statistics from as far back as 1989 have been included in this study in order to provide a historic understanding of the nature of emigration from South Africa.

- Official statistics place emigration in the period 1989-99 at about 82 000.
- Unofficial estimates are that 250 000 South Africans emigrated in the period 1989-1999.

(Brokensha, 2004, p.3)

The statistics suggested above may be relatively old but provide context to the phenomenon being discussed. Of these emigrants, a great portion was skilled individuals or graduates. In 1999 alone, over 260 engineers, nearly 100 doctors and dentists, more than 300 teachers, and over 1000 corporate professionals left South Africa. Between the years 1994 and 1997 more than 24 000 professionals left South Africa permanently (Brokensha, 2004).

The period between 2001 and December 2003 saw a total of 39 315 South Africans Emigrate from South African shores (Statistics South Africa, 2004). Even with the number of immigrants coming into South Africa, there was a net loss in this time frame of 17 360 South Africans. Of the total 39 315 emigrants from South Africa, 25 465 were economically active. Of the 21 955 immigrants to South Africa, only 3 018 were economically active (Statistics South Africa, 2004). This leaves South Africa with a net loss of economically active individuals of 22 447. This is a staggering figure when one considers that this is only over a three-year period.

Most emigrants from South Africa move to the UK, whilst the USA, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand also share in the wealth of skills leaving South Africa (Brokensha, 2004). In the year 2001 it was documented that the number of South African born medical professionals that were plying their trade in countries such as Australia, New Zealand, America, Canada and the United Kingdom was 23 407. This number included the likes of medical doctors,

nurses and other medical professionals (Breier, 2006). If this kind of number represents only one occupational field, it is unimaginable how many other professionals could be availing their skills in other countries.

According to a study conducted by Crush, *et al.* (2000), 69% of a representative national sample of skilled South Africans stated that they had considered emigration, and 38% of these said that they had very strongly considered this option. They make note that these figures are not only related to the white population but to the black population as well. The scary factor of this study is that if their survey population truly reflects that of skilled South Africans, then we are considering the potential loss of almost 40% of all the skills that currently exist in South Africa. No country can truly expect to sustain itself with this type of loss.

What is of even more concern is the fact that there are serious discrepancies in the official emigration data due to the reliance on 'self declaration' by those intending on emigrating. Furthermore, only those leaving the country from airports at Johannesburg, Cape Town, or Durban are actually captured in official data. Those leaving from places like Polokwane or any of the other 'smaller' airports are not included in these statistics. Those who leave South African borders with study permits or temporary work permits, and then do not return are also not included in any official data (Bailey, 2003). It is estimated that only 1 in 3 emigrants from South Africa were actually captured by emigration data during 1987 and 1997 (Bailey, 2003; Meyer, Brown & Kaplan, 2000).

It is understood that the statistics mentioned above were compiled several years ago and that newer statistics are necessary. However, Statistics South Africa has not compiled any emigration statistics since the year 2003. As of 2008 they have begun to compile a fresh set of statistics but their findings have not been released as yet. It is concerning that with figures as indicated for the period up to 2003 that such statistics were not viewed as important, and this lack of current data, and of accurate data in the past, may well be one of the major contributing factors to nothing having been done to curb this outflow of skills.

Without 'official' statistics to depend on it is necessary to seek other sources of information. Even these sources however are somewhat outdated for the greater part again giving import to the necessity for further study to take place in this sphere. The South African Institute of Race Relations' (SAIRR) compiled a report with figures taken from the 1995 - 2005 Household Surveys that suggests that over 1 million South Africans have left the shores in that 10 year period. Of these over 840 000 are white South Africans and the greater part of these are young, or as he puts it between the ages of 20 and 40

([http://www.fin24.com/articles/default/display\\_article.aspx?ArticleId=1518-25\\_2003186](http://www.fin24.com/articles/default/display_article.aspx?ArticleId=1518-25_2003186)).

Another study compiled by Crush *et al.* (2005) of over 10 000 final year students indicate that 79% of them have considered emigration, and in the region of 53% believe that they will have done so within 5 years of graduating and 35% of these felt this could be the case within 6 months of their graduation. Of greater concern is the number that had in fact already started the process. Nineteen percent had already applied for work permits, 11% for residence permits and 11% for citizenship.

These kinds of figures cannot be sustained if South Africa is going to remain economically sound, or even more so, if South Africa is wishing to grow economically. In fact, in a Deloitte and Touche publication of the National Remuneration Guide issued in February 2008, just over 80% of companies in South Africa have found it difficult to recruit staff with the required skills due to the shortage created by the brain drain. An additional difficulty was the lack of suitable candidates for affirmative action posts which further compounds the problem of skills flowing out of the country (<http://www.workinfo.com/Articles/braindrain.htm>).

Considering these facts it becomes extremely important to understand why it is that skilled individuals are contemplating emigration as an option, and to delve into the reasons provided for this mass movement away from the country. It is due to this discussion above that I wish to explore what the experiences are of certain young adults that appear to be leading to the serious consideration of emigration. Hopefully such an understanding, as spoken of earlier may assist in adding to the voice of psychology and efforts to bring about some form of intervention in the future.

#### **1.4 Theoretical framework**

The theoretical framework for this study is phenomenology. Phenomenology originated from the study of consciousness and experience and was later to include the life-world of the individual. This life-world can be understood as the space occupied by an individual, both external as well as internal. In other words, the physical environment' as well as the internal environment of thought and emotion or that contained by one's awareness, embody this life-world (Hergenhahn, 2005).

The nature of phenomenological psychology could be characterised as follows:

- It seeks understanding of human experiences;
- Its assumes the intentionality of consciousness; and
- Attempts to provide a holistic approach to the study of psychological problems.

(Misiak & Staudt Sexton, 1973)

The Phenomenological approach is explorative in nature, seeking to go beyond the immediately experienced meaning in order to give expression to the lived meaning. It seeks to understand humans through their personal experiences and the lived meaning of these experiences (Brownrigg, 2007). It views the specific context of an experience as lending very much to the inimitability of that experience, implying that it acknowledges that an experience and the meaning associated is different from person to person (Misiak & Staudt Sexton, 1973). Cosgrove (2000) poses, that it is in fact the strength of the phenomenological approach that the lived experience of an individual is emphasised and shown in its complexity. Intentionality as an assumption of consciousness basically means that phenomenology holds that all experience is intentional. Put another way, experience is directed toward something or can only exist in relation to something. An experience cannot exist without a subject or context to be related to (Gergen, 1999).

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, individual experience is the focus of the researcher as this allows for “an essential description of the phenomenon without distorting the essential meaning of the original data” (Kruger, 1988, p.150). It is vital that it is understood that the goal of phenomenological study is not to explain but to rather describe. In effect, it is through description that an understanding of the meanings and essence of an experience can be arrived at, and as such can be recognised as being acceptable, according to phenomenological principle (Moustakas, 1994). It is of the utmost importance that in order for phenomenology to hold water as a research approach, all contributions by a participant in such a study are seen as being valuable sources for data analysis. The life-world of the participant has to take dominance, and their viewpoint is what has to find expression. It is therefore not acceptable for the researcher to impose an explanation, but rather the approach of description as discussed above should be applied (Brownrigg, 2007).

When it comes to the analysis of the data as received from the participants, the four stages described by Giorgi (1985) will be applied, these being, forming a sense of the whole; breaking up the account into its natural meaning units; transformation, which basically means bringing to light the themes in the account; and then synthesis, which requires representing these themes in such a way that it is coherent to the reader. This will be expanded upon in chapter 3.

### **1.5 Plan of study**

This report consists of five chapters. The current chapter is intended as a trailer to the rest of the study. It is intended to give an indication of what is to follow, thus emphasis has been placed on the phenomenon, the aim of the study, the goals relating to this and an introduction to the theoretical point of departure.

Chapter two represents the related body of literature. It discusses various aspects of the phenomenon, giving short accounts of the history of emigration from South Africa, recent statistics, and a few of the documented reasons for the current situation.

Chapter three provides a more detailed description of the methodological approach employed in the research process. It gives account of the role of the researcher, research design, research participants, data collection and analysis, how the quality of the study will be maintained in terms of trustworthiness and reliability, as well as with the ethical considerations related with such a study, as it is people and their experiences that are being worked with. It discusses aspects such as informed consent, confidentiality, and other important concerns.

Chapter four concerns itself with the results of the study. These will be presented according to the themes that developed from the descriptions provided by the participants.

In Chapter five the integration of the study will take place, and the limitations and recommendations proceeding from this study will be discussed in way of closing.

## Chapter 2 Literature Review

### 2.1 Introduction

If one considers the history of mankind, one of the constant elements would be that of migration. Whether it was peaceable or under the auspices of war, it remains migration. The reasons for migration may vary considerably, but it could be posed that the underpinning motive has always been that of a better quality of life.

In the last few decades, migration has drawn some attention due to its impact on mainly the economic sector of the countries involved, particularly through the loss of “educated citizens from their country of birth” (Broaded in Miller, Haskell & Thatcher, 2002, p.32). This presents potential detriment or cost to the country of emigration as it leaves it “at risk of depleting its natural supply of intellectual talent” (Schuster in Miller *et al.*, p.32). This is particularly disturbing for South Africa, considering the emigration statistics mentioned in chapter one.

### 2.2 Migration in South Africa

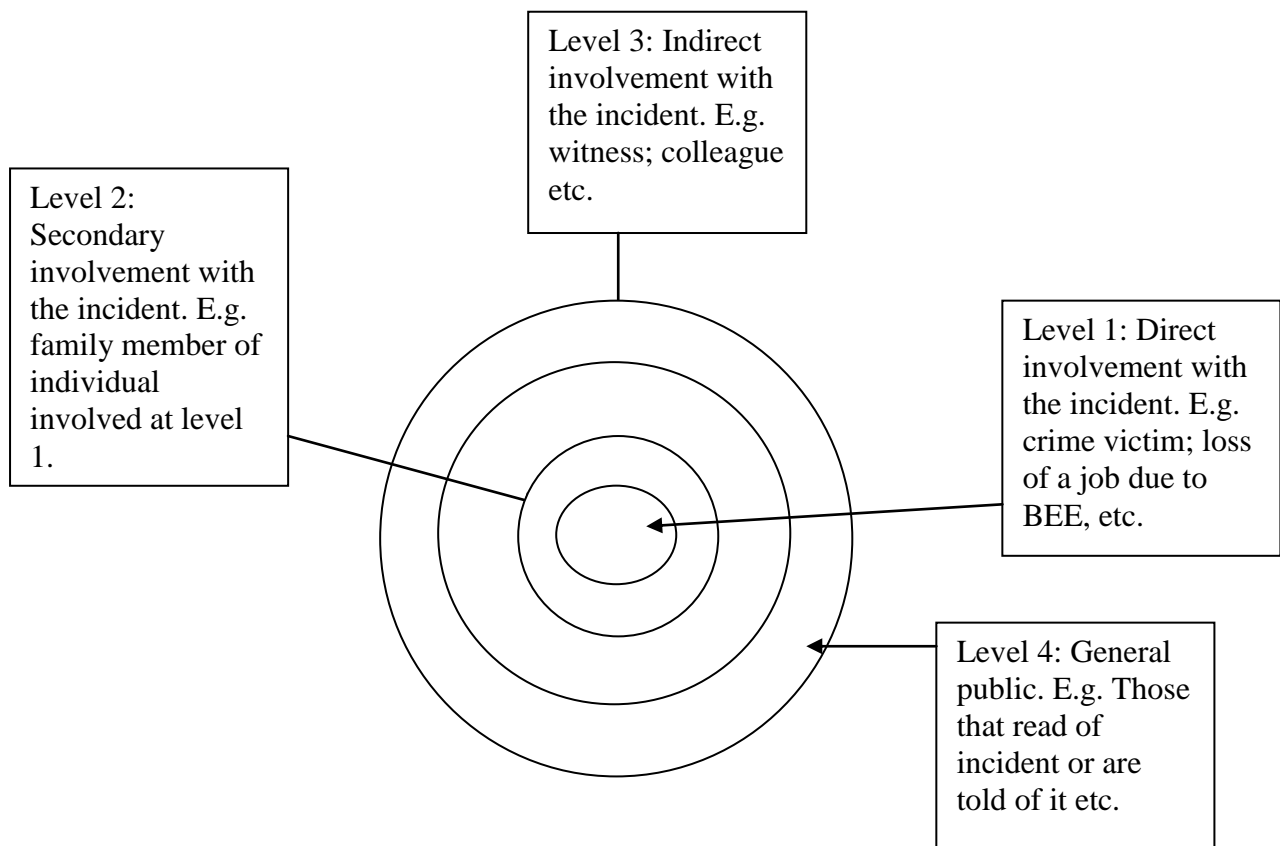
For South Africans, emigration or migration is not a recent phenomenon. Instead, it has played a major role in the shaping of our history. A few vivid examples of this are the immigration of the Nguni people from central Africa to South Africa; the emigration of Mzilikazi and his impis to Zimbabwe from Zululand (<http://www.sahistory.org.za/pages/people/mzilikazi.htm>); the majority of white South Africans are the result of immigration from other countries such as Holland and the United Kingdom amongst others; the northward ‘trek’ of the white settlers again into countries that were later known as Northern and Southern Rhodesia amongst others (<http://www.sahistory.org.za/pages/people/mzilikazi.htm>).

In the last few decades, emigration has greatly been a side effect of political positions and upheaval. For example, emigration has seen peaks around 1976 during the Soweto uprising, the mid 80’s during the state of emergency, and just prior to the 1994 general elections (Statistics South Africa, 2001). Since 1994 this pattern has continued with such impact that terms such as ‘brain drain’, the ‘new great trek’ and the ‘exodus’ have been used (van Rooyen, 2000).



### 2.3 The Decision making process

Before discussing possible reasons for emigration it is important to reflect on how perspective and ‘positioning’ in relation to a situation, influences the experienced meaning that an individual may form. The ripple effect model as illustrated by Andrew Davies in figure 1 below (<http://www.authorstream.com/Presentation/Renzo-39945-Shattered-Assumptions-Broken-Lives-Andrew-Davies-assum-Education-ppt-powerpoint/>) is useful to describe the varying effects that any situation may have on an individual depending on the nature of their involvement.



**Figure 1. The Ripple Effect Model**

(<http://www.authorstream.com/Presentation/Renzo-39945-Shattered-Assumptions-Broken-Lives-Andrew-Davies-assum-Education-ppt-powerpoint/>)

The ripple effect model is typically used in the description of the impact of a traumatic event on the various levels of community in which such an event were to take place, but holds relevance in this context too. It provides the understanding that regardless of how ‘close to’, or ‘removed from’ an event one is, the potential for it to have an impact extends well beyond those directly involved. It shows how experienced meanings can be different from one another, depending on one’s position in relation to the incident (<http://www.authorstream.com/Presentation/Renzo-39945-Shattered-Assumptions-Broken-Lives-Andrew-Davies-assum-Education-ppt-powerpoint/>)

[Lives-Andrew-Davies-assum-Education-ppt-powerpoint/](#)). Everyone that is involved in such a situation is affected by what happens.

Another model borrowed from the field of trauma, the Traumatic Stress Model, provides further insight into decisions being made concerning emigration. Stress can be understood as a ‘normal’ reaction to abnormal circumstances that place pressure on an individual or family unit. It is when these circumstances lead to extreme threat, or the sense of becoming overwhelmed by them, that a heightened state of physical, cognitive, behavioural and emotional arousal is reached. This is a state otherwise known as traumatic stress and is often the breakpoint at which individuals start seeking change (Brewin, Andrews & Rose, 2003). One of the main symptoms of traumatic stress is hyper vigilance. This theory does apply more directly to traumatic events such as being a victim of crime and or violence. Other stressors however can also bring an individual to a breakpoint, for example being unemployed for a drawn out period of time.

It must be emphasized that “it is not [always] the event itself that causes traumatic stress, but the mind (psyche) of the individual” (Stansfeld, 2002, p.26). In other words it is the way in which one gives meaning to and thinks about an incident, ones mental or emotional susceptibility, which could lead to a reaction. This again explains to some extent why certain individuals are affected more, whilst others appear to remain unaffected, as well as how on some occasions an individual far removed from a situation can experience it as though directly involved.

Keinan (1987, p.639) suggests that “psychological stress exceeding a certain intensity affects the quality of decision making” and often leads to individuals ignoring, or overlooking important factors. The suggestion is made that such stress can contribute to hyper vigilance which can also have an adverse effect leading to decisions being made hastily based on incomplete, one-sided or biased data. Keinan (1987) poses three different ways in which decisions can be made through the use of erroneous methods.

- The first is “premature closure” which means that a decision is reached prior to all possibilities being explored.
- The second, “nonsystematic scanning” occurs when the individual, in a panic, shifts between alternative solutions never really approaching them systematically.
- The third is “temporal narrowing” in which the individual hastily grasps onto the first plausible solution that may bring respite from the situation.

Johnston, Driskell and Salas (1997) concur with these approaches to decision making whilst in a hyper vigilant state. They state, that an individual making decisions in such an instance is likely to be frantic in their search, to hold narrowly to a few possible solutions without further exploration, and to choose hastily from the few options available.

Both Johnston *et al.* (1997) and Keinan (1987) suggest that although decision making whilst in a vigilant frame of mind allows for a deep and thorough investigation of all possible options and eventualities, that it is often unrealistic to expect individuals to be able to make use of this method in real world situations. In fact, findings of several studies have shown that under the often pressurized and sometimes emotionally charged conditions of real world situations the vigilant decision making process can actually be of detriment. In studies of such situations decisions made whilst in a hyper vigilant frame of mind often led to the best results.

In the instance of those considering emigration as a serious option, it can be assumed that there should be several factors that come into this consideration. Factors such as what will be gained versus what will be lost; what would keep them here versus what would make them leave; the loss of relationships versus the potential of new ones; positive elements of the status quo versus negative elements; positive elements of change versus negative elements; fears of the unknown versus fear of the known. If the studies indicated by Johnston *et al.* (1997) and Keinan (1987) are to be believed, then it is likely that individuals sharing in the reasons documented below made use of a hyper vigilant decision making model as opposed to the rational processes of a vigilant method.

#### **2.4 Documented reasons for emigration**

Some hold the view that the reasons that people move around the world are universal and can be summarized broadly as the search for better material conditions and the avoidance of physical danger. The thousands of South Africans participating in the current emigration wave are no different, and their motivation for leaving appear to be founded on the desire to escape from violent crime and to ensure that their quality of life and living standards are not affected by rapidly changing socio-economic and political conditions (<http://www.unisa.ac.za/default.asp?Cmd=ViewContent&ContentID=13288>).

In the study conducted by Crush *et al.* (2000), their participants cited the following as some of the reasons for emigration to another country:

- (a) the cost of living,
- (b) levels of taxation,
- (c) safety and security, and

(d) the standard of public and commercial services

In a follow up study, using final year students as their participants Crush *et al.* (2005) found the following reasons indicated in Table 1 that students in particular are looking to migrate to other countries.

Better conditions in MLD	Percentage
Cost of living	41.8
Ability to find desired work	55.6
Prospect of professional advancement	59.6
HIV/ AIDS situation	63.0
Level of job security	53.9
Level of income	78.8
Ability to find suitable schooling for children	50.7
Ability to find suitable medical care for family	55.8
A level of fair taxation	40.9
Personal safety	66.4
Safety of family	66.2
The future for children	47.3

**Table 1. Reasons for leaving South Africa**

(Crush *et al.*, 2005, p.25)

According to Table 1, the respondents refer to the expectation of better conditions in the desired destinations (Crush *et al.*, 2005) that these individuals seek to migrate to. These conditions are otherwise known as pull factors, but give a fair reflection of the concerns they have regarding South Africa, otherwise referred to as the push factors. The study mentioned includes data from the broader Southern African Developing Countries (SADC), but for the purposes of this study the data relevant to South Africa has been extracted.

Medical professionals indicate through a study conducted by Breier (2006) that the following factors are concerns to them:

- Insecurity and crime
- Affirmative action
- Deterioration of State education
- Uncertainty of the future

- Perceived frailty of the SA Economy
- Deteriorating conditions of the Public Sector
- Workload
- Social and Racial factors
- Transferability of SA qualifications in OECD countries
- Global demand of skills
- Higher pay abroad

The first eight of these factors essentially indicate ‘push factors’ whilst the last 3 can be viewed as ‘pull factors’.

The fact that the concerns revealed by these three studies over a period of six years have not changed very much is of considerable note. It distinctly signifies a lack of effort towards understanding the concerns of the emigrants and the apparent lack of action taken to attempt to address these factors, in the hope of curbing their impact on the South African skills pool.

#### 2.4.1 Economic instability

Factors such as rising inflation, unemployment, cost of living, levels of taxation, company strikes, and affirmative action, are all aspects that people associate with economic or financial instability, and a potential restriction of possibility (Myburgh, 2005; Crush *et al.*, 2000). The term economic instability could effectively be defined as “an unstable order” of economy or an economy in “disequilibrium” (<http://www.answers.com/economic%20instability>).

Economic instability has been cited as being the result of inconsistent policy management. The reason given for this is that external investment becomes discouraged by the uncertainty relating to the economy, and this in turn impacts on such things as the inflation rates, interest rates, cost of living and therefore the financial security of the individual (<http://www.treasury.gov.za/documents/fiscu/summits/1999/governments.pdf>).

The cost of living in South Africa has always historically been seen as very low in comparison to many first world or developed countries. The prices of basic foods, property, fuel and clothing have always been seen as being so much lower than the comparative prices in the United Kingdom (UK), North America, Australia, or any other favoured destination for emigrants. However in the recent past, the prices of such commodities have been steadily rising in such a fashion that the salaries earned by the average South African no longer carry as far as they used to. The instability of the oil price and in direct relation, the price of

transport and therefore the price of almost any commodity, is news of the day almost every day of the week (Morris, 2008).

The property prices have increased dramatically over the past few years to such an extent that it is truly out of the reach of many double salary earning families to afford the purchase of a home. The prices of rental properties, a lot more affordable as they are, are also increasing severely. The fact that the interest rate has climbed quite dramatically over the last number of years has also impacted severely on what people have been able to afford (Morris, 2008).

There is evidence that in certain occupational spheres opportunity is greater overseas than it is in South Africa. For example, in the financial services there appears to be a glut on the market, and many highly skilled individuals are finding amazing prospects in countries like the UK (Theunissen, 2006). In the medical field South African doctors and nurses are actively recruited for hospitals overseas, and offers that are substantially better than what they could expect locally are made (Breier, 2006). There are definite attractions in other countries, especially economic opportunities that can open up further possibilities for an individual.

#### 2.4.2 Safety and Security

Concerns surrounding safety and security seem to be some of the leading causes for people to consider emigration. As seen in the table above, over 66% of the South African respondents in the Crush *et al.*(2005) study felt that personal safety and safety of their family would be greatly improved if they were to emigrate. This conversely indicates that 66% of the South African students that took part in this study are concerned about the level of safety in this country. According to an international business report issued by Grant Thornton, one of South Africa's more recognised investment houses, crime is cited as being one of the main factors for the consideration of emigration by over 80% of the sample of professionals they took from over 300 companies with staff numbers between 100 and 400. Almost 72% of the businesses in this study reported that either staff members or their families had been impacted on by violent crime (<http://allafrica.com/stories/200805200001.html>).

Crime is a vivid reality in South Africa. Of the various types of crime, violent crimes elicit the greatest reaction from the average person. This reaction is commonly fear; fear of becoming a victim; fear of those close to one becoming a victim; fear of losing out on a future that one wishes to build for oneself and one's family (Brokensha, 2004; van Rooyen, 2000). Moreover, the psychological impact of being faced by crime on a '24 hours a day' basis can be and often is severe. Post Traumatic Stress is often experienced by immediate victims of crime, especially violent crime (Brewin *et al.*, 2003). A loss of self-esteem is in many cases a

result of being a victim as the individual feels that they could or should have done more in the situation. Constant exposure to crime and violence in general can however lead to other states as well, such as hyper vigilance, which is a common response by South Africans. This is a state in which an individual is overly sensitive to their environment and often behaves in exaggerated fashion in order to avoid the potential perceived threats (Mashiapata, 2003). The threat that is feared has no direct or immediate bearing on the individual but is experienced as being all around them and imminent, similar to being paranoid. The steps taken to avoid or guard against this threat are often excessive and in many cases unnecessary (Brewin *et al.*, Mashiapata, 2003).

In contrast another regular response to exposure to crime and violence can be that of desensitisation. This occurs when individuals begin to accept as 'normal' such events as would have elicited fear responses under less prevalent circumstances (<http://i08.cgpublisher.com/proposals/885/index.html>). In all of these instances a common thread that exists is the sense of a lack of control. The distinct knowledge that no matter what actions one takes in order to guard against crime, that control almost always lies in the hands of the perpetrators.

Crime appears to be of such consequence that at the Technology, Communications and Entertainment Summit held at Sandton in April 2001, "[n]o fewer than 72% of the 350 top-level media and IT executives present at the summit voted that a lower crime rate was more important to keeping IT experts in SA than higher pay, government intervention, or improved career development" (<http://www.itweb.co.za/sections/monitor/2001/0104190818.asp>). Furthermore, the South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR) study claims that crime is one of the leading causes for the loss of one fifth of the white population of South Africa in the decade between 1995 and 2005 ([http://www.fin24.com/articles/default/display\\_article.aspx?ArticleId=1518-25\\_2003186](http://www.fin24.com/articles/default/display_article.aspx?ArticleId=1518-25_2003186)).

It appears that South Africans are aware of the fact that crime exists in other countries, but that their understanding of these crimes is that they are less life threatening. Many people seem to share the view that life is a 'cheap commodity' in South Africa, whilst in other countries a much higher value is placed on life (Brokensha, 2004). Whether this is reality or not, again could be debated but the perception that is formed through media exposure as well as through other sources, is that one is less likely to be the victim of, especially, violent crime in other countries.

### 2.4.3 Better Opportunities

Many families are leaving the borders of South Africa, citing the reason of “affording [their children] a better opportunity in life” (Brokensha, 2004, p.63). Some of the reasons that are often associated with this are ‘affirmative action’, as well as the decline in public and commercial services. There appears to be a considerable link between the decline of public services, such as education and the perceived future that could be provided for children. The confidence levels of South Africans regarding the education system and the ability of the current administration to uphold a standard of education is at a low.

Teachers have been expected to teach a curriculum that has been significantly changed several times over the last decade, and that they have not received sufficient training in (Makhwathana, 2007; Jansen & Christie, 1999). Public schools often sit with pupil to teacher ratios of forty or more to one, giving rise to concerns of whether our children are receiving the attention necessary. The number of new teachers coming through the tertiary education system is dwindling. The number of children that go through their schooling ‘career’ without having access to the necessary study materials is concerning. Even the level of tertiary studies in this country is being brought into question, as many experience when trying to establish equivalencies with foreign professional bodies. Many parents that can afford it attempt to place their children in private education facilities, yet these are increasingly expensive and also have limited spaces as the long waiting lists at many of these schools attest to (Makhwathana, 2007).

Besides the education system, other forms of public service are also seen in increasingly bad light. For example the public transport system is one that most South Africans above a certain income tend to avoid as far as possible. Even those South Africans that have to make daily use of these services would prefer not to have to, as they fear for their safety in many instances, and are impacted by the unreliability of many of these services. A vast majority of the people using public transport in fact make use of the ‘informal’ taxi services, or otherwise known as the ‘emergency taxis’. A great deal is left to be desired of this industry when one considers the amount of violence surrounding it; the lack of proper maintenance of the vehicles; the cost of these services; the overloading of these vehicles; and the unsafe driving practices of many of these taxi drivers (Dugard, 2001).

### 2.4.4 Affirmative Action

Many black, skilled individuals are dissatisfied with the levels of income afforded to them (Crush *et al.*, 2000). Whilst at the same time it is the perception in the current climate of ‘affirmative action’, that many white males are experiencing difficulties in finding careers



(van Rooyen, 2000) and therefore struggling to secure income that is commensurate to their skill sets, but also of a sufficient nature to afford them their 'expected' standard of living.

It has been suggested that emigration has taken on not only political but also racial dimensions (Van Rooyen, 2000), since the majority of emigrants from South Africa are white and form part of the predominantly white population that voted against the now ruling ANC political party in the post-apartheid elections. This sentiment is somewhat expanded on by de Chaud and Thompson (2001) in that many white South Africans feel that they are being discriminated against through the Employment Equity Bill, which gives some advantage to South Africans of colour and to females. This is substantiated by more than 840 000 white South Africans who left South Africa during the period between 1995 and 2005 ([http://www.fin24.com/articles/default/display\\_article.aspx?ArticleId=1518-25\\_2003186](http://www.fin24.com/articles/default/display_article.aspx?ArticleId=1518-25_2003186)).

It is this Employment Equity Bill that has led to what has been termed 'affirmative action'. As defined, this is "a set of actions designed to eliminate existing and continuing discrimination, to remedy effects of past discrimination, and to create systems and procedures to prevent future discrimination" ([www.justice.gov.ab.ca/public\\_education/vocabulary.aspx](http://www.justice.gov.ab.ca/public_education/vocabulary.aspx)). This Bill was established to correct the 'representivity' in the work place according to the population, as well as redress the economic and financial imbalance created by apartheid. It was aimed at creating level playing fields within the work place where everyone is able to compete, based on equal opportunity to education, training and work placements (Motileng, 2004). It however appears to go to the root of job security concerns that many individuals have. White individuals are concerned as it threatens their ability to find meaningful work opportunities, whilst black individuals attempt to dissociate themselves from the stigma associated with it such as 'tokenism' and 'underserved' (Motileng, 2004).

Crush *et al.* (2000) propose that skilled individuals are more sensitive to such politically based circumstances, as they have more opportunity to remove themselves from such circumstances leading to a greater possibility of considering emigration. This increased sensitivity is further highlighted through responses to Government policies, such as, the 'one year community service' policy, posed for all graduates within the medically related fields of study. It is suggested that the likelihood of graduates emigrating is in fact increased by such attempts by government to retain the skilled individuals (Crush, *et al.*).

#### 2.4.5 Regional Instability

Another politically based argument that is gaining increasing momentum is related not necessarily to the political situation in South Africa, but more to the political instability of the Southern African region, the political situation in Zimbabwe for example. The confidence in regional leadership is greatly being affected by the seeming lack of ability to curb the negative actions of one of their own. South Africans are watching the developments in Zimbabwe with bated breath, and many are just waiting for these same types of developments to begin in South Africa. Just one example of this is the land reformation policy that played itself out in a very negative nature in Zimbabwe (<http://www.dfa.gov.za/docs/2005pq/pqdp13.htm>). Many experience this land reformation as having already started in South Africa referring to the land reclamation process that has seen several farms and other stretches of land being returned to the traditional inhabitants of the area in Limpopo and Northern Cape. Government however has generally stuck to its policy of 'willing buyer, willing seller', refusing to follow the example set by Zimbabwe ([http://www.sagoodnews.co.za/talking\\_points/land\\_reform.html](http://www.sagoodnews.co.za/talking_points/land_reform.html)).

Of further concern to many South Africans is the appearance of instability in the ruling party. The changes in leadership of the ANC have raised concerns about their commitment to a corruption free governance as their President still faces charges of corruption; the removal from office of President Thabo Mbeki and the ensuing in-fighting that has taken place and to some extent led to a breakaway faction; the apparent militant stance of the ANC Youth League in their support of Jacob Zuma, as portrayed through statements of violence issued by the President of the Youth League are all events that appear to impact on the sense of political insecurity that some South Africans appear to be sensing. (<http://www.dispatch.co.za/article.aspx?id=252614>).

#### 2.5 Conclusion

It is important to appreciate that even though situations often only directly affect a small number of people, the impact of such situations often travels far beyond these persons. In addition, the fact that it is not necessarily the actual situation but more the experienced meaning gained of the situation by a person that holds relevance, allows for individuals that are apparently far removed to react to it in a similar way to one directly impacted by the situation and vice versa.

Although theoretically a decision making process that takes into account all relevant factors is desired, it is often found that, in real life situations containing a fair level of stress, this can in fact be detrimental rather than positive. Johnston *et al.* (1997) pose that a decision making

model that takes into account only that which the individual holds as relevant can actually lead to better results for the individual than one that factors in all possible concerns, possibilities and eventualities.

The implications of emigration, the fears, insecurities, losses, hopes etc, have not been discussed in the literature and are all issues that an individual would need to consider when making a decision of this magnitude. The fears involved are those that have developed due to circumstances and experiences that the individual has been exposed to. For example, the fear of being a victim, the fear of harm or even death, the fear of not being able to provide, the fear of a negative future for children etc. On the other hand is the fear of the unknown, of 'going it alone', of making a mistake, of failure etc. The losses involved include the loss of property, loss of friends, the loss of the security of the known, loss of direct contact with family and the support structures they provide. Weighed against these are the hopes of a better future, better standards of living, of safety, of new relationships. The factors that individuals come into contact with, the impact these factors have had on their own lives, and the potential consequences of this decision in their lives, as well as the lives of those close to them, all need to be taken into consideration for a decision to be made.

The themes discussed above appear repetitively in the literature as the main influences on thoughts regarding emigration. The following statement is further indication of this:

Those leaving all voice the same concerns, the consultants say: fear of the violent crime prevalent in South Africa; worries over the cost and quality of health and schooling; and uncertainty over job prospects for themselves and their children in the face of "affirmative action".

([http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?art\\_id=qw981350101268B252](http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?art_id=qw981350101268B252))

That emigration from the borders of South Africa is a phenomenon that is happening and having serious consequences for the country cannot be argued. The way in which individuals seem to experience factors on the macro – context appears to have great influence on their decision making process, and may in many cases over-ride the psychological implications arising from emigration.

## **Chapter 3: Methodology**

### **3.1 Introduction**

Research methodology is the ‘map-book’ by which the ‘countryside’ of knowledge and information is being explored. One will find different map-books that supply different information, or highlight differing features. In the same way the research methodology that one decides to employ will highlight very different features of the ‘terrain’ to be explored. Each different methodology would bring attention to specific aspects that could possibly be viewed according to the interests established, and the ‘rules’ applicable to that method (Valle & Halling, 1989). Below I will set out the ‘map-book’ used in the exploration of the ‘terrain’ in question.

### **3.2 Research design**

The research design will be informed by the guidelines of qualitative research, but more specifically, a Phenomenological approach that will allow for “an essential description of the phenomenon without distorting the essential meaning of the original data” (Kruger, 1988, p.150). “In accordance with the phenomenological principles, scientific investigation is valid when the knowledge sought is arrived at through descriptions that make possible an understanding of the meanings and essences of experiences” (Moustakas, 1994, p.84).

This distinction is made above as phenomenological research is a specific type of qualitative research, with its main focus on the “experienced meaning” (Valle & Halling, 1989, p.44) of an individual rather than on just the overt actions or behaviours (Valle & Halling, 1989). Phenomenological research attempts to refocus investigation from descriptions of worldly objects to descriptions of experience (Valle & Halling, 1989).

The word ‘Phenomenology’, as a derivative of the Greek word “phainomenon”, refers to appearance. Philosophers have made use of this term and related terms to describe the study of “the appearance of things, as contrasted with the things themselves as they really are” (Spinelli, 1989, p.2). Effectively what this then means is that we can only really know something as we experience it and not necessarily the thing itself. In other words, two different people can be confronted by the same thing, yet describe its appearance, or more appropriately, their experience of that thing very differently, due to the meaning that they give to it (Spinelli, 1989).

Misiak and Staudt Sexton (1973, p.20) define phenomenological psychology as being “a systematic observation and description of the experience of a conscious individual in a given

situation”. This definition brings into focus the specific context of an experience which very much lends to the inimitability of that experience.

The focus of Phenomenological Psychology is on how and what meaning individuals give to their experiences in given circumstances. It is essentially explorative in nature, seeking to find an understanding rather than a means of change. The important aspect of such a study then, lies with the descriptions of the experiences of the individuals.

Case studies as a means of presenting data allows for the naturalistic and uncontrolled characteristics inherent in the lived experiences of participants to be illustrated. A case study often provides a persuasive demonstration and makes concrete that which otherwise serve as an abstract principle. Therefore investigation into phenomena is often the result of the ability of case studies to make examples of a phenomenon more concrete and therefore more appealing to the investigator (Kazdin, 2002). Therefore, case studies will be used in the presentation of the descriptions of the experiences of the individuals.

### **3.3 Position of researcher**

When considering the methodology used in research, the position of the researcher needs to be clarified. The researcher is in a very similar position as those he is studying, “being-in-the-world” (Keen, 1975, p.33). Keen (1975) suggests that the reason for research is a two-fold one; firstly to be able to find meaning and understanding of something, and then to be able to communicate this to others. The researcher is therefore tasked with immersing himself into the inner world of other individuals until such time as the meaning being formed by the individual becomes apparent to the researcher (Woolfe & Dryden, 1996). In order to do this, the researcher needed to put aside or ‘suspend’ his views of the world and understandings of certain experiences, in order that the preference is given to the descriptions afforded by the participants (Valle & Halling, 1989). For this to be possible however, it was very important that the researcher was aware of their thoughts, understandings and ideas surrounding the phenomenon in question in order that they might be bracketed (Hayes, 2000; Kruger, 1988). To pose this another way, the researcher needed to “transcend the limits of [his] perspective” (Keen, 1975, p.35) in order to understand those perspectives given by the study participants.

Working from a phenomenological position meant that it was necessary to remain open to what may emerge in the process of better trying to understand a phenomenon (Kruger, 1988). “Through faithful description, he thus strives to bring ‘the prereflective life-world... to the level of reflective awareness where it manifests itself as psychological meaning’” (Valle & King in Kruger, 1988, p.143).

To understand the perspective of the participants means that it was necessary to interpret how understanding had been reached concerning the individuals' experiences (Willig, 2001). For as deeply into the world of the individual the researcher can go, when extracting himself again, it would be the researchers own understandings and not the participants' directly that are obtained.

### **3.4 Research participants**

Five young adults that are currently busy with their tertiary studies, or have recently completed their tertiary studies were approached to give their responses to the research question posed. The age group targeted was that of 20 to 30 years. Each one of these participants has either started the process of emigration, or is very seriously considering this as an option in the near future.

The participants in this research were selected by means of 'accidental sampling'. This means that they were individuals that came to the attention of the researcher, for whom the phenomenon of emigration held meaning (de Vos, 2000). In other words they have been selected according to their suitability as regards their having experiences relating to the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). Their ability to communicate their experiences and the related thoughts and emotions fluently was also of paramount importance considering that this is the central idea to the research (Nager, 2002).

It must be stated clearly that the views and perceptions that have been shared by these few individuals are, or in no way will be, a generalization as regards the young adult population, but rather it is purely a window into the individuals' world of experience.

### **3.5 Data collection**

Written descriptions were used as the data capturing procedure. Effectively, this falls in the realm of interviewing, but the individual, instead of providing an oral description for a verbal question, has written about their experience (Kruger, 1988).

The researcher met with each of the individuals, in order to explain to them the nature of the study to be undertaken, the confidentiality of the information that they would provide as well as their anonymity throughout the entire process. Part of the information that was collected is biographical in nature, but it was explained during this meeting that such information will not necessarily be made use of in the report. Consent however, was discussed with and sought from each of the individuals to involve them in the research and to use their responses as data in this study.

This means of gathering the data was selected, as it provides the individuals with the opportunity to describe their experiences in a manner that is most fitting for themselves, with as little interference or influence coming from the researcher (Brownrigg, 2007; Kruger, 1988). In this way very little opportunity was offered to influence the way in which they expressed themselves. There were no questions or statements that may have swayed their thoughts, or what aspects they focused on, thus allowing their responses to be richer. It is understood that some influence may have been exerted through the way in which the research question was posed to them, but in essence the intention was to provide them only with the topic on which they were to reflect, no more.

The question posed to each of the individuals was open ended which allowed for a fuller and more detailed description (Hayes, 2000). In the event that clarification was necessary, the opportunity to enter into short discourse with the participants was maintained. This took place on two occasions where the need for clarification was experienced. Further, each individual was asked to read through the interpretation of their experiences in order to provide guidance as to whether they felt that appropriate wording had been provided to their experienced meaning.

To each participant the following question was posed:

Could you please write for me an account, in as full detail as you possibly can, of the experiences that you have drawn on in your thought and decision making processes, that have brought you to the point at which you currently find yourself, in terms of emigrating from South Africa? Please remember that these texts are to be used in research and therefore the richer the descriptions you provide, the more successful the research might be.

### 3.6 Data analysis

The 'map-book' chosen with which to navigate the 'terrain' of the experiences that these participants provided was the phenomenological method. This method of analysis is less a method *per se*, but rather a set of guidelines that allow for the surfacing of a description of the phenomenon whilst keeping as 'true' to the original responses of the participants as possible (Kruger, 1988). This process involved the following 'steps':

- **Sense of the whole** - This process is one in which the researcher, had to read and re-read the responses numerous times in order to first try to form an intuitive and holistic grasp of the data (Hayes, 2000; Kruger, 1988). In other words the researcher attempted to 'soak' in the meaning of each of the individual's descriptions (Giorgi,



1985). This was an inductive process involving open mindedness and empathy (Hayes, 2000).

- **Natural Meaning units** – Once a sense of the whole was established, it was necessary to ‘break down’ or disassemble each response into what are referred to as “natural meaning units” (Kruger, 1988, p.153). These are effectively sections of the response that would be coherent or understandable if they stood alone (Giorgi, 1985). It is from these sections or units that one is able to differentiate themes within the experience as a whole (Hayes, 2000; Valle & Halling, 1989).
- **“Transformation”** - Kruger (1988, p.153) described this as an attempt to explain each of the themes in as basic language as possible. This is where interpretation became explicit. The researcher at this point attempted to ‘describe’ what the individuals were saying in psychological terms. In other words, an attempt was made to express that which was given by the participants in terms that are acceptable in the writing of a research report (Hayes, 2000). As mentioned previously, this interpretation, although the researchers words, needed to express as closely as possible the original meaning of the respondent.
- **“Synthesis and description”** - Kruger (1988, p.153) again, suggests that the last step in the analysis process is a twofold one. It is in this stage that the attempt to piece together the varying experiences gathered – synthesis was made, and then presented in such a way that sense could be made of it by the reader - description. During this process the interpretations reached were reflected against the original descriptions offered in order to ascertain whether they remained as true to the meanings as possible or if the “...insights really are appropriate” (Hayes, 2000, p.191). In order to further test the way in which these experiences were synthesised the respondents were asked to read it. When found to be acceptable by them as being ‘summarised’ accounts of their own experiences confirmation was reached that the process was a reasonable research process (Hayes, 2000).

### 3.7 Trustworthiness

The concept trustworthiness relates to the concept of validity in quantitative research methodologies. Validity means to measure to what extent an instrument is able to measure what it was designed for (Kvale, 1996). Kopala and Suzuki (1999) suggest that the consistency that is sought by such measurements is in fact not possible in a qualitative study.



His reasoning is that in a qualitative study each researcher brings their own subjective nuances to the table that would lead to change regardless of the accuracy with which the study is conducted.

Trustworthiness in contrast to validity takes this into account and instead depends on the manner in which the research is conducted and presented (Kvale, 1996). The aim is to generate understanding that is credible and acceptable and true to the meaning given by the participant. Hayes (2000) puts forward that there are two ways to allow a researcher to test for this though. The first is to reflect the ‘description’ against the original responses of the participants in order to ascertain whether it remains as true to the meaning as possible implying internal trustworthiness.

The second is to have the participants examine the ‘description’ in order to see if they view it as being “valid” (Hayes, 2000, p.191), or as a reasonable summary of their own experience. This is an example of external trustworthiness (Hayes, 2000). Furthermore, when the description posed by the researcher, of the account provided by the participant, is recognisable by individuals who have shared similar experiences, credibility has been attained (Brokensha, 2004). According to Hayes (2000, p.191), “[i]n many forms of research, such a subjective evaluation would be unacceptable, but since the whole goal of phenomenological research is to reflect subjective experience, this is the most appropriate form of ‘validity’ test the material could receive.”

The ‘tests’ suggested by Hayes (2000) were both applied in the conduction of this study. The descriptions were repeatedly compared against the original responses in order to make sure that what had been understood, fairly, reflected the original responses. At the end of the process I gave each respondent the opportunity to read through the synthesised description relating to their response and took this opportunity to make necessary changes that they suggested in order that the findings held the credibility that was sought.

### **3.8 Consistency**

Understanding that a qualitative study is concerned with personal experience and not with scientific objectivity is of great importance (Brokensha, 2004). According to Phenomenological psychology, the idea that we cannot understand a phenomenon objectively, but rather, only through our experience of that phenomenon which varies from person to person, negates reliability as defined in quantitative research (Spinelli, 1989). This means that the consistency that is sought for by reliability is essentially not possible, as it assumes that a phenomenon can only be experienced in a certain way (Brokensha, 2004). You can further

assure consistency of interpretation by interpreting the same part several times and make sure that you interpret it the same.

As mentioned previously, the aim of this study was not for the results to be replicable or for them to be generalised, but rather to shed light on the phenomenon from the experiences of the participants.

### **3.9 Ethical considerations**

#### 3.9.1 Introduction

As the accounts of other people were being used, which effectively made these individuals the participants of my study, there were several issues that had to be considered and certain ‘guidelines’ that were followed (Willig, 2001; de Vos, 2000; Richardson, 1996; Kvale, 1996; Kazdin, 1992). Some of the key areas concerning ethical consideration as regarded this study were the following: informed consent; confidentiality; possible consequences for participants; the researchers’ role; release or reporting of findings (de Vos, 2000; Kvale, 1996).

#### 3.9.2 Informed consent

For the study to commence, informed consent was needed from the participants. Informed consent has to be based in the full knowledge of, what the goals of the research investigation are; the main characteristics of the design; and what the possible consequences of participation may be (de Vos, 2000; Kvale, 1996; Kazdin, 1992). Once the individuals were willing to voluntarily participate in the study, informed consent was given. This was obtained by way of participants signing a consent form.

#### 3.9.3 Confidentiality

When considering confidentiality, the term violation of privacy can be viewed as being synonymous (de Vos, 2000). What this means is that the participants have the right to remain anonymous; to veto any information concerning them to be included; how their information may be used or presented; who may have access to this information; and how this information may be collected (de Vos, 2000; Kvale, 1996). It was the researchers’ responsibility to ensure that these rights were maintained.

#### 3.9.4 Possible consequences for participants

It is the responsibility of the researcher to ensure that the potential for harm is minimised as far as possible. If there are any consequences, whether beneficial or harmful to the participant, it is necessary for the researcher to lay these out and discuss them with the participants

(Richardson, 1996; Kvale, 1996). To the researchers best knowledge there were no such circumstances that arose as a result of participation in this study.

### 3.9.5 Role of the researcher

The responsibility of the researcher is threefold: to science; to the participants; and to the independence of research. This means that the researcher is responsible for the building of knowledge within the professional field; for maintaining a professional stance towards their participants; and for reporting on the research findings as fully and frankly as is possible within the agreed limits of confidentiality and informed consent (Kvale, 1996).

### 3.9.6 Release or reporting of findings

The researcher has the ethical responsibility of reporting on the findings of any body of research in such a manner that is scientifically acceptable. The report needs to be accurate, clear and contain all essential information. Any limitations to the study need to be stated. The findings also need to be made available to the participants (de Vos, 2000), which was done in this study.

## 3.10 Conclusion

The phenomenological methodology used in this study allows for description of phenomena without the original meaning of the participants' response being misrepresented. The focus of the study is on the experienced meanings that the participants form concerning the experiences that they have been through and therefore the phenomenological method is appropriate. Their experiences were captured in written form by the individuals themselves in response to an open ended question. This method allowed for the participants to include that which they found to be relevant without influence from the researcher.

It is the responsibility of the researcher to bring to the fore the experienced meanings of the participants and to pose them in a scientifically acceptable form. In the next chapter the findings of the research will be outlined in the form of five cases studies.

## Chapter 4: Results

### 4.1 Introduction

The focus of this chapter is the analysis of the data gathered through essay type responses of participants to an open-ended question related to their experiences leading them to seriously consider emigration. It is of great importance to remind the reader that this study was not carried out with the hope of being able to explain all emigration and the experiences leading to emigration, through generalization, but to rather open a window on the experiences of these few respondents and to understand the phenomenon of emigration from their perspective.

The process by which these themes were brought to light involved me as the researcher immersing myself in the accounts of the participants in order to identify as closely with their experiences as possible and to experience a ‘sense of the whole’ (Hayes, 2000; Kruger, 1988). This was done through repetitive reading of these accounts. Once I gained this sense of the whole, “natural meaning units” were identified (Kruger, 1988, p.153) in the texts. It is these meaning units that allow for one to identify the themes that are present in the accounts of the individuals’ experiences.

Following this, interpretation became explicit in that the next step involved the description of what the individual was saying. Once this was done it was necessary to ‘summarize’ the accounts of each of the participants in such a way that they reflected the original meaning that the participant wished to portray. Excerpts from each of the respondents’ texts were used in the description, in order that the reader would be able to scrutinize these understandings against the original meaning presented by the participants. It may occur that certain themes are found in each of the respondents’ texts, and these are to be highlighted in the final chapter.

### 4.2 Experiences related by participants

In the following section I will discuss the experiences related by the participants. As these experiences are particular to the individual I will discuss each account separately. One of these accounts will be my own which I will interpret in the same manner as the others. The participants were:

- Participant 1 (A):       English Male  
                                  29 years old  
                                  Married, no children

This individual is a graduate of the University of Pretoria. He is busy with post graduate studies and works within the field of tertiary education. He is strongly considering the

possibility of emigration with his wife. He has three siblings in South Africa and several extended family members living overseas.

- Participant 2 (B): Afrikaans Male  
28 years old  
Married with a 1 year old daughter

This individual is a graduate of the University of Pretoria. He holds a post graduate degree and is working directly in his field of study. He is already in the process of emigrating overseas along with his wife and 1 year old daughter.

He is an only child whose parents live in South Africa and he does not have any family overseas.

- Participant 3 (C): English Female  
26 years old  
Married, no children

This individual is a graduate of the University of Pretoria. She holds an undergraduate degree and is in the process of completing a post graduate degree. She however is not working directly in her field of study. She and her husband are currently exploring options to emigrate overseas. Her parents live in South Africa, but she has direct as well as extended family members living permanently overseas.

- Participant 4 (D): Afrikaans Male  
29 years old  
Single, no children

This individual is a graduate of the University of the North West (Potchefstroom campus). He holds an undergraduate degree and is currently working towards his postgraduate degree through the University of Pretoria. He is strongly considering the possibility of emigration. He has a sibling and parents living in South Africa, but has spent a few years working abroad.

- Participant 5 (E): Afrikaans Female  
29 years old  
Single, no children

This individual is a graduate of the University of Pretoria. She holds an Honours degree and is in the process of completing her Master's degree through UNISA. She is currently working directly in her field of study. She is currently in the process of applying for immigration status. She has two siblings and parents living in South Africa but has been overseas on working holidays.

#### 4.2.1 Analysis of participant 1's account

The response of participant 1 was analysed and the following themes were extracted:

##### **Theme 1: Fear**

Participant 1 opens his account by expressing that everything that he discusses in his account should give understanding to the fears that he has regarding staying, and his reasoning for considering emigration. In this theme there seems to be a few distinct subthemes. The experiences that the participant uses to explain these are in some cases exactly the same but he uses phrases that create a distinction. These subthemes are 'the fear of violence', the 'fear of becoming a victim' and 'the fear of past experiences repeating themselves'. As the fear of violence is the first 'voice' to be 'heard' in his response, I will discuss it first.

Even though his account is told in an almost chronological manner, there seems to be some significance in the fact that the first experience he discusses is related to violence and insecurity. There are other such incidents that he mentions through his account, but it appears to be of import that his first memory that gives understanding of his fears should be concerning this theme. Although these incidents do not all take place in South Africa, they appear to have relevance to his decision making process. He discusses instances which occurred in 3 different countries but which have all contributed to his fears and reasoning.

The first incident of these to be discussed, involved protests that took place on a mine in Swaziland. Being a child at the time of these riots, his telling of the story almost carries a sense of excitement rather than fear. Instead of portraying how the violence impacted on him emotionally, the 'action' that took place during this time is voiced. He states that "to this day" (line 3, paragraph 2) he has little understanding of what the protests were actually about. This lack of understanding or perhaps his age at the time may explain the sense of excitement instead of fear portrayed. Even an incident that he was directly involved in, where a vehicle he was in was stoned and rocked, is discussed without mention of fear or other emotion. Instead, his most vivid memory is about having soldiers 'dug-in' in their yard. Later in his account however he reflects back on these and the other events and states how they have led to a sense of insecurity.

The second incident of violence and insecurity mentioned is that of farm take-overs in Zimbabwe. He words his fear here through saying “the farm take-overs by war veterans, and general animosity towards whites displayed by the government were truly disconcerting to me” (lines 3, 4 & 5, paragraph 6). He refers to the violence applied and disregard for human life in these events as being “gut wrenching” (line 5, paragraph 6). In this instance the emotional impact of the events is explicitly stated.

His experiences of violence and insecurity in South Africa, he again states, have impacted on him sufficiently for them to be factored into his reasoning for emigration. He refers to violent crime as something that he is exposed to on a daily basis through various media sources, but that he has also had ‘closer’ experiences relating to family and neighbours. “A family member had her husband shot in the bed next to her” (lines 5 & 6, paragraph 16), and “a neighbour died in front of my gate” (line 4, paragraph 16). These quotes give a sense of the personal loss that violence has inflicted on the participant, yet it is his emotional response to these events that give true insight into the impact of violence in his life, and more so the second subtheme of fear of becoming the victim.

The subtheme of ‘the fear of becoming the victim’ is raised through the way in which he associates himself with the immediate victims in each of the above accounts. He makes use of terms such as “although I was never directly involved” (line 3, paragraph 6), and “experienced crime vicariously” (line 2, paragraph 15) to show that even though he was not the immediate victim it could as easily have been him. He says that these events leave one “feeling scared for your life” (line 8, paragraph 16) and that you “fear for the security of your loved ones” (line 9, paragraph 16). These provide understanding of the sense of insecurity that violence has left in the participants’ life. The manner in which his account opens with an instance of him being a victim and essentially closes with an instance of him being the victim tends to lend credibility to this fear in its’ relation to violence or the potential of violence.

Violence is however not the only context in which this fear of becoming the victim is raised. In his response the participant also aligns himself with those who have been the ‘victims’ of affirmative action. He explains that he has “indirectly experienced” (lines 1 & 2, paragraph 8) and “came into indirect contact with” (lines 4 & 5, paragraph 8) affirmative action through the experiences of his brother and brother-in-law. His fear of becoming a victim to affirmative action is further indicated, through his statement that difficulties he himself had in finding gainful employment “thankfully” (line 2, paragraph 11) had nothing to do with affirmative action.

In addition there seems to be a further subtheme of ‘the fear of past experiences repeating themselves’. He clearly raises this fear in his statement that “[e]ven though much of the ... account refers to incidences outside of South Africa, ... the potential of similar incidences occurring in South Africa gives rise to a sense of insecurity” (lines 3, 4 & 5, paragraph 17). This subtheme is very strongly related to the second major theme that runs through this participants’ response, being economic factors. Through his experiences of a number of economic factors in South Africa, it is apparent that the participant fears that the negative experiences of such factors in Zimbabwe may repeat themselves in his current context. He in fact elucidates this by saying that his experience of South African economic factors “makes one fear that similar circumstances as Zimbabwe are vaguely possible” (lines 9 & 10, paragraph 12). He also draws parallels between the political situations, but these are a lot less explicitly stated. He mentions only that “political decisions and occurrences” and more expressly “specific individuals that hold positions of power” are causes for concern due to the potential harm that could be caused for the people of South Africa. This fear is also illuminated through his comment regarding affirmative action serving to recycle the animosity and racial tensions of the past.

Beyond these subthemes of fear, the participant makes reference to a few other fears that he has. These are included here as they in a sense create a bridge to the other themes. He mentions that he has concerns for his future children. He explains that he “fears for their safety” (line 3, paragraph 14) and “for their opportunity to make a reasonable living” (lines 3 & 4, paragraph 14). This experience of fear appears to be a pervasive one reaching into every aspect of this participant’s life, and seems to lend strongly to his consideration of emigration.

## **Theme 2: Economic instability**

The theme of economic instability seems to also contain a few sub-themes. Devaluation of currency, living standards and costs, and affirmative action are all matters discussed by the participant which appear to relate to his understanding of economic instability.

Through the use of terms such as “the shocking devaluation of the currency” (lines 4 & 5, paragraph 4), and how this drastically impacted on the standard and cost of living, the participant tries to convey the impact this had on him. He further uses an example of school fees having gone from \$8 500 Zimbabwean dollars per term, to in the region of \$120 000 000 Zimbabwean dollars in order to show the incredible rate at which the currency has devalued, and to try and almost graphically represent this. He seems to be trying to convince one of the difficulties that people were put in due to this devaluation through statements such as



“salaries had to increase exponentially” (line 6, paragraph 4), and yet even then “what one could afford on a salary became less and less” (lines 7 & 8, paragraph 4).

He draws a direct correlation between the rate of devaluation and the cost of living, and continues to indicate that the standard of living was impacted on as an immediate result, through declarations such as “the more the dollar decreased the more difficult it became for shops to continue stocking their shelves” (lines 8 & 9, paragraph 4). The sense that this acts as a curtain raiser to his experiences of South Africa is a fairly strong one. The expectation that this type of scenario might repeat itself is, as discussed above, in fact an explicit one, given strength through his observations on how the interest rates and inflation rates were steadily climbing whilst the exchange rate declined in South Africa, and how these factors lead to the fear discussed above. His reference to how salaries had to increase exponentially in Zimbabwe and even then could not buy much, and how making ends meet is difficult even though both he and his wife are earning above entry level salaries further provide understanding towards both his experiences of the fear of experiences repeating themselves and his concerns regarding the costs and standard of living.

It appears as though affirmative action is understood in relation to its’ impact on the economic stability of the individual. In his discussion of affirmative action this participant reflects on the impact that this had on the future of those family members directly involved. He states in a very ‘matter of fact’ manner that the loss of opportunity of advancement is the greatest consequence of affirmative action and how this may influence their future ability to contend with the costs of living and therefore to maintain their standard of living. He reflects on how affirmative action essentially ‘robbed’ his family members of jobs that should have been theirs. He has come to understand affirmative action as creating an environment in which only certain racial groups or gender groups can prosper at the detriment to other groups, or at the detriment of individuals who do not share certain attributes.

Although a number of experiences are highlighted through this account it appears that the experienced meaning that the participant has formed is one of a lack of potential for the future, that there is very little hope of circumstances improving in the foreseeable future. Rather, it appears as though he believes that things will only deteriorate further. His fears of past experiences returning and the experienced meaning he seems to have formed surrounding the economic status of South Africa give the impression that remaining in South Africa would be ill advised.

### Theme 3: Crime

Although the theme of crime relates very strongly to certain of the subthemes from the theme of “fear”, there are certain factors that make it strong enough to stand alone. The participant emphasises the concerns he has surrounding crime by stating that “[m]ore than anything else crime is a major concern...” (line 1, paragraph 16). He discusses the impact of crime on his life through both vicarious experiences as well as personal experiences. The meaning that he has developed surrounding all of these experiences, seems to be that it “could happen to you at anytime” (line 7, paragraph 16), that crime is something that you should fear at all times.

In forming these conclusions he draws on vicarious experiences such as the death of neighbours or family members and his own experience of having someone standing over him and his wife while they were sleeping. Such an experience led to action with regard to emigration. He iterates this by stating that “[t]his experience alone was enough for us to genuinely start looking into the requirements to be able to emigrate” (lines 5, 6 & 7, paragraph 17).

#### Summary of themes:

- Fear – This theme is broken down into the subthemes of the fear of violence, the fear of becoming the victim and the fear of past experiences repeating themselves. His fear of violence is clearly informed by the types of experiences that he has directly and indirectly been involved in. The fear of becoming the victim has roots in both the fear of violence and his personal experience of having a criminal stand over him and his wife while they slept, as well as the way in which he identifies with those that he views as victims. This is shown in how he relates with the victims of violence, crime as well as the ‘victims’ of affirmative action. His fear of past experiences repeating themselves seems to have a very strong link to his experiences of Zimbabwe and his experience of elements in South Africa that he views as slowly heading in the same direction.
- Economic instability – Devaluation of currency, living standards and costs, and affirmative action are all matters discussed by the participant which appear to relate to his understanding of economic instability. These circumstances appear to leave the participant with the distinct feeling that there is little hope of a secure future.
- Crime – This is included as a theme mainly due to his emphasis of it being the major concern surrounding his thoughts on emigration. The sense that crime can impact on a person’s life at anytime and that it is something to fear is very strongly portrayed.

#### 4.2.2 Analysis of Participant 2's account

The response of Participant 2 was analysed and the following themes were extracted:

##### **Theme 1: Victimization**

It is apparent that this participant seems to feel resentful, and to some extent guilty, for pursuing the option of emigration. The impression conveyed is one of feeling forced into a situation not of his choice, of having been backed into a corner from which he needs to take extreme action even though this action goes against his very nature. He makes use of terms such as "...been victimized into feeling 'bad'" (line 3, paragraph 1), and that the message conveyed through media and other sectors of the country is that "you are running away, being a bad person, or only thinking of yourself" (lines 5 & 6, paragraph 1).

He speaks of being part of a section of the South African people that are being "marginalized, victimized, and thrown away" (line 7, paragraph 1). He also makes use of terms such as "a story of us and them" (line 1, paragraph 3), and "a South African that does not feel welcome in SA" (line 2, paragraph 3). These all speak concisely to the sense of being singled out for treatment that is unfair or uncalled for. It is not always clear who he refers to when discussing 'them', or who exactly it is that creates this sense of not belonging. He does at times refer to certain bodies or groups that play some role in creating this sense of being victimized such as the media, but much of the time it is through insinuation that he creates the impression that a certain sector of the South African population is the source of these feelings.

Up to this point the examples provided that give indication to this sense of victimization, are relatively generalized in nature. However, he also reflects on the feeling that victimization is a context that is South African. He utters this through the statement "The story of SA's history is my story as well, a story of us and them" (line 1, paragraph 3), and that "[t]he history of South Africa is repeating itself" (lines 2 & 3, paragraph 2). Natural meaning units such as these, clearly provide the reader with the sense that this participant holds the view that South Africa has always been in a flux of antagonism in which conflicting interests or views are held.

This theme of victimization appears to overlap with other themes that come to the fore. I will therefore discuss these overlaps shortly as I understand them to integrate with the theme of victimization, and then later discuss the other themes more fully. In a sense as related to this theme, these other themes tend to provide further contexts in which victimization appears to have been experienced.

These contexts that I will briefly emphasize are race relations such as racial integration and black economic empowerment, and crime. In these contexts it appears as though the sense of victimization becomes more personal in nature, through specific ‘perpetrators’, being identified.

In terms of race relations it is patent that he feels this directly impresses upon him as it relates to his occupational future. This is seen in the question that he poses on more than one instance, “what happens when I can’t find work because I am a white person” (lines 8 & 9, paragraph 5) and in slightly different terms “...when I can’t find work ... because of my race” (lines 10 & 11, paragraph 5). Furthermore he gives credence to this concern in the way he discusses black economic empowerment. He states that businesses like their family’s have to “comply with certain requirements, or you stand to lose your business at the end of the day” (lines 18 & 19, paragraph 5), and that he views these impositions as being “in itself ...blackmail” (line 19, paragraph 5). Again his use of words such as “forcing a business to sell...” (line 20, paragraph 5) and ‘to force people into a workplace...’ (line 26, paragraph 5) clearly indicate a sense of lack of control, but possibly more so having control wrestled away leading to the sense of victimization.

Furthermore, through direct statements such as “blame ...whites in SA for everything” (lines 21 & 22, paragraph 6), and “by punishing the very people that were willing to change and work for the new South Africa” (lines 24 & 25, paragraph 6), he again, very apparently gives vent to this sense of being victimized by the Administration in power, but also by the black population of South Africa. This sentiment is further perpetuated through his use of terms such as “Apartheid” (line 21, paragraph 6), “reverse Apartheid” (line 5, paragraph 2) and “only white people are seen as racist” (line 1, paragraph 7) which are terms relating to the victimization of individuals based on the ‘colour of their skin’.

Without going too deeply into the theme of crime, for crime to exist it is by its very nature necessary for a victim to exist. In all mention of crime throughout his account, the fear of being victimized through crime is a very real concern for him. Thus the theme of crime relates to the theme of victimization in the form of a context.

The most telling comment that he makes in this context of crime is that he refers to crime as “the war against honest, good people” (lines 5 & 6, paragraph 2). I believe the understanding that this statement invokes is that in war there are always victims, and it is so often the ‘innocent’ bystanders that get caught up in war that receive the brunt of victimization.

## Theme 2: Sorrow

Throughout this account, even through the apparent anger related to victimization, it is obvious that regret is apparent. Interestingly much of this sense of regret is related to victimization. Comments such as “I feel a sudden discomfort arising” (line 2, paragraph 1) and the need “to explain, and mainly to myself” (line 2, paragraph 2) give the distinct impression that thinking about emigration leaves him with a feeling of guilty discomfort and regret. His regret is related to circumstances that have led to his decision and also over the decision itself. This is an encompassing emotion that captures the essence of several tones that one finds expressed in the account provided.

The respondent expressed that his consideration of emigration is effectively done under protest and that he regrets the need to do so but finds no viable alternative available. This same tone is experienced in the statement that “...a decision to emigrate will not only affect my life, but that of other significant people...” (lines 3 & 4, paragraph 3). Again, the regret is reflected in that the need to emigrate is evident and that this will impress on others the same sense of ‘helplessness’ as what he has experienced. His decision will be forced on them as he felt it was forced on him. The posed statement that “it would have been easy to leave ...if we could get these people to join” (line 5 paragraph 3) reinforces the sentiment of regret bringing an ‘if only’ type of reflection into his experience.

A different type of ‘regret’, one of self-pity, is brought into light when he talks of being in another country without his friends and “foresee[ing] a problem” (lines 3 & 4, paragraph 4) and “get[ting] down very easily” (lines 4 & 5, paragraph 4). He states that at least initially he will “feel very sorry for [him]self” (lines 5 & 6, paragraph 4) not having friends to interact with once over there.

The notion of him ‘regretting’ the circumstances that have led to his decision to emigrate is once again highlighted through the way in which he discusses the economic scenario that he views in South Africa. Here he makes use of questions that he and others have posed in conversation, in order to explain his decision making process. To give weight to the haplessness he experiences in this regard. More over the use of wording like “if” (line 7, paragraph 5), and “what happens when...” (line 8, paragraph 5) illuminate the sense of uncertainty he finds himself experiencing. The impression made is that all of this leads to a ‘regret’ of not having control, or the ability to influence the circumstances leading him to the decision he has made.

Another point that I understand as an attempt to relate this ‘regret’ is the way in which he states how he appreciates that certain measures are meant to be positive, but that his experience of these measures being implemented leave him with the reverse experience. For example, he believes that small business has a role to play in uplifting people and understands that the intention of Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) is meant to be positive, but he has experienced it as blackmail. He believes “to force people into a workplace... is detrimental to our economy” (line 26, paragraph 5) but that it is imperative “to teach new skills” (lines 24 & 25, paragraph 5) and to “...employ people that are willing to learn to eventually become managers and owners” (line 25, paragraph 5).

The most obvious statement of actual ‘regret’ comes in the form of statements such as “I honestly don’t see a future for myself and my family in this country, and this is sad, and causes a lot of discomfort” (lines 1 & 2, paragraph 12); and, “[d]eep down I hope that it will never come to this” (lines 5 & 6, paragraph 13). It is in statements such as these that one is able to blatantly ‘hear’ the ‘regret’ expressed and the depth with which this impacts on his experience of South Africa.

### **Theme 3: Insecurity**

The participant expressed this theme through a range of contexts such as crime, economic concerns, relationships, the historic context, racial relations, service delivery, and education.

To begin with, the “sudden discomfort arising” (line 2, paragraph 1) discussed earlier can be understood as a sense of insecurity relating to the entire decision making process. Being ‘made’ to feel “...bad for entertaining the thought” (line 3, paragraph 1) of emigrating, leaves one feeling insecure about yourself as a person. Being told that you are “running away, being a bad person, and only thinking about yourself” (lines 5 & 6, paragraph 1) leaves one feeling that you have no right considering your own needs. Viewing yourself as forming part of a community “...that is being marginalised, victimised and thrown away by the powers” (line 7, paragraph 1) would very much leave one with a sense of insecurity as it is then difficult to know how you fit into the larger picture, if you fit in at all. To add to this point I will again use the posed comments of “a story of us and them” (line 1, paragraph 3), and “...a South African that does not feel welcome in SA” (line 2, paragraph 3).

Further fears or insecurities as relating to South Africa in general can be related through assertions such as “[t]he history of South Africa is repeating itself” (lines 2 & 3, paragraph 2); “[a] lot of aspects worry me about SA” (line 1, paragraph 5); “by teaching people to not take responsibility and to blame ‘apartheid’ and whites in SA for everything, we are breeding

misfits and criminals” (lines 21 & 22, paragraph 6); “ I honestly don’t see a future for myself and my family in this country” (line 1, paragraph 12); and “if Africa doesn’t need me” (line 4, paragraph 13). He is uncertain about the direction that South Africa is taking, and what direction will be open to him and his family in the future.

Crime very clearly provides a context that leaves him and his family feeling particularly insecure and unsafe. He comments on this right from the outset expressing his concerns through statements such as “I have not enjoyed one evening out without expecting to be mugged, hijacked, or to have my car stolen” (lines 8 & 9, paragraph 1), and “I cannot imagine allowing my wife to drive around in our cities at night alone” (lines 9 & 10, paragraph 1). Furthermore, his reference to crime being “the war against honest, good people” (lines 5 & 6, paragraph 2) very clearly iterates his insecurities relating to crime. The uncertainty of what can occur during a war, and again the haplessness related to war lends strongly to the sense of insecurity experienced.

“[W]hen five armed men enter a house at night to gang rape a woman and kill the family for a cell phone and midnight feast from their fridge” (lines 8, 9 & 10, paragraph 6); “we are so used to people climbing over our walls at night, people hijacking cars, raping women, killing honest hard working people” (lines 12, 13, & 14, paragraph 11); are observations reflecting the depth of emotion experienced in relation to crime. He fears the brutality of crime and sees futility in a situation in which you can lose your very life for the least of possessions.

Associated to the above are several other comments that indicate a real sense of insecurity as related to the legal system. He feels that “corruption is a national pastime” (line 2, paragraph 7), that one can buy oneself out of any situation, or through corrupt means attain that which you desire. He finds it scary that “I can buy an AK-47 from my gardener, with a supply of ammunition, for less than a weeks’ wages” (lines 6 & 7, paragraph 7), and when one tries to report criminal acts to the authorities one is openly laughed at.

Beyond this are comments that recount how this aspect of crime and the ensuing insecurities relate to his decision to emigrate. He says in relation to South Africa that “I feel unsafe” (line 12, paragraph 12), there is a “...high crime rate and [a] ...low level of perceived safety” (lines 5 & 6, paragraph 11) and that “safety, being the biggest issue” (line 2, paragraph 9) is what drives this exploration of possibilities for a new home. It is this that leads to people thinking that the grass will be greener anywhere else. In contrast to this, he perceives several countries overseas, to be very different to the South African context. He refers to “how little other countries struggle with crime” (line 3, paragraph 9); how they “control and defend their



borders” (lines 4 & 5, paragraph 9); how they “work very hard at keeping threats away from the public” (line 5, paragraph 9).

Insecurities as they relate to the economic concerns of South Africa can be understood through different examples. The first to be raised in his account is that of black economic empowerment (BEE) which “feels like reverse Apartheid in disguise” (lines 4 & 5, paragraph 2) as discussed under the theme of victimization. He views BEE as a threat to his family and experiences therefore, the ‘security’ of being in control of your own business and in a sense your own destiny as being rocked quite severely.

Besides the BEE related concerns, it is quite clear that he has concerns surrounding the political and as it relates the economic instability of the region. These concerns impact severely on his confidence in the South African economy and its future security. He discusses how the historic view point of South Africans in general, but specifically of South Africans in positions that understand the economic context, was always a positive one. “[I]nvesting in SA has always been the norm” (line 8, paragraph 5) is how he terms this. Yet, this outlook appears to have shifted severely as he impresses with the statement that there is “no use in investing...in SA if the country is becoming a truly African country, like Angola, Zimbabwe or Mozambique” (lines 6, 7 & 8, paragraph 5). With comment such as this it is very clear that his personal view point is that maintaining confidence in the future of the South African economy is futile. His referral to “the Zimbabwe route, where two million rand becomes R60 000 within a few months” (lines 6 & 7, paragraph 8) is also very transparent substantiation of these insecurities.

He effectively links his insecurities regarding the economy, the regional instability, BEE and race relations in the form of affirmative action through his wording “...what happens when I can’t find work because I am a white person, and I lose all that I have worked for, and all that I have invested in SA” (lines 8, 9 & 10, paragraph).

His experience of the current economic environment is that a white person is at risk; that a white person will not be extended the same opportunities in South Africa as a person of colour. His expectation is that as a white person one will stand to lose everything. This apprehension is clearly presented in his question “will they become racists because they live in poverty...?” (Lines 11 & 12, paragraph 5) in which he expresses fear of his children becoming racially intolerant due to economic circumstances. Furthermore, as race relations and economic outlook are related, his view is that those individuals that are willing to work



towards a racially integrated society are the same individuals that are being economically 'punished' through the advent of affirmative action and BEE.

Less prominent, but as clearly stated, are his insecurities connected to service delivery and education. The concerns about the legal system and their blatant failures are related earlier in the context of crime. He has very little confidence in the country's authorities to uphold medical services referring to how they have "dissolved in the last 15 years" (lines 2 & 3, paragraph 8). With regard to education his scrutiny appears to be that it has gone backwards in that last period. He insinuates this through saying that the situation has gone from having to "share textbooks" (line 9, paragraph 10) being the worst people had to deal with, to children and teachers alike not being able to "keep up with the new norms and standards" (lines 11 & 12, paragraph 10) of an ever changing system. In comparison to this he puts it across that countries overseas focus on providing 'security' in terms of education through making it a "top priority" (line 12, paragraph 10).

An all encompassing statement on the theme of insecurity is as simply put as "[w]e are unsure of our future" (line 2, paragraph 12). This quote gives the reader a sense of the unambiguousness with which this theme impacts the life of the participant.

#### **Theme 4: Loss**

This participant raises certain complications to the proposed emigration. The first, is the understanding that were he to emigrate that he would be unable to maintain the familial relations that he clearly wishes to. It is also made clear that he considers his choices to carry similar effects for his family. This is indicated through statements such as "we do not live in isolation" (line 3, paragraph 3), and "...will not only affect my life, but that of other significant people in my life" (lines 4 & 5, paragraph 3). These meaning units allow one to understand that his decision will not only impact on his life and that of his wife and child, but also on the lives of family and friends. He openly expresses the familial closeness that he and his wife experience, and also discusses the impact that friends have in his life. Family is shown to be of immense import through his statement that they are "the biggest factor keeping me in South Africa" (line 7, paragraph 3). A large part of this experience of loss for him is the effective loss of security he contemplates that such relationships provide him and his family.

Other forms of loss experienced by the participant are a loss of the sense of belonging; a loss of trust in South Africa; the loss of economic security; loss of business; loss of autonomy; loss of confidence in the future; loss of property; loss of humanity. He explains that he

experiences his being in South Africa as one of not being welcome, of being an outsider. He explains that his trust in South Africa has been rocked due to the similarities that he sees developing to circumstances that have already taken place in other African countries.

Economic security he essentially explains is lost due to implementation of policies such as BEE, but also due to what he sees as a lack of confidence in the South African economy. The sense of loss of business and autonomy relate very strongly to this concern regarding BEE. His understanding of this is that even though one may own one's own business, that you can be forced to sell out some of this to a black 'partner', or that the decision as to who one hires is no longer at the discretion of the owner but rather dictated by government.

He sees the future of raising a family in South Africa as a flawed one, with many possible pitfalls such as the decline of education and the potential lack of safety etc. The future of the country in general is also viewed in drab terms as indicated through his views concerning economic security etc. The loss of property concerns itself with the experiences of crime whilst the loss of humanity also links into this. He experiences the impact of crime as leading to circumstances in which people are not willing to enact basic human traits such as talking with others, or assisting someone in distress, instead he experiences South Africans as being more willing to partake in activities that he views as being inhumane such as raping and killing others.

Summary of themes:

- Victimization – This theme encompasses the sense of being put into a situation not of his own making; of being made to feel 'bad'; of being marginalized and unwanted or unwelcome; of having history repeat itself on him; of being the victim in a range of contexts such as crime, affirmative action etc.
- Regret – The theme of regret is reflected through his use of emotions in his descriptions of the experiences he has endured. His mention of experiencing discomfort and guilt surrounding his intentions and decision making; his concern regarding the impact that this will have on loved ones; the manner in which he discusses the situations leading to his decision; the way in which he acknowledges efforts made to improve circumstances that have in fact failed to bring about the desired outcome etc.
- Insecurity – This was a theme that is understood to relate directly to 'physical experiences' such as crime, economic concerns, relationships, race relations as well

as a few others. Yet, it was this ‘experienced meaning’ that time and time again was impressed upon the author as this account was repeatedly read.

- Loss – This theme reveals itself through a number of factors ranging from a sense that he will lose his family bonds but also the security that family and friends have come to provide. Furthermore, there are a number of other factors in relation to loss that he tends to experience. These appear to reflect the more negative aspects of his experience of South Africa and in a sense how these things have deteriorated to the extent that he experiences the ‘loss’ of them.

#### 4.2.3 Analysis of participant 3’s account

The response of participant 3 was analysed and the following themes were extracted.

##### **Theme 1: Crime**

One may feel that discussing crime as a theme could be seen as a ‘cop out’ and that not much analysis has been done. To the contrary however, in the account of this participant, crime appears to play a most significant role in her decision making process. The vast majority of her response is concerned with crime. The types of crime discussed vary, as does the extent to which this crime impact directly on her or not, but that this point of discussion dominates her experiences described is indisputable. She as good as lays this out for the reader in her opening statement “I would sum up my reasons seriously considering emigration in the following points: crime, lack of job security, crime, crime...” (lines 1 & 2, paragraph 1).

She discusses crime from a very personal perspective, either as being the victim of the perpetrated crime, or reflecting the personal impact or relationship with the crime. She explains how she has been “robbed, mugged, almost hi jacked” (line 1, paragraph 2) some time ago, and how this has left a huge impression on her. Her reaction to this is that she is now willing to “break laws to avoid being a victim” (lines 7 & 8, paragraph 2). This clearly indicates the pervasiveness of the impact crime has had on her. She recounts the events that she has experienced vividly, and is still affected by the experiences.

Those crimes that are described in which she is not directly a victim, she still discusses as impacting on her in a personal manner. She tends to relate herself to the experiences of these crimes either through describing a personal relationship with the actual victims, or purely through the way she relates the incidents. These incidents of crime affected her personally because they had a deep set impact in her life and the losses that she has suffered at the hands of criminals.

Furthermore the extent to which she relates to indirect experience of crimes is varying in nature. It appears to range from experiencing the crime through the role of an immediate witness to the vaguest role of belonging to the same group as the victims. She makes statements ranging from having “seen people dying on the side of the road” (lines 1 & 2, paragraph 3), to “[a]s a woman in South Africa, it is statistically probable to be raped at some stage in your lifetime” (lines 2 & 3, paragraph 7). One can understand her relating to the first situation in two different ways, that of witness, but also as belonging to the group of people who have lost a father or even just a loved one. The second indicates very plainly, the way in which she relates to a certain group of the population who are highly at risk of being victims of violent crime. This statement also gives voice to the very real concern that she has of, yet again, being the direct victim of a crime that is severe enough to be coupled with the likes of murder as she points out through saying that having read the newspapers and seen the television reports it is always about “another death, another murder, another rape” (lines 1 & 2, paragraph 7).

### **Theme 2: Fear**

It is obvious as one reads through this account that the participant lives in perpetual fear, and that this fear is a major driving force in her decision making process. The statement, “[p]aranoia, fear and helplessness have become descriptions for my life” (lines 2 & 3, paragraph 14) states the extent to which fear plays a role in her life. She describes her life as being synonymous with fear.

She openly assigns these emotions she experiences to the crime in South Africa. In fact she says this in as many words through her statement that she does “not want to live with so much anxiety and terror, apprehension, worry ...and that is what crime in South Africa has done to me” (lines 4, 5 & 6, paragraph 14). She even goes as far as ‘projecting’ her experience of this on the entire country through stating that crime “is terrorizing this country” (line 8, paragraph 3).

Fear has left her feeling insecure in almost any setting that she may find herself in. When she is outside in the street she feels that she can “no longer walk around the streets happily, care free” (lines 3 & 4, paragraph 2). It has created a situation in her life that she is “always suspicious of her fellow man” (line 5, paragraph 2) and that she has to always be wary of her surroundings and the people in her surroundings. As spoken of earlier, she has become a ‘criminal’ herself because of fear. She has become someone that “break[s] laws to avoid being a victim” (line 7, paragraph 2), referring to her avoidant behaviour.

She avoids stopping at stop streets and robots; she avoids going out alone at night; she ‘secures’ her home through closing curtains, switching on alarms, putting on lights; she avoids having to go to the shops late; she avoids staying home alone; she has even put having a family on hold because she fears for the environment in which she would be bringing children into. This amount of fear, this overwhelming sense of futility contributes to her feeling “like a captive” (line 1, paragraph 5), and this again feeds directly into the next theme I wish to discuss.

### **Theme 3: The need for freedom**

“I want to live freely” (line 1, paragraph 5) is her cry. She very purposely makes the reader understand that she is overpowered by crime and her experience of emotional captivity. She makes declarations such as “I feel like ...a prisoner of crime” (lines 1 & 2, paragraph 5); and “I am an inmate in my own home” (line 2, paragraph 5) which leave absolutely no room for any other interpretation. In fact, it gives the reader the impression that she is saying that, not only has she been the direct victim of certain crimes, but that she is also being ‘punished’ for crime instead of the perpetrators. She is ‘serving time’ as the captive, prisoner or inmate, instead of those that have actually committed the crimes.

She further emphasises this experience, from a slightly different analogy, through her descriptions of how she has to secure herself and her family. She creates the impression of being under ‘siege’ through reference to forts as she describes her circumstances as “a Fort Knox existence” (line 11, paragraph 4), and that there is the need to secure things in such a way that “[n]othing should be able to penetrate our little fort” (lines 7 & 8, paragraph 5). Her husbands’ experience and description of her “living in fear” (line 1, paragraph 14) and “not living at all” (line 1, paragraph 14) gives further credence to the understanding of her experience.

In contrast she wishes to live freely. She has a need for freedom from crime and the all encompassing impact that it has on her. She is looking for an escape from this ‘prison’ that she is experiencing and the opportunity to experience the “carefree and secure” (lines 11 & 12, paragraph 4) existence that her brother and family experience. She wishes to “move to a safer environment; (lines 3 & 4, paragraph 11), to experience surroundings in which it is possible to move around “without fear, without worry” (line 3, paragraph 4) and “without ...possible criminals, possible threats” (lines 3 & 4, paragraph 4). Interestingly she even ‘fears’ that she “would take a while to adjust to living like that” (lines 10 & 11, paragraph 4). Just as a prisoner being released on parole often finds it difficult to adjust to ‘life on the outside’ she expresses fear of experiencing this in the same way.

#### **Theme 4: Job security**

Her other main reason for considering emigration is the “lack of job security” (line 2, paragraph 1). She refers to job opportunities, gender and racial matters as these are presented through employment equity, affirmative action, and financial security. In her discussion of these issues it is clear that she sees them as being interconnected and so I will discuss them as such.

She tends to relate emigration with better job opportunities than she is privy to in South Africa as her understanding of opportunity in South Africa is very clearly connected to a person’s race. She speaks of a situation where the “right skin colour” (line 10, paragraph 10) opens the door of opportunity regardless of what else one may bring to the table in terms of qualifications, skills, passion, motivation or enthusiasm. These things seem secondary in nature, and only considered once race has been ‘accepted’. Terms such as “Apartheid” (line 12, paragraph 10), “affirmative action” (line 6, paragraph 10), and “employment equity” (line 4, paragraph 10) all describe these race relations and the changeover of power in which different race groups benefit from opportunities that others are to some extent excluded from. She explains affirmative action and employment equity as systems aimed at “correcting the wrongs of the past” (lines 13 & 14, paragraph 10) brought about by Apartheid. It is her assertion then that due to these ‘corrections’ that her “husband lost out on countless career possibilities as he is Caucasian” (lines 15 & 16, paragraph 10).

Employment Equity relates as much to gender issues as it does race issues. The actual underpinning of employment equity is to bring about the situation in the workplace that racial and gender ‘representivity’ is attained. In reference to this she makes two comments, one ‘positive’ and one ‘negative’. She states that she, being female should actually be “more equitable for employment” (line 3, paragraph 10), and that her husband being a “Caucasian male” (line 16, paragraph 10) is due to this, not “politically correct enough” (lines 17 & 18, paragraph 10). She also makes it clear that although she feels that setting the past right is of severe importance, that “overcompensating” (line 13, paragraph 10) is only having a negative impact on the sphere of opportunity. Her statement of “looking for better job opportunities” (line 1, paragraph 10) and the sense that these are only possible outside of South Africa is given extra weight by her closing remark that her “fear is that [her husband] will never be correct ‘enough’ for the promotions needed to provide [their] family with financial security” (lines 18 & 19, paragraph 10).

The way in which her entire account is in reference to these two ‘reasons’, and the ‘personal involvement’ that she portrays them with, presents to her mind an overwhelming argument for emigration.

Summary of themes:

- Crime – This ‘forced’ itself across as a theme mainly through the sheer volume of content related to it. It reflected both ‘physical experiences’ that she was personally involved with, and ‘experienced meanings’ of both these personal experiences but also of a wide range of indirect experiences.
- Fear – This theme was very closely related to that of crime, and again I understood it to form a large part of the ‘experienced meaning’ relating to the theme of crime.
- The need for freedom – The sense of captivity and of being ‘under siege’ is one that is laid out fairly plainly, and the thought of emigration appears to be a search for opportunities that may free her from this captivity, that may set her free.
- Job security – This theme, like that of insecurity of the first participant, seems to discuss a few circumstances such as a lack of opportunity in the South African market, employment equity as it concerns gender and racial matters, and affirmative action.

#### 4.2.4 Analysis of participant 4’s account

The response of participant 4 was analysed and the following themes were extracted:

##### **Theme 1: Enjoying life**

It seems important to the participant that it is understood that she does and always has appreciated her life in South Africa. She tries to portray the sense of happiness that she has always experienced growing up in South Africa and how this experience has always led to a sense of home, a sense of future. She says that South Africa has always been the “only country that I had ever considered a future in” (line 4, paragraph 1). The type of lifestyle she always enjoyed was a ‘sheltered’ and protected one, as she describes that she is from a small conservative town. Her description of the ‘good old days’ is filled with reminiscence of good family times and fun with friends. She goes as far as saying that it was “the greatest way that a child could grow up” (lines 4 & 5, paragraph 2).

Problems were something that could be looked on as a nuisance, or something that could easily be taken in ones stride. They were never something that threatened the sense of security



that the participant seemed to have developed. The impression is given that the participant had started to develop a sense of invincibility by the time she left school.

This participant presents herself as a very confident person, and in this theme she comes across as a person who is willing and able to make her own decisions and to decide her own path. She appears to be a person who can take the advice of others yet who has the strength of character to be able to still follow her own heart and make her own decisions. She indicates this through going away to Pretoria for her tertiary studies even though her friends strongly encouraged her not to. In this strength of character however there also seems to be something of a 'rebellious streak' or a sense of the 'risk taker' as indicated through her decisions to live in a "really bad neighbourhood" (line 7, paragraph 3), and others that went against what she felt her parents and friends would approve of such as visiting friends in Soweto. As she says "if my parents knew half the things that I got up to then they would have had heart attacks" (lines 5 & 6, paragraph 4). She also indicates how her actions fall outside of the 'normal' or 'acceptable' through her statement that "[g]oing to Soweto was not the type of thing that an Afrikaans girl from Brits did" (lines 6 & 7, paragraph 4). She further strengthens this theme of 'going against the grain' by dating a black guy from Soweto and spending nights and weekends with him. She feels that her family and friends would never have been able to understand her actions.

It is evident in her account that she views herself as a sociable kind of person. This is depicted through her descriptions of the various friendships that she has developed and maintained over the years. The friends growing up in the small town, the flatmate and her boyfriend, the friends from Soweto, the old school friends, are all examples given that in a sense build the notion of her being a friendly, self-confident, outgoing individual who makes the best of situations and enjoys life.

## **Theme 2: Invincibility**

From her childhood days this participant was not exempt in a sense from negative experiences. She was aware that 'bad' things happen and experienced this firsthand in a sense through the stock theft and poaching that they experienced on their farm, or through their cars being broken into. She was also aware during her University days that things such as muggings and even worse can and did take place quite regularly. The understanding is provided that she was no stranger to negative experiences, or crime related experiences and that she was aware of the fact that such things could occur at any time. There is however a sense of invincibility that is portrayed in her telling of various scenarios. It seems to grow through the years as she describes the incidents that took place in her childhood to how she



essentially ‘placed herself’ in potentially dangerous situations but was never harmed in any way or directly affected by anything. Her living in a bad neighbourhood and never being affected, not being mugged, going into Soweto and not feeling unsafe, all appear to lend to her sense of invincibility. Even a situation that could have been seen as being of direct threat, where three men entered the room that she and her flatmate were sharing whilst in Europe and tried to get into bed with them, is explained away as being an ‘innocent’ mistake due to the men being under the influence of alcohol. In other words she removed the personal threat of the situation by explaining it away “they didn’t actually mean any harm” (lines 8 & 9, paragraph 5). In her telling of these experiences it is evident that she never really expected to be the immediate victim of something that could be of actual harm to her.

### **Theme 3: Vulnerability**

This all changed however quite suddenly and unexpectedly during a visit to her old school friends at their University in Potchefstroom. She tells of an incident in which she and a friend of hers were attacked by two men. Her friend was rendered unconscious by the one man and she was grabbed and pulled into the bushes by the other. The vividness with which she tells of this incident gives strong indication to how it has impacted on her, on how vulnerable she found herself to actually be.

During this experience she came to experience fear as she had never done in the past, a sense of helplessness comes to the fore through her statements “[t]here was nothing I could do” (line 9, paragraph 8), and “I couldn’t fight them off” (line 9, paragraph 8). The sense that she was powerless to influence what happened was overwhelming as indicated through her statements that “he did what he wanted to do... [and] ...they just did what they wanted to” (lines 8, 9 & 10, paragraph 8).

The nature and severity of this experience seems to have been sufficient, in and of itself, to destroy the sense of invincibility that seemed to have developed over the years. She found herself in this moment to be completely vulnerable, helpless and fearful.

It seems that the intention of this participant to emigrate is directly influenced by the experience that led to these emotional states. Said differently, it is the experienced meanings that she has formed through the physical experience of the incident that have immediately informed her thoughts on emigration. This is emphasised through her stating that “[s]ince the beginning of this year ... I have been getting more and more upset with what happened to me and have started feeling as though I should just get away from here completely and try and start over somewhere else” (lines 1, 2 & 3, paragraph 12).

#### **Theme 4: Betrayal**

The disbelief she experiences when thinking of what happened to her is particularly tangible. Through the account of her experiences the participant gives the impression that she comes from a family and, in a sense, culture where black people were not to be trusted. To support this understanding I refer to her comments that she had not felt ‘unsafe’ whilst visiting in Soweto as though that would be the expected, and that her parents would not have approved of these visits. She in fact outright states the concern that they have as she says that she “could not believe that after all those years listening to how black people were dangerous” (lines 1 & 2, paragraph 10).

That something of this nature would happen to her, and that it would not be black people that had been involved but rather her ‘own people’ was something that neither she nor anyone that she knew could have ever anticipated. After describing the experience discussed above the participant expresses her disbelief over the fact that the two men were Afrikaans. She states that all she could think of when she got back to her friends place was that “[t]hey were Afrikaans” (line 9, paragraph 9), and that “it was white Afrikaans guys that had done something like that” (lines 2 & 3, paragraph 10) to her. There is actually a distinct sense of betrayal in the way that she emphasises the fact, that they were Afrikaans, through the use of repetition.

A different sense of ‘betrayal’ is conjured when she discusses how the interactions between her and her boyfriend changed after this incident. It seems as though she reproaches herself for the way in which she forced her boyfriend to remain quiet about what had happened. It is though she feels that she has ‘betrayed’ him, as she states that she “could see that it hurt him to leave it” (line 9, paragraph 10). Furthermore, this seems to be compounded through her not being able to have him hold her, and by her need to push him and her friends away. The ultimate ‘betrayal’ as related to her boyfriend was her telling him to leave her alone. It is obvious in the way that she relates this, that she did not want to do this, but that she was not able to do anything to stop it from happening. Here the sense of ‘betrayal’ appears to come through as a ‘betrayal’ of her boyfriend and her friends, but also in a sense a ‘self-betrayal’ in that she did not want to do any of these things but ended up having to anyway. Another sense of ‘betrayal’ that comes to the fore is related to the fact that she had been dating a black man and had never told her parents because this was not something that “an Afrikaans girl from Brits did” (line 7, paragraph 4). Her fathers’ initial reaction tends to bolster this sense of betrayal in that he just kept quiet for a long time letting this “settle in with him” (line 1, paragraph 11) when she told him.

The final sense of ‘betrayal’ is in fact given in the opening line of the participant’s response through the statement “I actually hate the fact that I am even thinking about moving from South Africa” (lines 1 & 2, paragraph 1). She distinctly feels a sense of betrayal to her country because she is considering the thought of emigration. She indicates the depth to which she experiences this ‘betrayal’ by saying that South Africa is essentially “the only country that I have ever called home... [or] ...considered a future in” (lines 3 & 4, paragraph 1). This ‘final betrayal’ also initially gave rise to hurt with her parents, but they have come to accept that this may be a good thing for her to do in order to deal with the experienced meaning of what she has been through.

Even though each of these types of ‘betrayal’ seems to be evident, also evident is the hurt that they seem to have caused her. In her relating of these happenings, without her doing so directly, she is able to transmit the sadness and hurt that each evokes.

#### Summary of themes:

- Enjoying life – Growing up this participant had the opportunity of enjoying life and experiencing the good that life has to share without being too directly or too greatly impacted on by negative experiences. The friendships that she was able to build and maintain, the opportunities afforded to study where she wished to and the good fortune she had in managing to avoid any unpleasant experiences really lend to this theme.
- Invincibility – The fortune of not really experiencing any discomfort due to criminal acts or any other really unpleasant experiences seems to have led to a feeling of invincibility. In a sense she experienced that no matter what situation she put herself in she was ‘safe’ and this led to the belief that nothing bad would actually happen to her.
- Vulnerability – When something bad did actually happen to her, this sense of invincibility was replaced by a very strong sense of vulnerability. She came to experience fear, helplessness and powerlessness all in one foul incident leaving her feeling rather uncertain.
- Betrayal – This is a theme that comes across in a few different ways. With the perpetrators of what happened to her being of her own people the impression of her feeling betrayed is strongly portrayed through her repetition of this fact. Further feelings of betrayal seem to come to the fore concerning the way in which she dealt with her boyfriend and friends. These same actions almost seem to give rise to a sense of self-betrayal as well. The last impression of betrayal is provided through the

way in which she ‘confesses’ to her parents about the fact that she had been dating a black man, something supposedly not done where she comes from.

#### 4.2.5 Analysis of participant 5’s account

The response of participant 5 was analysed and the following themes were extracted.

##### **Theme 1: Disillusionment with leadership**

This participant states his distinct lack of trust in the leadership of South Africa by suggesting that his experience of it is that it is “like a dictatorship” (lines 3 & 4, paragraph 2). He uses words such as “meant to be” (lines 1 & 2, paragraph 2) in reference to the democracy of South Africa and the rainbow nation, whilst his experience is that the leadership of the country have always put themselves ahead of the needs of the country. He likens the current leadership and their approaches to the “old regime [that] created apartheid” (line 1, paragraph 3). He believes that the leadership through policies that they employ in fact create circumstances that are detrimental to the people of the country. He also believes that the ordinary person on the street is powerless to make any difference to how ‘their’ leadership actually go about their business. He says that his experience is that the “plain citizen on the street doesn’t have a voice” (line 8, paragraph 2). This indicates a very strong sense that the participant feels powerless to make a difference, or that he is given no opportunity of making a meaningful contribution to the state of his country. He appears to feel that South Africa, instead of moving forward, is repeating aspects of its history. Furthermore, he is concerned with the fact that not only is the ordinary person not able to do anything about it, but he also refers to the inability of the opposition parties to do anything positive. He acknowledges that the faults of the current regime are not quite as extensive as those implemented by the previous government but that there are still faults that leads to the sense that one needs to leave South Africa.

He appears to believe that many politicians currently in power are more interested in improving their own financial situation, or their own standard of living than what they are in actually leading the country and providing what is best for those that put them in power. He discusses how many make use of corrupt means in order to achieve these improved standards of living. He accuses them essentially of lining their own pockets whilst the state of the country leaves a great deal to be desired. He accuses them of failing to provide services for the people he seems to view as important. Two examples of these that can be provided here are, the inability for the state sponsored utility Eskom to provide necessary power for the population and the inability of the state to provide a formal public transport system that is

actually operable. He does discuss other factors in which he feels government are failing the people but these will be discussed as stand-alone themes due the way in which he discusses them, and the emphasis he places on these.

## **Theme 2: Financial security**

Within the theme of financial security various aspects appear to come to the fore. He discusses affirmative action, earning potential, buying potential and opportunity for the future as part of this theme.

Firstly he explains how the institution of apartheid led to circumstances in which the greater population were unable to provide financial security for their families due to the fact that they were unable to get sufficient education, to find work of any great import or to look after their families properly. He then describes how he views affirmative action as being very similar in nature in its end result, now only the impact is on the white people. He seems to understand that the intention of affirmative action or Employment Equity is in fact to create an ‘equal playing field’ where finding work is concerned, but his experience of it is something very different. He views the result as being the advancement of under skilled individuals of colour purely due to the fact that they are of colour. And as a result of this he finds that many white people who in fact do have the necessary skills are overlooked and even purposely kept out of work in order that a black person can be employed. He views this as actually leading to a situation that “seems to force people that are skilled out of South Africa” (lines 11 & 12, paragraph 3). He very explicitly claims that were such a situation to directly impact on his opportunity for advancement that it would be one of the greatest reasons for him to leave South Africa.

Beyond the possible impact of affirmative action is the issue of earning potential. He discusses personal experience as well as indirect experience where this is concerned. He is not happy with the fact that he is currently earning the same level of income that he earned whilst working in the UK a decade ago. This brings two factors in to play. The first is a personal experience of what earning potential is possible in a foreign country as opposed to his earning potential in South Africa. It also brings to light what he views as a major discrepancy that he was able to earn the same as what he is doing now without any qualifications at that stage as opposed to a 4 year qualification and 4 years of experience now. He states this by saying that “it seems as though in 10 years I have actually moved backwards financially” (line 5, paragraph 4). He further reflects on this issue of earning potential by raising the fact that he has friends in the UK that are “earning much higher income” (line 8, paragraph 4) than him

even though he holds better qualifications than they do. This seems to compound his sense of inadequacy as relating to his earning potential.

Besides this is the sense that his buying potential is greatly reduced in his current circumstances. The impression is created that he understands financial security as being greatly dependent on what one earns and what one is able to do with this earning. He reveals his concern in his comment that he is “really struggling to make ends meet” (line 6, paragraph 4). He reflects on how he is unable for all intents and purposes to fend for himself in that he cannot afford to even rent a flat by himself or buy a car, whilst his friends in the UK are able to buy property, to invest in a secure entity. He also reflects on the glaring difference between South Africa and the UK as concerning the ability of individuals to provide for their futures. He sees the inability of South African graduates to save for their futures and compares this to how anyone working in the UK is afforded this opportunity regardless of their qualifications or even skill levels. His thoughts concerning his future are put plainly in his statement that “it would be better ... for me to start from the beginning in another country” (line 15, paragraph 4).

### **Theme 3: HIV/AIDS**

The fact that the participant personalises HIV/AIDS through contemplating what its impact could be on himself, his family or his future children indicates that this concern is worthy of standing alone as a distinct theme. He in no way speculates what the effect of this might be, but instead his thoughts almost trail away as though the impact of this would be too ‘big’ or scary to think about. What he makes very plain is that he views the way in which the South African Government, and especially certain people in power, have approached the threat of HIV/AIDS as actually increasing the possibility of such fears coming to light. He almost goes as far as articulating that he believes that government have in fact worked against the medical profession and the people in relation to this health threat. He more or less implies that government has helped HIV/AIDS become the threat that it is in South Africa. He uses phrases such as “their hands are tied up by government” (lines 1 & 2, paragraph 7), and that “[d]ue to policies that the government have put into place” (lines 9 & 10, paragraph 7), to describe why the medical professions have not been able to combat the pandemic.

He further expresses his feelings surrounding this by saying that people in power have in fact put the general population and more so the uneducated at risk through statements that they have made in public forums. He refers to statements made by people as influential as the Health Minister, the previous President and even the current President that just compound the

situation. Again the implication is apparent that these individuals have assisted HIV/AIDS by misinforming the uneducated population of South Africa.

#### **Theme 4: Crime**

Yet another concern that relates to his disillusionment with government but that is emphasised sufficiently to stand alone is that of crime. This emphasis is given through the manner in which he words the section on crime, through his repetitive reference to “you”. Further emphasis is provided by the clear statement that the crime rate in South Africa is one of the highest in the world, and how it “affects South Africans on so many levels” (line 2, paragraph 9). Although he has never been the direct victim of any criminal activity it is apparent that the impact of crime is experienced in a very direct way. He experiences it in such a way that he views himself as not being “safe from crime” in any environment, and that it actually leads to abnormal behaviour and invades every sphere of life.

He views criminals as having very little respect for human life, or, that they give very little value to it being willing to “[kill] people for their cell phone ... [or] so that they can take your TV and a few bottles of alcohol” (lines 1 & 2, paragraph 10). What he seems to deem as being even worse is the fact that the very same people that are meant to be protecting the people are in cahoots with the criminals. He states that South Africa seems to be a country where “the police are often part of the problem when it comes to crime” (lines 3 & 4, paragraph 9). His view of the police is a very negative one and as such reflects back on the government as “failing badly in dealing with crime” (line 1, paragraph 9). Again in his closing statements concerning crime he reflects how emigration and removing himself from the situation could potentially be of benefit.

#### **Theme 5: The future**

This theme is reflected upon primarily because it is a constant in his response. In relation to almost every aspect of his response the participant reflects on what the future may hold concerning that factor. He reflects on the political future by saying that he does not see any change taking place in the near future. He reflects that a future in another country may hold better opportunities for him with regard to his work situation and as related his financial security. He refers to his concerns for the future capability of government to cater to the transport needs surrounding the World Cup Soccer. He reflects on what the future holds on the subject of HIV/AIDS and how this might impact on him and his current and future family. He reflects on a future in which safety is less of a concern. In the end he reflects on a future that involves him getting married and having children and how he wants to provide the same opportunities afforded him as a child. Opportunities of freedom, of being able to play care



free, of being able to go to school and of not having to live in fear and all of these reflections leave him thinking that the future must find him elsewhere, in a different country.

Summary of themes:

- Disillusionment with Leadership – The greater part of this response concerns itself with a sense of disillusionment with leadership and how instead of creating a country that one is proud to live in the leadership are negatively involved in everything that is not right with the country.
- Financial Security – This theme concerns itself with factors such as affirmative action, earning potential and buying potential, which lend to a sense of a lack of financial security. The participant describes his circumstances as being greatly less than what he would want them to be especially when compared to what he believes he would be afforded were he in another country.
- HIV/AIDS – This as a theme reflects the participants concern that this is a threat beyond the capabilities of the medical health professionals to control. The participant believes this is even more so the case, due to governments' ineffectual policies and apparent disregard for the gravity of the situation.
- Crime – Although never directly affected by crime it appears that the participant is definitely impacted upon by crime. He sees criminals as having no regard for the value of human life and the police as aiding the criminals in their endeavours. His analysis of the situation is that it would be better to be somewhere else.
- The future – His concern regarding the future almost runs as a golden thread throughout the response. The impression is created and stated in the end that the only hope for a real future is to create that future in another country.

It is important to reiterate at this stage that the above analysis is the result of repetitive immersion and constant comparison to the original responses. Thus the essence of the experiences discussed has been portrayed as the researcher has come to understand them. Through the reflection of actual statements made by the participants the researcher has attempted to provide grounding for the analysis, consequently lending to the trustworthiness thereof.



## Chapter 5: Discussion and conclusion

This chapter serves to summarise the analysis of the participants' responses and to discuss it in terms of existing literature and theoretical approaches. This chapter also provides an indication of the limitations observed during the process of this study and possible recommendations of how these results can be used and to reflect on the phenomenon discussed.

### 5.1 Summary

For the content of this report, the author will compare the responses of the five respondents in order to attempt to identify whether there are any 'physical experiences' to which the participants have responded. He will also try to compare the 'experienced meanings' where possible in order to identify commonalities, which may provide a better understanding of the reasons for respondents wanting to emigrate. The following themes were found to be common amongst the respondents.

**Fear** – Of all the themes that were discussed by the various respondents the theme of fear is probably the most dominant, seemingly all encompassing. The apparent reason for this is that fear comes to the fore as the most commonly experienced meaning as related to a number of contexts that the participants describe in their responses. In other words, the various scenarios that the participants may have observed or experienced predominantly contributed to the experience of fear. Whether the experiences were related to violence, crime, the economy, job opportunities, the future of family and children, all seem to result in a sense of fear.

The simple pervasiveness of this theme makes it difficult to believe that any other theme is more influential in the decision making processes of the participants as concerning emigration. On the other hand however, the experience of fear appears to be completely dependent on the experience of these other factors mentioned above. Therefore fear will be discussed as it relates to the other themes that revealed themselves.

**Crime** – In the broadest context crime features as one of the leading factors that all of the participants have had some degree of contact with. Some have shared very specific experiences of crime whilst others have been less direct in their descriptions. Whether involved in the context of crime as primary victims or vicariously, each of the respondents share this as an experience that has weighed heavily in their decision making process. It is however the experienced meaning that each has shared that brings to the fore the actual

impact that crime has. Fear essentially sums up the experienced meaning of each respondent, but how this fear is portrayed is slightly different for each.

Fear therefore appears to be an overwhelming perception or experienced meaning that is formed based on the physical experience of criminal acts. The factors that appear to be involved in the development of this experienced meaning are the following:

- Proximity to the crime
- Intensity of the experience
- Degree of exposure
- The type of crime

As discussed in the literature study, the ‘proximity’ to the crime seems to have limited influence on the formation of this experienced meaning, except perhaps for the level of intensity thereof. Sometimes however the intensity can be amplified not by proximity but rather by the mind of the individual (Stanfeld, 2002). Furthermore, the volume of exposure to criminal acts is also to a certain degree a factor to be considered in the development of this experienced meaning of fear. Again, as in the case of proximity, there is no absolute correlation between the two but it does seem to carry some sway in the matter. Hyper vigilance appears to be the end result in most cases even if the majority of the experiences mentioned were indirect. It in fact appears that repetitive exposure has more relevance than whether the experience is direct or indirect (Johnston *et al.*, 1997).

It is also apparent that the type of crime has direct bearing on the development of the experienced meanings surrounding the physical experience of crime. As discussed in chapter two, violent crime is seen to exert a much greater impact on individuals, regardless of proximity, than other forms of crime such as theft (Brokensha, 2004).

Crime also evoked a sense of a lack of control. It seems as though their understanding of crime is that one has little control over what will happen, when it might happen and who it will happen to. Also involved here is a sense of ‘loss of control’ in the instances where the individuals were directly impacted on by crime.

**Victimization** - The different participants express their experience of victimization differently, some explicit in their use of the word others insinuating the experience. It is found in relation to, crime, violence, affirmative action, and government policies, amongst other

factors. The participants relate to a variety of these contexts, most indicating that they ‘fear falling victim to’ or ‘fear being victimized’.

The word victimization expresses this sense of ‘loss of control’ mentioned above. It expresses the sense that choice has been removed, that a situation is forced on one without any means of avoiding it or any real recourse available to the person involved. The ability to have any influence on how a situation or context of this nature plays itself out appears to be removed from the individual involved leaving them powerless or helpless to change their circumstances.

The experiences that each of the respondents may link with victimization are in some cases very different from one another whilst in other instances they hold more commonality. Most however, indicate their experience of this in a very individual manner discussing it from a very ‘self-centred’ position in order to communicate the very personal impact such a theme has in their lives. Participant two however conveys the context as being so much more pervasive than this. His experience of victimization is that it is a South African context in itself. He discusses victimization as do the others from a personal perspective but then widens this perspective to include the entire country as experiencing this theme. As discussed in the theme of crime, ‘proximity’ to the experiences does not directly influence the extent to which they experience it.

**Economic Instability** – This is another factor that almost all of the respondents have discussed though each has referred to it in different ways and from different perspectives. Concerns such as living standards and costs, as well as affirmative action, are identified by most of the participants, whilst other concerns such as devaluation of currency, earning potential and buying potential as well as some politically related concerns were brought to the fore.

It appears as though the participants are in agreement regarding the impact of affirmative action on young white South Africans. They tend to portray fear through the belief that affirmative action has, and will lead to, circumstances in which it will be difficult as a white person, and particularly a white male to find meaningful and ‘qualification-related’ work. Those that have made reference to affirmative action in their responses all make mention of having been impacted upon, at least indirectly by this. The result appears to be the understanding that if individuals that are qualified, and in many instances experienced, are struggling to find gainful employment due to the colour of their skin, then it is likely that better opportunity may exist in other countries.

These responses tend to echo the sentiments discussed by de Chaud and Thompson (2001) concerning the impression that white individuals and especially white males tend to lose out on work opportunities and therefore financial security or growth due to the policy of black economic empowerment. They echo the disquiet discussed by Motileng (2004) surrounding the theory of affirmative action as a tool to eliminate discrimination, and the experienced reality thereof, of discrimination towards white people.

Related to the response of participant 2 is the understanding that even an entrepreneurial effort is not safe from the impact of the policy of black economic empowerment which requires black partnerships. This situation leaves him and his family with very little sense of economic security.

Living Standards and the directly related cost of living are also viewed as having a great impact on the sense of economic instability. The concerns raised by the participants range from, experiences in neighbouring Zimbabwe where these factors saw a rapid decline and the fear of the same occurring in South Africa, to the basic view that the money one earns just does not stretch as far as it used to forcing a decline in standard of living. Related to this factor is the devaluation of currency and the fear that the situation in Zimbabwe will repeat itself in South Africa. Furthermore the hope was expressed that the higher salaries earned in other Western countries will nullify the higher cost of living.

Economic instability was also related to a lack of confidence in political leadership in the whole of South Africa. The predominant reason for this factor to be included in the economic instability theme is the direct impact that government decision and policy or even just the actions of individual politicians can and do have on the stability of the currency and the performance of the economy. As suggested by Crush *et al.*, (2000) skilled individuals tend to be more responsive to such factors mainly due to the fact that they are in position to remove themselves from these. They have the capacity to make decisions about their environment.

In contrast to the other participants' responses, participant 4's reaction was influenced mostly by one experience rather than the accumulation of events that have led to the serious consideration of emigration. However, as discussed in the literature study the severity of a single incident can bring an individual to a breakpoint as easily as repetitive exposure to stressful or traumatic events.

Through all of the accounts provided by the participants, the theory discussed concerning decision making processes is reflected fairly accurately and is in a sense then affirmed. They attest to the Ripple Effect Model's (<http://www.authorstream.com/Presentation/Renzo-39945-Shattered-Assumptions-Broken-Lives-Andrew-Davies-assum-Education-ppt-powerpoint/>) position that 'proximity' to an incident does influence the impact experienced, but it does not necessarily have a direct correlation, as it does happen on many occasions that the worst impacted upon is one further removed from the actual incident. This again relates to Stansfeld's (2002) postulation that it is not always the incident that leads to the stress reaction but on occasion it is but the perception or way in which the individuals process the information that leads to the reaction. These theories can be related to the manner in which almost all of the respondents discuss a majority of experiences that have influenced their decision making from a position of having not been directly involved or of 'indirect' impact. The fact that several of the participants also make reference to the pervasive nature of some factors such as crime also lends credence to the suggestion that the constant exposure to such may lead to a sense of being overwhelmed by them leading to a state of traumatic stress or hyper vigilance in many cases (Brewin *et al.*, 2003).

Some of these participants appear to have fallen into the 'trap' of making their decisions concerning emigration based on 'one-sided' or biased information as discussed by Johnston *et al.* (1997) and Keinan (1987), which as they explain is often the case whilst in a state of hyper vigilance. Only two of the participants appear to have been able to take into consideration a broad spectrum of possible factors and eventualities whilst considering their futures.

As suggested above, it appears as though the experienced meaning of fear is established through these responses as the leading factor for the consideration of emigration as a means of improving their lived experience. This sense of fear is pervasive, found in relation to a broad variety of concerns and in some cases is more a result of their interpretation of the situation than as a direct result of an incident. This then means that its potential to impact on a persons' ability to make 'vigilant' decisions is so much more inhibiting. As a result of the variety of concerns that it finds itself in relation with, it is also potentially the most difficult factor to contend with in order for this trend of emigration to be curbed.

## **5.2 Limitations**

Like in all research, the methodology used influenced the results. This study was done using a phenomenological approach and qualitative research methods with the aim of understanding the phenomenon and the experience related from the perspective of the individuals involved. If the same question was posed through a different methodology it may have provided

different information. Furthermore, the nature of interpretation means that it is possible for different individuals to reach different conclusions based on the same data. Therefore, in order to increase the trustworthiness of the results the researcher had to repetitively immerse himself in the data provided by the participants. This occurred over a period of several months in an attempt to test the interpretations attained to be sure that they remained consistent.

The use of written responses versus verbal responses held both benefits and challenges to this process. The fact that the responses were already in writing meant that the possibility of mistakes being made during transcription or details being altered was cancelled out. Beyond this however, it provided the participants the opportunity to interpret the research question as they wished to have time to think about their experiences, and to respond with a single, flowing account of their experiences. This freedom enriched the process in that, what was discussed in their responses was wholly theirs, without any imposition through probing questions or any other external influence. It provided them the opportunity to dwell on experiences for as long or short as they deemed necessary, which in itself provided insight to the importance and extent to which that experience held meaning for the participant.

Whilst providing for a very 'direct' response from each participant this form of data gathering may have allowed for relatively 'thin' descriptions or put another way, description that lacked richness at times. There may have been potential in a verbal interview to delve deeper into the various experiences, and the related 'experienced meanings' that the participants shared. With a more detailed or fuller story their 'experienced meanings' may have been clearer and understanding more easily attained. The risk of this as has been alluded to, is the opportunity for the researcher to influence the extent to which a participant discusses any one experience. This may skew the importance with which the participant actually viewed that experience.

It must also be noted that although each participant has had the opportunity to read through the analysis of their response and agreed that it was an accurate interpretation, the responses were interpreted from the perspective of the researcher. The experiences of the researchers thus played an important role in the interpretations and the potential remains for other interpretations to be formed.

It is possible that if more participants were included in the study that further experienced meanings may have emerged, which might have provided a broader 'knowledge' of the experiences that tend to fuel the brain drain phenomenon. Related to this point, the experiences described may have been different if the participants were of a diverse race

group, age group, and had different levels of training or social-economic status. Furthermore, the fact that the focus of the study was young graduates may have restricted the variety of experiences described. Perhaps, if the study had a broader focus and had included older participants, again the experiences described may have varied in nature.

If a study taking the limitations described above were done and a greater variety of experiences were to be unveiled, it could be of benefit to follow this up with a quantitative study making use of a questionnaire that allows participants to indicate from a list of identified themes which experiences have led to their interest in emigration. Such a study could provide a much broader understanding of the perceived concerns that people have.

All of these limitations allow scope for other studies of a similar nature to be conducted, with slight differences, which could further enrich the voice of psychology on the topic of emigration and the brain drain phenomenon. Studies that make use of other forms of methodology, even if they might alter the focus of the question somewhat, would further be able to bolster this voice and provide a fuller basis of knowledge which could ultimately lead to changes in policy or political stance.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

The data attained from this study first and foremost adds to the voice of concern surrounding the phenomenon of emigration. As suggested in the first chapter, perhaps such studies could provide insight into the phenomenon of emigration and encourage government action in an attempt to make remaining in South Africa a more attractive prospect.

What this study does is provide a 'personal' voice to the experiences that are affecting South Africans and that are leading to emigration. It provides context that the individual reader can relate to and respond to and discusses the phenomenon of emigration in such a manner that is relevant and accessible.

Furthermore, a study of this nature may encourage further studies to take place. These could potentially look more deeply into, reasons given for emigration; accurate figures concerning emigration and skills loss; the impact of lost skills on different industries, or the economy as a whole; the factors that encourage immigration, and so forth.

If studies making use of alternative methodologies, methods of data collection and analysis were to take place it would enrich understanding of how different people understand and respond to experiences, what factors play a role in determining these understandings and

therefore essentially broaden the knowledge concerning human nature or what it means to be human.

#### **5.4 Reflection**

The research was done to understand what it is that actually ‘pushes’ someone to want to leave all that they know, and to start a whole new life somewhere else. The literature that has been perused in connection with the phenomenon of leaving South Africa reveals ‘reasons’ for leaving. These reasons tend to describe circumstances or physical experiences predominantly. They discuss issues such as rising cost of living, lack of security, poor service delivery (Crush *et al*, 2000), the effects of a policy of affirmative action (van Rooyen, 2000) and high levels of crime (Brokensha, 2004; van Rooyen, 2000). It is these same issues that are regularly read about in the newspapers or seen on the news. These same issues were expected to be found in the accounts of the participants, and at face value, are described in their accounts.

As the responses were read and the author immersed himself in the experiences of the participants (Woolfe & Dryden, 1996), it became clear that these issues were, in a sense, physical occurrences that led to the experiences that have been laid out as themes in this study.

It emerged that it is not always physical experiences that directly lead to the belief that emigration is the only viable option available. So many South Africans are exposed to the same phenomena yet their ‘experiences’ of these phenomena may differ, and the way in which they then describe their ‘experience’ reflects these differences. The author has come to the understanding through this study, that it is the perceptions formed, or the ‘experienced meaning’ of a phenomenon that are leading individuals to make decisions that perpetuate the ‘exodus’ (van Rooyen, 2000) of young ‘skilled’ adults from our country’s borders, rather than specific physical experiences.

Unless the ‘physical experiences’ and the related ‘experienced meanings’ that result in emigration being considered are identified, the outward flow of these skills cannot be stemmed. Even if, in the long run, these experiences and ‘experienced meanings’ can be identified, it may be possible that the damage is done, that a total recovery to full potential may not be possible.

This topic of emigration and skill loss is, and will remain, a topic of interest in the minds of South Africans. Unless we are able to understand it and address the concerns, physical or



perceived, there is the potential for this phenomenon to continue growing with potential devastating impact on the economy, service delivery and development of the country.

South Africans perhaps need to, instead of discussing opportunities to emigrate, discuss these ‘common’ experiences and the, so often, varying related meanings formed, in order that different outcomes to these experiences may be sought.

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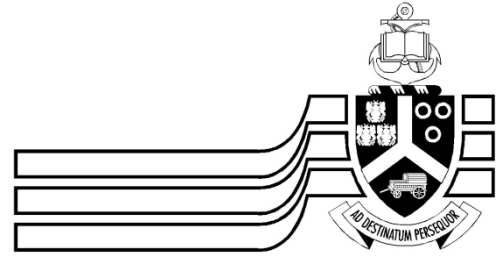
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## APPENDIX A



University of Pretoria

Pretoria 0002 Tel (012) 4204111

Faculty of Arts

1/6/2010

## **INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH**

Hereby I invite you to participate in the following research project conducted by David Thompson at the University of Pretoria.

### THE RESEARCH GOAL:

To explore the experiences that appears to be leading to the serious consideration of emigration as a possibility amongst young adults.

### RELEVANCE OF STUDY:

To gain insight into the experiences that lead young adults to seriously consider emigration as an option in their future planning, in order to better understand the dynamics behind the 'brain drain' phenomenon.

### WHAT IS REQUIRED OF THE PARTICIPANTS?

Participants will be asked to write an essay on their experiences in response to an open ended question. This will require open mindedness, and a willingness to share their related experiences.



PLEASE NOTE:

- Participation is voluntary and you may decide to withdraw at any time during the research process.
- All information will be treated as confidential and no data will be shared outside of the research context. If it is necessary to provide this information to anyone, the participants' written consent will be requested.
- Anonymity of the participants will be assured, as the researcher will not make use of real names, rather nom de plume's or letters will be used if necessary.
- Research results will be published in the format of a research report without identification of the participants.
- Research participants can have access to the final report if they so choose.
- After the research has been completed, research data will be destroyed.
- It is not foreseen that participation in this research will be harmful to the participants in any way.

Any questions are to be directed to: David Thompson - 082 560 4554

Professor Maretha Visser – (012) 420 2549



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA  
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## APPENDIX B



Pretoria 0002 Tel (012) 4204111

1/6/2010

Faculty of Arts

## LETTER OF CONSENT

I, .....

hereby acknowledge that I have been informed of the content and the procedure of the research being conducted by David Peter Thompson, at the University of Pretoria. I understand the scope of the research and could ask the researcher to clarify any questions I had. I understand that all information will be treated as confidential and that no data will be shared outside of the research context. The research context consists of the researcher and a supervising psychologist at the University of Pretoria. I understand the goals of the research and have been informed that I will have access to the final product of this research, if I choose so. I understand that my identity will remain anonymous. I have the right to withdraw from the project at any time.

I agree to participate in this research on a voluntary basis.



This document was signed on this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ at  
\_\_\_\_\_.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

ID Number: \_\_\_\_\_