

**BRAIN DRAIN AND BRAIN CIRCULATION: A STUDY OF SOUTH  
AFRICANS IN THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES.**

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M. Phil. in Social Science Methods  
at the University of Stellenbosch**

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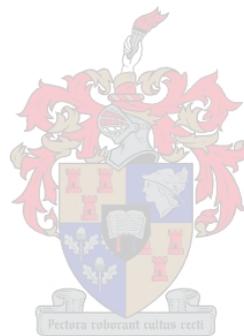
## DECLARATION

I, the undersigned hereby declare that the work contained in this thesis is my own original work and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it at any university for a degree.

**Signature**

10/03/2006

**Date**



## ABSTRACT

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Human resources are one of the most valuable assets of any country's economy. Countries invest millions in the education and development of their citizens to improve knowledge, skills and productivity that will sustain and enhance their economic growth. Previously governments regarded money spent on education and training of its current and potential workforce as a 'safe' investment, but the situation has changed drastically in the past 50 years. Today, many highly skilled professionals are leaving their native country to work and live in another.

In South Africa skills migration and especially the brain drain phenomenon, has made headlines in the media since the early 1970s and is still a hot topic today. South Africa's skills migration is typical of a brain drain in the truest sense. This study aims to analyse the skills migration flow of South Africans to the UAE by collecting data via a web-based survey. The main research problem focused on who the South Africans living and working in the UAE are (demographic statistics) and their motivating reasons / causal factors for leaving South Africa and moving to UAE.

Results indicate the South Africans in the United Arab Emirates are a highly skilled, educated, professional, cosmopolitan and mobile group. Although there is evidence pointing to some of these skilled migrants returning home (a brain circulation movement), unfortunately many might not return until specific socio-economic conditions are addressed in South Africa and will therefore form part of the South African brain drain.

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## OPSOMMING

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Menslike hulpbronne is van die waardevolste bates in terme van 'n land se ekonomie. Lande belê miljoene in die opvoeding en ontwikkeling van hulle burgers om hulle kennis en vaardighede te ontwikkel en produktiwiteit te stimuleer. Regerings het voorheen hierdie geld; wat gespandeer word op opvoeding en ontwikkeling op hul huidige en toekomstige burgers as 'n veilige belgging gesien, maar die situasie het dramaties verander gedurende die laaste 50 jaar. Vandag verlaat verskeie goed opgeleide professionele persone hul land van herkoms en gaan werk en woon in 'n ander.

In Suid Afrika het die migrasie van vaardighede en spesifiek die “brein dreinerings” tot hoofopskrifte in die media gelei, vanaf die vroeë 1970's en is vandag nog 'n onderwerp van belang. Suid Afrika se migrasie van vaardighede vorm definitief 'n breindrein patroon. Hierdie studie ondersoek die migrasie van professionele of opgeleide Suid Afrikaners na die Verenigde Arabiese Emirate toe te bestudeer deur data in te samel deur middel van 'n webwerf vraelys. Die hoof navorsingsprobleem fokus op die demografiese faktore van hierdie Suid Afrikaners, en wat is hulle redes om Suid Afrika te verlaat en na die Verenigde Arabiese Emirate toe te verhuis.

Die resultate dui aan dat die Suid Afrikaners wel hoog opgelei, goed gekwalifiseer, professioneel, kosmopolitaans en mobiel is. Alhoewel daar bewys is van sommige van hierdie Suid Afrikaners wat permanent sal terugkeer ('n brein sirkulasie beweging), wil dit voorkom asof meeste van die respondente nie sal terugkeer voordat sekere sosio-ekonomiese faktore opgelos word in Suid Afrika nie.

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## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

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BBC: British Broadcasting Cooperation  
CEE: Central Eastern Europe  
Cosatu: Congress of SA Trade Unions  
CSS: Central Statistical Service  
DRC: Democratic Republic of Congo  
ECA: The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa  
EU: European Union  
HDI: Human Development Index  
HSP: Highly Skilled Personnel  
HSRC: Higher Scientific Research Council  
IMF: International Monetary Fund  
IOM: The International Organisation of Migration, a UN body  
IT: Information technology  
Nacoss: National Coalition for Social Services  
NRF: National Research Foundation  
OECD: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development  
PTK: Professional, technical and kindred workers  
SA: South Africa  
SADC: South African Development Community  
Sama: South African Medical Association  
SAMP: South African Migration Project  
SANSA: The South African Network of Skills Abroad programme  
SSA: South African statistics  
UAE: United Arab Emirates  
UCT: University of Cape Town  
UK: United Kingdom  
UN: The United Nations Organisation  
Unctad: UN Conference on Trade & Development  
UNDP: United Nations Development Programme  
Unisa: University of South Africa  
USA: United States of America

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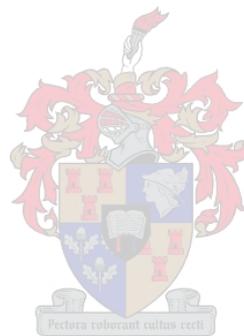
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# Chapter 1

## Orientation

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### 1.1 Introduction

Human resources are one of the most valuable assets of any country's economy. Countries invest millions in the education and development of their citizens to improve knowledge, skills and productivity that will sustain and enhance their economic growth. Previously governments regarded money spent on education and training of its current and potential workforce as a 'safe' investment, but the situation has changed drastically in the past 50 years. Today, many highly skilled professionals are leaving their native country to work and live in another. This migration of skills has increased in recent years and shows no indication of slowing down (Todisco, 2004).

In a "normal" society where the natural rate of growth is determined exclusively by births and deaths, it takes approximately 6 years for a child to reach school age, approximately 20 years for the child (now an adult) to enter the world of employment, approximately 25 years for the child to get married, approximately 60 years to reach retirement and approximately 75 years to die. The precise age of an individual when any of these life events occurs, if it occurs, will vary, but broadly speaking the rhythms and the course of an individual's life will conform to the pattern described. Whereas certain changes to the pattern will take place over the course of years, the phases of the life cycle are hysteretic. That is to say, changes to the general rhythm occur gradually enough to allow us to make a reasonably good estimate of what the population of schoolchildren, newlyweds, workers and pensioners will be at any given time. We are thus in a position to adapt our educational policies, pension systems and so on accordingly. Migration, however, has the potential to alter and even overwhelm the predictable regularity of the generational processes. In a brief interval of time, a migratory flow can bring about a shift in the population dynamics both of the country of origin and the country of destination. A sharp rise in the number of immigrants can suddenly swell the number of schoolchildren or workers and, occasionally, even the number of pensioners in the receiving country. The country of origin will experience precisely the opposite effect, and, depending on the form of emigration, experience a corresponding drop in the number of schoolchildren, workers, newlyweds or pensioners

(Todisco, 2004). It is clear from the above that migration can have serious consequences for the country of origin as well as the receiving / host country.

In South Africa skills migration and especially the brain drain phenomenon, has made headlines in the media since the early 1970s and is still a hot topic today. South Africa's skills migration is typical of a brain drain in the truest sense. Highly skilled professionals more often than not choose to migrate from a developing country to developed countries around the globe.

Due to a good bi-lateral relationship between South Africa and the United Arab Emirates, the advantage of no tax duties and other socio-economic reasons, Dubai and the UAE is fast becoming one of the top destinations for South Africans wanting to live and work overseas.

## **1.2 Background to the research problem**

Migration is a mutable phenomenon and open to cultural interpretation. It cannot be meaningfully analysed without reference to a whole host of considerations relating to the emigrant's country of origin and chosen destination country, the culture of the original and host country, the individual, familial, social and political forces that prompted migration, the policies that have been put in place to stem immigration flows etc (Todisco, 2004). This study aims to analyse the migration flow of South Africans to the UAE by referring to these and other considerations. The aim of this study is not to compare the skills migration of South Africans to the UAE with SA skills migration to other countries, but rather to focus on this specific case study – skilled South Africans living and working in the UAE.

Main research problem:

Who are the South Africans living and working in the UAE (demographic statistics)?

Sub research problems:

- What are the motivations for leaving South Africa?
- What are the motivations for moving to the UAE?
- What adaptation problems do South Africans in the UAE experience?

- What existing links do South Africans in the UAE still have with South Africa and what would motivate them to return?
- Do these South Africans form part of an international workforce, i.e. do they live and work in several countries abroad of which the UAE is only one?

The basic data gathered in this study could be useful for future studies. The main research problem focuses on whom the South Africans living and working in the UAE are (demographic statistics) and their reasons / causal factors for leaving South Africa and moving to UAE.

### **1.3 Motivation behind the study**

The United Arab Emirates differ from the more traditional host countries for the brain drain and brain circulation movement of South Africans, for example:

- The United Arab Emirates is located in the Middle East – a predominantly Arab speaking continent vs. Europe, Australasia and the Americas where English is widely spoken.
- The United Arab Emirates is a Muslim country vs. Europe, Australasia and the Americas where the predominant religions are Christian based.
- The United Arab Emirates is ruled by a royal family and not a democratic government like most Western countries.
- The UAE is a very young country especially vs. other destination countries like Great Britain.

The above-mentioned facts illustrate the differences between the UAE and the more traditional host countries for the brain drain and brain circulation movement of South Africans, and therefore warrant research to be done on the brain circulation pattern of South Africans living and working in the UAE. The researcher moved to Dubai at the end of October 2003 and thus forms part of this brain circulation movement of South Africans to the UAE. As (to my knowledge) no prior research has been done on the brain drain and/ or brain circulation of South Africans in the UAE, this put the researcher at a convenient vantage point to do primary research on this topic and contribute to the body of knowledge on brain drain and brain circulation.

Most African countries, and in particular South Africa, are affected by both brain drain and brain circulation, but this is the continent where the least academic research has been done on these phenomena (Gaillard, & Gaillard, 1997). Most of the research

available on this subject has been done on the migration of skills to Great Britain, the United States of America, Canada, Australia and Europe. The results of this study could help gain new insight into this phenomenon and add to the body of knowledge on skills migration in the Middle East.

Furthermore Crush and Williams (2001) point out that official South African statistics don't include a skills profile of emigrants. A skills profile of emigrants is an important determinant of the impact on a country and its economy, according to Kaplan (2000). This research could shed some light on the demographics, including the occupational type, race and age of the South Africans in the UAE and provide us with a better understanding of whom these South Africans are and why they migrate. The research data collected, could lead to further studies that can be done to establish the impact of the brain drain or brain circulation of these South Africans in the UAE on the South African economy when they left as well as the foreseeable impact on the South African economy upon their return.

The results of this study can also be used to give prospective emigrants from South Africa a better indication of prospective difficulties that will be faced in the UAE. The results could also benefit support groups for South Africans in the UAE for example the South African Group in Dubai / <http://www.sagroubdubai.com>, the South African Business Group in Dubai, the Interdenominational church and the South African Embassy. With the information generated by this research, better support can be provided for South Africans intending to move and those already living and working in the UAE.

#### **1.4 Outline of remainder of the thesis**

A brief outline of the remainder of the thesis is given below:

Chapter 2 gives an international overview of the brain drain and brain circulation phenomena. The main factors contributing to international skills migration are discussed and examples of skills migration are provided globally.

Chapter 3 discusses brain drain and brain circulation within the South African context. This section analyses the South African skills migration by identifying characteristics of the demographics of South African skilled emigrants, the implications of the skills

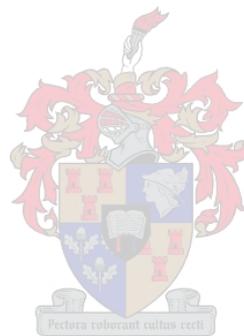
migration, the push and pull factors involved in this process as well as measures taken to contain the South African brain drain.

Chapter 4 focuses on the UAE as a receiving country of South African skills. A broad overview of the country is given and concludes with a section of why the UAE differs from other receiving developed receiving countries globally.

Chapter 5 discusses the methodology and research design of the study. The target population, sampling design, and survey tool is presented. This chapter concludes with the results of the analysis of the survey data.

Chapter 6 is devoted to the conclusions and recommendations of the study.

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## Chapter 2

### Brain drain and brain circulation: an international overview

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#### 2.1 Introduction

Brain drain discussions have largely been based on human capital theory (Psacharopoulos & Hinchliffe, 1973). Skill migration tends to be viewed from the perspective of a return to education and as a permanent loss of human capital to countries of origin. From the policy-making standpoint, the political nature of skills migration makes it an agenda item for national governments and those dealing with international relations. (Cao, 1996). It has been characterised as wealthy countries appropriating some of the best of the poor countries' high-level manpower, the very resource on which their continuing economic progress depends (CIMT, 1970). It has been accused of dividing the world into the human-resource-rich and the human-resource-poor, and has been seen as a threat to international integration (Benchofer, 1969; Oldham, 1969; CIMT, 1970; Grubel & Scott, 1977).

#### 2.2 Migration and skills migration defined

Todisco, (2004) identifies two migration movements: economic and non-economic. The economic driven migration includes movements connected with employment, both the present work activity and a new one. The non-economic group includes all migrations connected with non-work issues, such as family reunions, hospitalisations, refugees, prisoners, pensioners and elective residences.

Economic migrations can be divided into two categories: mass migration and skills migration. Mass migration involves people who are poorly educated or uneducated and lacking specific skills and whose impulse to migrate are the result of factors in the place of origin, rather than factors in the place of destination. These migrants are acting out of desperation and usually seek only to survive and will accept any work. Their plans are sketchy, though they usually treasure the idea of returning to the home country someday. The social burden that these immigrants impose on a local community can be sizeable. The local community has to deal with the problem of providing accommodation, schooling, health care, pensions and transportation for the foreign arrivals. In addition to the material burdens, social tensions can arise as immigrants often find themselves drawn into micro-criminal activities and organised crime.

In many respects, skills migration is the mirror image of mass migration. It does not involve large number of people, the migrants have medium to high or very high qualifications and the migratory project is clearly identified. The period abroad is usually temporary and proportionately far fewer migrants end up becoming permanent residents in the host country. The skills migrants do not cause social tensions because they often arrive with a pre-arranged job and are therefore not desperately seeking work. They have enough money to pay for essential services (accommodation, health care, welfare contributions, schooling etc) for themselves and their families. These migrants are more likely than the unskilled to travel with their entire family. Integration with the local community is usually straightforward because the migrants tend to be the sort of people who know how to communicate with others. As their economic autonomy means that they place little or no social burden on the host country's community, they are less visible socially and less likely to give rise to forms of rejections or racism than the unskilled who arrive as part of a mass influx.

### **2.3 Brain drain, brain circulation and brain gain defined**

According to Ikubolajeh Bernard Logan (Abedian, 2001), brain drain refers to process (es) by which a country loses trained experts of the group "professional, technical and kindred" workers (PTKs) to another or other countries. The United Nations Organisation (UN) defines brain drain as a one-way movement of highly skilled people from developing to the developed countries that only benefits the industrialised or host countries. However a brain drain can also take place between two developing or two developed countries. In fact, the British Royal Society coined the term "brain drain" to describe the outflow of scientists to the United States and Canada in the 1950s and early 1960s.

For the purpose of this study the South African brain drain will refer to tertiary educated or skilled South African professionals leaving South Africa for another country with the intention of moving there permanently.

Skills migration not only includes brain drain but also brain circulation. Brain circulation refers to professionals leaving their home country to work and live in another country, but who return permanently to their home country at some point in time.

Whereas the brain drain pattern only benefits the receiving country (in other words the country to which the skilled worker is emigrating), brain circulation benefits both countries. With brain drain, according to Iraj Abedian (Haffajee & Hazelhurst, 2001), the birth country loses to the receiving / host country because: "...when a skilled individual immigrates to the country with her/him comes a sum of 'past investments' as well as a stream of 'future revenues' based on the imbedded competencies the individual has." The country of origin invested in the education and training of the individual only to lose the skilled worker to another country which receives the skills and education of this individual free. It is widely accepted that brain drain has caused severe leakage of skills and wealth generation, from both developed and developing states and regional blocks of the world (Cohen, 1996a-b).

With the brain circulation pattern, however, both countries benefit. For the above-mentioned reasons the receiving country benefits from the expatriate, but when the expatriate returns to his/her country of origin new skills and knowledge are brought in from the host country which in turn benefits the country of origin's job market and economy. According to Professor AnnaLee Saxenian (2000), this new breed of "circulating" immigrants has brought back valuable experience and know-how to their local economies.

The table below provides a comparison of some of the differences between brain drain and brain circulation. Unlike the case of brain drain the controlling power of highly skilled personnel (HSP) migration in brain circulation is not in the hands of governments, but rather in the hands of employers or organisations. Given the reality of a changing global environment brain circulation refers to the mobility of HSP who have marketable expertise and international experience and who tend to migrate for the short term or make temporary business visit where there skills are needed. The more organisations they work with the more experience they acquire. An example of this is when employers use HSP's to optimise particular tasks within the organisation – this could include starting up a new branch in a foreign country.

**Table 2. 1 A comparison of the characteristics of ‘brain drain’ vs. ‘brain circulation’**

<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>Brain Drain</b>	<b>Brain Circulation</b>
Controlling agency	Government	Organisation(s)
System of mobility	Closed	Open
Policy goal	Controlling people	Optimising tasks
Direction of movement	One-way	Multiple directions
Duration	Permanent	Short-term

Source: (Cao, 1996: p.275)

Brain gain is the mirror image of brain drain. For example, when a highly skilled South African immigrates to Australia, South Africa experiences a brain drain and Australia experiences a brain gain. Similar to the brain drain, the brain gain process can be temporary – for instance a South African that immigrates to Australia, but return home permanently after a period of time.

The term, brain drain is a popular way to explain the migration of skilled people across the globe, and the media tends to use this term indiscriminately. However skills migration as a phenomenon is much more complex to define as stated above and includes various migratory forces (brain drain, -gain and –circulation) that influence each other continuously.

## **2.4 Factors contributing to skills migration**

The number of people crossing borders in search of a better life has been rising steadily over the past 15 years. At the start of the 21st Century, one in every 35 people is an international migrant. If they all lived in the same place, it would be the world’s fifth largest country (BBC Factfile: Global migration). The United Nations (2002) estimates that over 180 million people live outside of their birth country (as cited by Hugo, 2003).

The International Organisation of Migration (IOM), a UN body, advocates an acceptance that migration is here to stay - saying that it is an age-old human instinct to move in search of better opportunities or security (Haffajee, 2001). The BBC’s article on migration concurs with the UN, stating that globally most of those who have left their

countries of origin, or are planning to do so, are motivated by a desire for better opportunities. Migrations of people for non-refugee reasons have been taking place since before the beginning of recorded time. If we trace our ancestors back far enough, all of us would find that we originated somewhere else. Migration has often been, and is likely to continue to be, an important catalyst of advancement, according to Ruud Lubbers, UN High Commissioner for Refugees (Refugees and migrants, BBC).

Even though people have been migrating for hundreds of years, the reasons behind today's skill migration are not quite as simple as an "age-old human instinct". There are various reasons for migration. This section discusses some of the most common reasons for skills migration. It is now time to acknowledge that international migration is a powerful process, and outcome of, the ages of internationalisation and globalisation, especially when we consider the emotive phenomenon of brain drain. (Cohen, 1996a-b).

#### 2.4.1 Globalisation

Globalisation is not easily defined, but Cao's (1996:271) summary of the four major perspectives on globalisation provides a useful overview:

- Politically, globalisation is portrayed as a world-wide redistribution of power and wealth after the collapse of the former communist power block in 1990;
- Economically, globalisation is perceived as an integration and interdependence of the world economies coupled simultaneously with competition for limited market shares and natural resources;
- In cultural terms, globalisation is interpreted as a battle over values between East and West accompanied by wars among different religions and ethnic groups for dominance; and
- In the context of science and technology, globalisation implies a balance between control and decentralisation of information systems and an equal access to and share on the latest developments, especially in communication

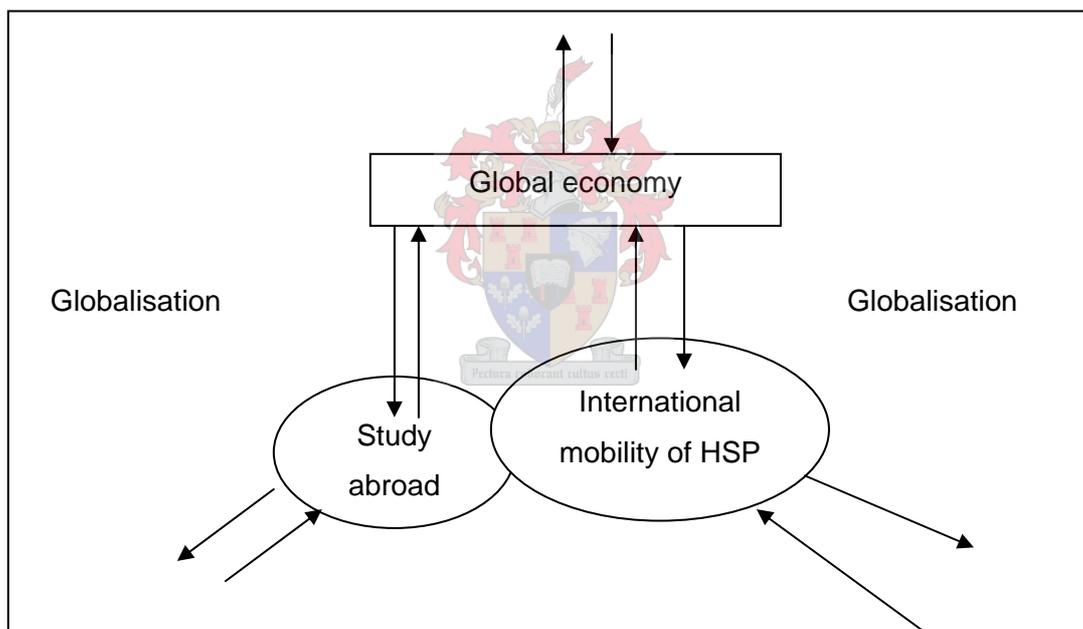
The following recurring characteristics of contemporary globalisation, according to Cao (1996:271) are:

- It seems to be dominated by concerns for the global economy.
- It no longer refers to only a handful of countries, all the nations in the world are now either participating in or being affected by the process.

- The globalisation processes affect many sectors in society, especially those involving politics, the economy, technology, culture and education.
- It is a complex and long-term process and it is not yet clear where globalisation will finally lead.

The era of globalisation is not only leading to many more opportunities for people to work abroad, but also to study abroad. Students from all across the globe form part of the skills migration process when they study abroad. See the simplified diagram (Figure 1) below of the relationships between globalisation, global economy, and international mobility of highly skilled personnel (HSP) and study-abroad.

**Figure 2. 1 Simplified diagram of the relationship between globalisation, global economy, international mobility of HSP and study-abroad.**



Source: (Cao: 1996: p.273)

#### 2.4.2 Skills gap in select industries

Even though it is generally accepted that global labour markets are opening up, select industries in many countries have become desperate for skills and the global village offers an open market for employment and career opportunities to HSP (HSRC Fact Sheet 5, 2004). According to Roger Kerr (2001), governments have responded to this need by easing immigration rules and fast-tracking work permits, increasing the

potential for skills migration. Salt (1992b: 1106) remarks that technological developments and the desire of rich countries to maintain their competitive edge, will encourage them to recruit the best brains from wherever available. For HSP working in a foreign country and for non-native organisations is attractive, possible and getting easier. These HSP's are forming a truly internationalised workforce (Cao, 1996), but also form part of two major phenomena: brain drain and brain circulation.

### **2.4.3 Socio-economic factors**

Crime, poor living conditions, poor health care, sub-standard higher education institutions, religious persecution as well as gaining international experience and/ or better career opportunities abroad, are all socio-economic factors contributing to a skills migration and in certain countries to a brain drain pattern. These contributing factors to skills migration are not a new phenomenon, however. Socio-economic conditions in the UK largely contributed to the British migration to North America in the 1800's. Examples of other socio-economic contributing factors to skills migration are cited below.

Nearly 84% of emigrating executives cited the crime and violence in South Africa as their reason for leaving in 1997 (Crime propels brain drain, 1997). In the case of Sudan's brain drain, the largest contributing factors were drought, famine and civil war. These have brought about increased Sudanese migration over the past two decades (Ali, 1999). Nunn (2005) also mentions the use of selective immigration policies, designed to attract highly skilled workers, while deterring others seen as less economically beneficial to receiving countries.

One of the main contributing factors to the brain drain is the inability of governments and other institutions to design and implement adequate policies to train and retain human resources, and is compounded by policies adopted by some developed countries to retain foreign graduate students and attract foreign experts.

### **2.4.4 Political Factors**

Discrimination within a home country can contribute to skills migration or a brain drain. Political and religious persecution drove luminaries like Albert Einstein and Enrico Fermi across the Atlantic more than half a century ago. Standard human capital theory suggests that members of discriminated-against minorities invest more in education

when this provides them with the means to avoid discrimination by immigrating to other countries (Brenner & Kiefer, 1981; Carrington & Detragiache, 1999; Katz & Rapoport, 2001). Australian immigration data shows that minority members are significantly over represented and better educated than members of their respective relevant majority group when they hail from ethnically divided countries, for example Malaysia, Sri Lanka or Fiji. (Docquier & Rapoport, 2003).

Discrimination against a certain minority can also lead to political persecution resulting from personal philosophical incompatibility with the political authorities' increases the desire to migrate (Danso, 1994). Prior to World War 2, thousands of Jews fled Eastern Europe from the political persecution of the Nazi's. A more recent example is of the scores of Zimbabweans migrating to other countries in fear of persecution by Robert Mugabe's government.

Deliberate attempts by political authorities to fill public sector jobs with specific ethnic groups also contribute to skills migration or brain drain. In Kenya, highly skilled individuals who belonged to other ethnic groups were denied jobs or promotions and ended up leaving the country. This process is known as "Kikuyunization". As a direct result of this, a sizeable number of its senior professors and other HSP immigrated to other countries in the immediate post independence period in Kenya. (Danso, 1994). During the Apartheid era in South Africa thousands of South Africans (mainly blacks) went into exile to escape the Apartheid Government and today the affirmative action policies implemented after the change in government in 1994, has also contributed to an increase in white skilled professionals immigrating.

Poor human rights practices, political and/or arbitrary arrests coupled with a backlogged court system, intolerance of political dissent, lack of academic freedom, civil conflict and the ravages of war, illegal regime change and favouritism based on ethnic affiliation are among the political reasons for the brain drain. All of these factors, in addition to others, occur somewhere in Africa today (Shinn, 2002).

A distinction has to be made between migrants and refugees and especially political migrants and refugees. Migrants, especially economic migrants, choose to move in order to improve future prospects of themselves and their families. Political migrants choose to move from their country because of the current political system or because

they are being discriminated against politically. In other words these migrants leave due to political push factors. Refugees however, have to move if they are to save their lives or preserve their freedom (Lubbers, 2004).

Refugees fleeing war or persecution are in the most vulnerable situation imaginable, they have no protection from their own state – indeed it is usually their own state that is threatening to persecute them. If other states do not let them in, and do not help them once they are in, then – to put it starkly- they may be condemning them to death, or an intolerable life in the shadows, without sustenance and without rights (Lubbers, 2004).

Environmental refugees (people displaced because of environmental problems such as drought, earthquakes etc.) are not included in the definition of "refugee" under international law (Wikipedia, 2005). For the purposes of this study a refugee is someone who seeks refuge out of fear of other people as opposed to any other motivational cause. Under international law, refugees are individuals who:

- are outside their country of nationality or habitual residence;
- have a well-founded fear of persecution because of their race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group or political opinion; and
- are unable or unwilling to avail themselves of the protection of that country, or to return there, for fear of persecution

At the end of 2002, 10.4 million people around the world had refugee status, according to the UN High Commission for Refugees (BBC News Factfile: Global migration, 2004). These figures do not include the 4.1 million Palestinian refugees' assisted by the UN Relief and Works Agency. More than 140 states are party to international agreements under which they are responsible for protecting those recognised as refugees.

#### **2.4.5 Economic factors**

Traditionally economical factors have been one of the main reasons for skills migration and the brain drain and are probably the most obvious factor of all. Some hold the view that people migrate ultimately to improve their economic well-being. (Adepoju, 1984)

Economic factors also contribute to brain circulation. It is not uncommon for young South Africans to spend a gap year or two in the UK after completing high school to earn some cash, especially with the favourable rand pound exchange rate of a few years ago. Ojo (1990) adds that these economic factors go beyond the personal element of salary to encompass the macroeconomic performance of the host country

and the extent to which it can provide the required infrastructure for trained professionals to utilise their skills. He does stress however, that the macroeconomic conditions in the home country should be significantly worse than the host country, because people do not migrate for the sole purpose of gaining a slight economic or professional advantage. Thus the economic gains must be significant enough to warrant migration from their home country (Ojo, 1990).

Interestingly enough, economic factors are also major players in developed countries. Economic factors were the main contributing factor of an IT brain drain in Canada in the late 1990's. Even though Canadian IT professionals are actually better paid than their counterparts in the United States, Canada's high tax rate more than wiped out that advantage and it became almost impossible to compete against US take-home pay (An IT brain drain in Canada, 1999). This resulted in large numbers of Canadian IT professionals migrating to the USA.

## **2.5 Examples of skills migration**

### **2.5.1 Developed countries**

The brain drain from developing countries is not the only form of skills migration of HSP around the world. Skills migration between developed countries is not a new trend and has been around for decades. The belief that migration is simply a phenomenon affecting the poorest of the world has been increasingly disproved.

#### *2.5.1.1 Western Europe – Example: Germany*

Germany seems trapped in the dual aspects of brain drain. On the one hand, the country needs highly qualified and skilled personnel and tries to become more attractive and open. On the other hand, Germany wishes to keep its own researchers/scientists and avoid providing other countries with German home-produced intellectual capital. Over 2% of German students enrol in foreign universities (Frankfurter Rundschau, 28.07.2001, as cited in Dell'Anno, 2004). This is the highest rate within the G7 countries. Moreover, few foreign students move to Germany. A study published by the German Centre for Research on Innovation & Society (2001) highlights that in 1999; more than 4,400 Germans were enrolled as graduate students in US universities. (Beuchteman, as cited in Dell'Anno 2004).

Germany holds 9th place in supplying the US with graduate students. Germany is again the only western European country registering such a high number of recipients. Germany ranks 6th in number of doctorate recipients in the U.S, and ranks above Russia and Japan. It is interesting to note that during 1998-99, German-born received more than 400 doctorates from US universities and well over half of them were in fields of science and engineering.

In today's global economy, brain gain is of strategic relevance for the growth and wealth of nations in the 21st century, a notion the US has clearly understood and reacted to successfully. Germany and Western Europe seem to have adapted more slowly. Instead of adopting a strong policy to foster brain gain, they have so far experienced more of a brain exchange, a phenomenon that has been pushed by the 'Europeanisation' of the production system and from a more flexible and integrated labour market.

Evidence suggests Germany and Western Europe seem to have not identified the way to become a more interesting and challenging place so as to attract the "brains" of the world and move to the forefront of research with a view to become a global leading innovator in services and production (Dell'Anno, 2004).

#### 2.5.1.2 Asia Pacific – Example: Australia

Skills migration has affected Australia as much as any nation, as many as 23% of its population was born overseas in 2004. This is mainly due to an immigration policy that is highly selective of skilled people (Hugo, 2004). Australia is seen as a 'traditional migration country' and one of the few nations to have a formal immigration programme. The migration program has changed in recent years in that the focus on selection on the basis of skill has increased, while the proportion made up of family and humanitarian migrants has decreased. As opposed to Germany, Australia is unequivocally experiencing a 'net brain gain', although there has been some discussion of a 'brain drain'. These discussions seem to be premature, even if Australia has been losing skills in a few industries (for example the computing industry) to emigration, these losses do not warrant a brain drain.

The strong demand for professionals in computing and some other fields in Australia in recent years is fundamental to Australia's ability to retain most of its own resident

professionals with the skills in question and to attract overseas trained persons in the same fields. This is particularly evident in relation to New Zealand citizens. New Zealand commentators emphasise that it is not so much any shortfall of jobs in New Zealand that explains the exodus to Australia but the potential career gains and higher salaries available in Australia. Lifestyle is a secondary matter in this case. But if this is so, what factors can explain why Australia (in its turn) is not losing a greater proportion of its residents to locations that offer better salaries and perhaps better career prospects? And why is Australia attracting a substantial flow of skilled migrants to Australia (other than from New Zealand)?

One hypothesis is that 'lifestyle' is a key factor. This term covers a multitude of dimensions, including political security, a crime and pollution free urban setting (relative to parts of Asia and the United States), a low cost of living, good quality (and at least at the university level) low cost education for children, good housing and other urban amenities and nice weather. Another important factor, especially for residents or prospective immigrants of Asian origin is the existence of substantial co-ethnic communities in Sydney and Melbourne (Australian Government Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs, 2005).

One of the main attractions for skilled migrants to immigrate to Australia is presumably the "lifestyle" or quality of life that Australians enjoy. South Africa has been losing its skilled and qualified personnel to Australia for decades due largely to the similar environment and safer environment. Australian recruiters regard South Africa as a valued and readily accessible source because professionals from South Africa can fit readily into the Australian corporate setting. India too, is increasingly seen as a ready source of IT skills, which is likely to expand in the future as employers overcome some initial uncertainties about skills and concerns about whether the cultural 'style' fits with an Australian workplace. In turn, Australia's highly skilled prefers the UK as a destination country for either temporary or permanent migration and the USA has been increasing in importance over the last decade (Hugo, 2004).

Australia's immigration programme appears to be working, as it is currently a net importer of skills across the globe. Robinson (2003) concludes that countries like Australia is feeling no loss because people are coming in as fast as they are leaving.

### 2.5.1.3 North America – Example: The United States of America

The USA seems to be best prepared for the needs and trends of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and is a global importer of the highly skilled. Due to its long immigration tradition, the US economy is open enough (and labour markets flexible) to welcome the global citizens that are looking around for the most promising places to live, to work, to earn money and to spend it. A real business has been established here. It starts with education, continues with attractive local complementarities (sand, sun and fun) and ends with easy access to the local labour market for foreign specialists (Straubhaar, 2000). Undoubtedly the September 11 terrorist attacks have restricted some of these previously easy access roads into the States, but for most nationalities this still holds true.

Foreign students contribute over \$7 billion to the US economy annually (List 1998, as cited by Straubhaar 2000). The growth rate of foreign students in the USA is 5% per annum. This not only qualifies education as one of the best selling US exports, but also means that in effect the US is experiencing a net brain gain. Almost half of the total PhD recipients in the USA in any year are now “foreigners” (Mahroum 1999: 19, as cited by Straubhaar 2000).

Many of the successful foreign students remain in the US after the completion of their studies. Almost 50% of all European doctoral graduates stay in the USA after completion of their studies and many never return to their country of origin (Mahroum 1999:20, as cited by Straubhaar 2000). What is most disturbing about this brain drain is the large number of European students that form part of this skills migration, especially taking into account that many European universities offer almost tuition-free education, versus the expensive American universities.

The USA attracts not only Europeans but also migrants from all the continents. In the Asia and Pacific region, the biggest source country is the Philippines with 0.73 million migrants. Of these the greatest majority has a tertiary education. China, Korea and India have lost approximately a million migrants to the States. In terms of brain gain, India is one of the best source countries with over 75% of its USA immigrants being tertiary educated.

With regard to Africa, the biggest migratory flows to the USA are from Egypt, Ghana and South Africa. For these countries, over 60% of the migrants have a tertiary education. It is interesting to note that migration of low-educated Africans to the USA is almost nil (Carrington & Detragiache, 1998). This is mainly due to the USA immigration qualification process whereas tertiary educated individuals stand a much better chance of qualifying.

In North America Mexico is by far the largest sending country with most of the migrants having a secondary education level. This pattern is shared by the smaller countries in Central America, but not by at least two Caribbean countries: Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago. (42% tertiary educated Jamaicans and 46% tertiary educated from Trinidad and Tobago).

Migration from South America is relatively small in absolute numbers and is split between the secondary and the tertiary educational group. Colombia has the largest number of migrants, followed by Peru and Argentina (Carrington & Detragiache, 1998).

Geographically, there are areas that attract those who are more skilled and the highly qualified tend to gravitate around these areas fastening economic and social growth of certain regions. The less attractive regions become increasingly 'outsiders' in the overall growth process and amplify the brain drain-brain gain effect (Dell'Anno, 2004)

### **2.5.2 Developing countries**

The effect of the skills migration is hardest felt by developing countries. Although skills migration also takes place in developed countries, as mentioned above, most of these countries manage to attract enough incoming HSP to "fill the gap" left by their HSP nationals leaving for abroad. This simultaneous in-and outflow of HSP protects these countries from the damaging effects of brain drain. This is unfortunately not the case in most developing countries.

#### *2.5.2.1 Eastern Europe-Example: Poland*

The outflow from Poland that started in mid-19th century and the movement in the second half of the 1900's is critical to understanding recent migration. Historically, Poles have displayed a great propensity to emigrate. Important emigration waves began in 1860 and 1890. The emigration was driven by socio-economic

underdevelopment, overpopulation and insufficient demand for labour by industry. According to estimates, between 1860-1940 approximately 5.5 to 6 million Poles settled abroad, one third of them in the US. Some 20-30% returned to Poland. (There were also massive deportations between 1864 and 1915 as well as between 1939 and 1945) (ISS 1999). In recent times, the scale of immigration is not considerable and consisted almost exclusively of Poles returning to their homeland. (Kozłowski, 2004).

For many years, Poland has had a negative balance of foreign migration. Between the end of World War II and late 1980s, the number of Poles leaving the country to settle abroad did not exceed 35,000-40,000 per annum. From the beginning of 1960s until the beginning of 1990s, the immigration flows to Poland were statistically insignificant. However, one of the existing and visible inflows was the movement of Vietnamese students who arrived in Poland under a government-sponsored 'socialist co-operation' program or academic exchange (ISS 2000b). After graduation, the majority returned home but the once-established ties led to the formation of a large Vietnamese diaspora in Poland, active mainly in small trade and catering services. Armenians are also among other relatively large ethnic groups. Most of them are well-educated people but they rarely find employment commensurate with their qualifications (ISS 2000b). In mid-1996 the settlement of Kazakhs of Polish ancestry from Kazakhstan to Poland was set in motion. However, education of immigrants from Kazakhstan is under the country's average (ISS 1997, as cited by Kozłowski, 2004).

This brain drain is not unique to Poland and many Eastern European countries are in the same dilemma of losing their best skilled. A quick overview of the brain drain in Eastern Europe follows below. Table 2.2 on the following page details the flow of skilled migrants as a ratio of the total skilled population per country in the brain drain to Germany.

**Table 2. 2 East European Cumulated Immigration Flows into Germany According to Qualification, 1992 – 1994, in 1,000 persons**

Sending Country	Aggregated Immigrants according to Qualification		
	highly qualified (1)	total (2)	skill ratio (flows) (3) = (1):(2)
Poland	9.02	48.41	0.19
Ex CSSR	1.76	10.60	0.17
Hungary	3.78	10.87	0.35
Romania	6.11	63.47	0.10
Bulgaria	3.74	9.65	0.39
Ex Yugoslavia	18.58	236.16	0.08
Albania	1.11	14.72	0.08
Ex USSR	37.79	370.63	0.10
<b>Total</b>	<b>81.89</b>	<b>764.51</b>	<b>0.11</b>

Source: (Straubhaar / Wolburg 1999, as cited by Straubhaar 2000)

Table 2.2 demonstrates that the cumulated share of highly qualified immigrants varies across countries. Whereas it is the highest for Bulgaria, immigrants from the former Yugoslavia exhibited the lowest skill ratio. The share of highly qualified persons in the German population is 0.13 for the same period, 1992 – 1994. Compared to the average qualification of persons residing in Germany, the human capital content of immigration from Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Bulgaria lies significantly above this value. Consequently, we can indeed observe a definite brain drain for these Eastern European countries (Straubhaar, 2000).

The EU ignores the fundamental economic relevance of high skilled immigration. This is especially true with regard to Eastern Europe. In the nearby back yard of the EU, highly skilled people with a strong affinity to Western Europe, with specific language skills and with a familiarity to Western European culture and habits could be motivated to come to the EU instead of migrating to the USA (Straubhaar, 2000).

In summary, the USA is experiencing a brain gain; Eastern Europe a form of brain drain and a brain exchange and/or a brain circulation for the Western European

region. The most problematic continent in terms of the scale of skills migration is undoubtedly: Africa.

#### *2.5.2.2 Africa: Example Zimbabwe*

Brain drain has hit African countries hardest. Statistics vary but even the estimated numbers are daunting. Oduba (2003) estimates that up to 40% of the African continent's top professionals now live abroad. About 250,000 Nigerians are living in the United States, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) estimates that since the 1980's, Africa has lost more than a third of its professionals to developed countries. According to an article in "The Herald" (Brain drain strangling economic development, 2001), which quotes a research study done at Natal University in South Africa, it is costing the continent \$4 billion per annum to replace the lost HSP with expatriates from the West. Africa lost an estimated 60,000 middle- and high-level managers between 1985 and 1990, and 23,000 qualified academic professionals emigrates each year in search of better working conditions (Brain drain cost, 2001).

It is estimated that one in four Zimbabweans have fled the country in the past five years. And with millions of skilled and professional Zimbabweans leaving the country in droves, the government is now desperate to stem the brain drain from the economically ravaged country. Unfortunately rather than approaching the problem from a positive standpoint and seeking to solve the root causes of the exodus, the government is planning to force graduates to work in government service (Clamp on the brain drain, 2005).

Zimbabwean students are extremely negative about their personal and national economic fortunes now and in the future, according to Crush et al, 2005. They show the greatest desire to leave and the greatest likelihood of doing so, when compared to other SADC (South African Development Community) states. These states include South Africa, Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland etc. Zimbabwe dropped to 145th place out of 175 countries in the Human Development Index (HDI) rankings in 2003. The HDI is a composite measure of average achievement in three basic dimensions of human development: a long and healthy life, education and a decent standard of living. Zimbabwe experienced a drop in Gross Domestic Product of 30% in the past three years and has been classified by the United Nations as having the fastest shrinking

economy in the world (The Socialist, 2005). Hyperinflation has slowed to 381% in 2004, from a peak of 600% in 2003. Medicines, vehicle repairs and agricultural prices have risen by over 600% and the state-owned telephone and postal services have hiked fees by 1,000% (The Socialist, 2005).

It is clear that Zimbabwe is going through a severe political and economic crisis and facing serious food shortages due to recurring droughts and the government's fast-track land redistribution programme, which disrupted agricultural production and slashed export earnings (IRINnews, 2005). Agricultural production is expected to be at least 30% down on 2002/2003 as only 44% of land seized from white farmers was utilised (The Socialist, 2005). The deteriorating economy in Zimbabwe has forced some professors, lecturers, medical doctors and scientists to operate minibuses, taxicabs or operate beer parlours. It is a form of 'internal brain drain' to have many architects, accountants and pharmacists underemployed (IRINnews, 2003).

Of the 3.5 million (25%) Zimbabweans that have left the country, 1.2 million now lives in South Africa, 1.1 million in Britain, 100,000 in Australia and the rest are scattered throughout Southern Africa and elsewhere (The Socialist, 2005).

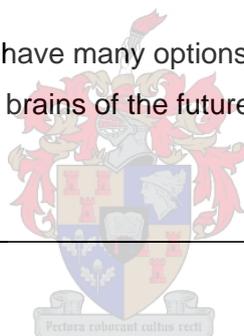
The Zimbabwean government will soon compel professionals trained or educated via state resources in universities, polytechnics and colleges to work in the civil service for some time before they can be allowed to join the private sector or work legally in other countries. The professionals most affected by this new policy are doctors, nurses, lawyers, engineers and technicians.

Many of Zimbabwe's hospitals are now staffed with health professionals from Cuba, China, Eastern Europe and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Of these doctors many don't speak workable English. It is estimated that each doctor now does the work of seven – so severe is the shortage and so desperate the need of the population ravaged by malnutrition and HIV/AIDS (Clamp on the Brain Drain, 2005).

Any migration of skills does not necessarily have to be a crisis for Africa. It is only when Africa loses skills needed to sustain and enhance its development, that the brain drain becomes critical for African countries. The African brain drain must be viewed in terms of the availability of such skills in the respective African home countries, the quality of

the skills that are being lost, and the needs for the skills in the home country (Danso, 1994). Brain drain further “hits” the African continent twice – first when they lose their skilled or educated people to other developed nations and secondly when they have to replace these skills lost with expatriate professionals. The replacement of the emigrated professionals by western expatriates comes at very high costs (Danso, 1994), as expatriates have to be relocated and frequently demand higher wages. With a shortage of skilled citizens, the African economy suffers and productivity stays low. In countries with low productivity less opportunities exist, which in turn is a deterrent for non-African skilled people to migrate there. Unfortunately this trend looks to continue in the future. In a SAMP study in 2005, 79% of students surveyed in Southern Africa said that they have thought about moving to another country and as many as 35% said there was a likelihood of it happening within six months of graduation (Crush et al, 2005). Africa seems to be trapped in a vicious cycle of continuing losing their best and brightest while not being able to attract any replacements.

Global citizens of the 21<sup>st</sup> century have many options. Closed doors here and red carpets there could mean that the brains of the future will be lured by the likes of the Americans (Straubhaar, 2000).



## Chapter 3

### Brain drain and brain circulation: the South African scenario

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*To this day we continue to lose the best among ourselves because the lights in the developed world shine brighter – Nelson Mandela<sup>1</sup>*

South Africa's HSP migration is typical of a brain drain in the truest sense. HSP more often than not choose to migrate from South Africa (a developing country) to developed countries around the globe. The University of Cape Town (UCT) and the HSRC recently studied South African emigration to the five most popular destinations – Australia, Britain, Canada, New Zealand and the United States – and reported that close to a quarter of a million South Africans had settled in those countries between 1989 and 1997 (Flight of the Flamingos, 2004).

#### 3.1 The extent of South African skills migration

It is difficult to establish an accurate figure for the South African brain drain as researchers seem to distrust the official South African statistics (SSA). Crush & Williams (2001) state that the statistics on the number of South Africans leaving to settle abroad are significantly underestimated by the SSA; and suggests that "... a more reliable way of assessing the true extent of emigration would be to examine data from the recipient countries. A comparison of South African data for the period 1984 – 1993 and that of the United Kingdom (the recipient country) shows that the United Kingdom (UK) figures are more than three times that of South Africa. The South African data shows that 28 965 people emigrated to the UK between 1984 and 1993, while the UK data shows that for the same period 100,700 South Africans emigrated to the UK (Brown & Van Staden, 1998).

More evidence of an undercount is the difference between the official South African emigration statistics of the period 1989 – 1997, which shows 82,811 South Africans emigrating and the official statistics from the five most popular destinations for the same period totalling 233,609 South African immigrants during the same period (Crush, 2004). Another study by the HSRC stated that the HSP outflow of South Africans is up

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<sup>1</sup> National Research Foundation. (2002). *Brain-drain and –gain in South Africa. Who loses, who gains?* Retrieved August 2, 2004 from the World Wide Web: <http://www.nrf.ac.za/news/braindrain.stm>.

to four times higher than the official figure suggests, which is deeply troubling (Flight of the Flamingos, 2004).

There are several possible reasons for the South African brain drain official figures undercount. Currently the official statistics rely on self-declaring emigrants. The completion of departure forms is not always enforced and not all those intending to emigrate indicate as such (Stats SA 2001). Other South Africans leave for a gap year abroad with the intention to return home afterwards, but then find the grass greener on that side. Two-year training schemes in Canada and Britain are also attractive to South African graduates and an unknown number of these trainees do not return. (Cohen: 1996/1997). The emigrating South Africans are not the only to be blamed however. According to Bailey (2003) there are several other flaws with the official migration data. These include: categories that have changed, making it difficult to formulate trends analysis. The official data do not provide a breakdown by race. The data set is incomplete due to a new computerised system being introduced in January 2003 and the system did not capture disaggregated occupational data, until recently.

South Africa used to be a major importer of skills during the apartheid era. This turned out to be a significant boost to the country's stock of HSP (Bailey, 2003). In the period 1965 – 1985 immigration accounted for no less than one-fifth of the increase in highly skilled workers in South Africa (Kaplan, 1998). This is no longer the case in South Africa. As the table below illustrates South Africa has been experiencing a net loss from 1994 – 2000.

**Table 3. 1 HSP migration flows for South Africa for the periods 1988 – 1992 and 1994 – 2000.**

	1988-1992					1994-2000				
	Immigrants		Emigrants		Net gain/loss	Immigrants		Emigrants		Net gain/loss
	<i>number</i>	%	<i>number</i>	%	<i>number</i>	<i>number</i>	%	<i>number</i>	%	<i>number</i>
Engineering & architecture	2,645	25	1,460	24	1,185	1,063	16	2,891	16	-2,867
Natural sciences	1,019	9	631	10	388	489	7	1,482	8	-405
Medical, dental & health services	1,546	14	915	15	631	754	11	2,559	15	-2,072
Education & humanities	2,155	20	1,779	30	376	1,805	27	5,547	32	-4,609
Legislative, executive & managerial	3,393	32	1,246	21	2,147	2,564	38	5,070	29	-3,244
Total	10,758	100	6,031	100	4,727	6,675	100	17,549	100	-13,197

Source: Central Statistical Service (CSS) (1990, 1992b, 1994, 1998b) *Tourism and Migration (Report No. 03-51-01 for years 1989, 1991, 1993, 1996)*; Stats SA (1999, 2001) *Documented Migration (Report No. 03-51-03 for years 1997, 1998, 2000)*

Thus, although there seems to be only a small net loss of migrants per annum, the statistics are more cause for concern when we consider that nearly two-thirds of immigrants are declared not to be economically active (Cohen: 1996/1997). Kaplan et al (1999) confirms this, stating that immigration is falling and it is historically unprecedented for South Africa to have such a limited immigration of professionals. The main reason for the decline in immigration of skilled workers in the 1990's is the new government's 'restrictive' immigration policy (Kaplan, 1998). So even though there is a two way migration process across the South African border, the outflow of South African HSP is much greater than the inflow of foreign HSP.

Historically, official data on migration to and from South Africa shows that immigration exceeds emigration, except for specific years relating to five historical periods marked by specific political and economic conditions in South Africa (Kaplan, 1997). Kaplan's five historical periods are: the 1961 Sharpsville unrest, the Soweto uprisings in 1976, the declaration of a state of emergency between 1985 and 1987 and the political uncertainty after 1993 in anticipation of the forthcoming elections in 1994. These events can't be held directly responsible for the increase in emigration during these periods; however they do qualify as significant push factors (these factors are discussed later in this chapter), which may account for the increased outflow of people during these specific years (Brown & Van Staden, 1998)

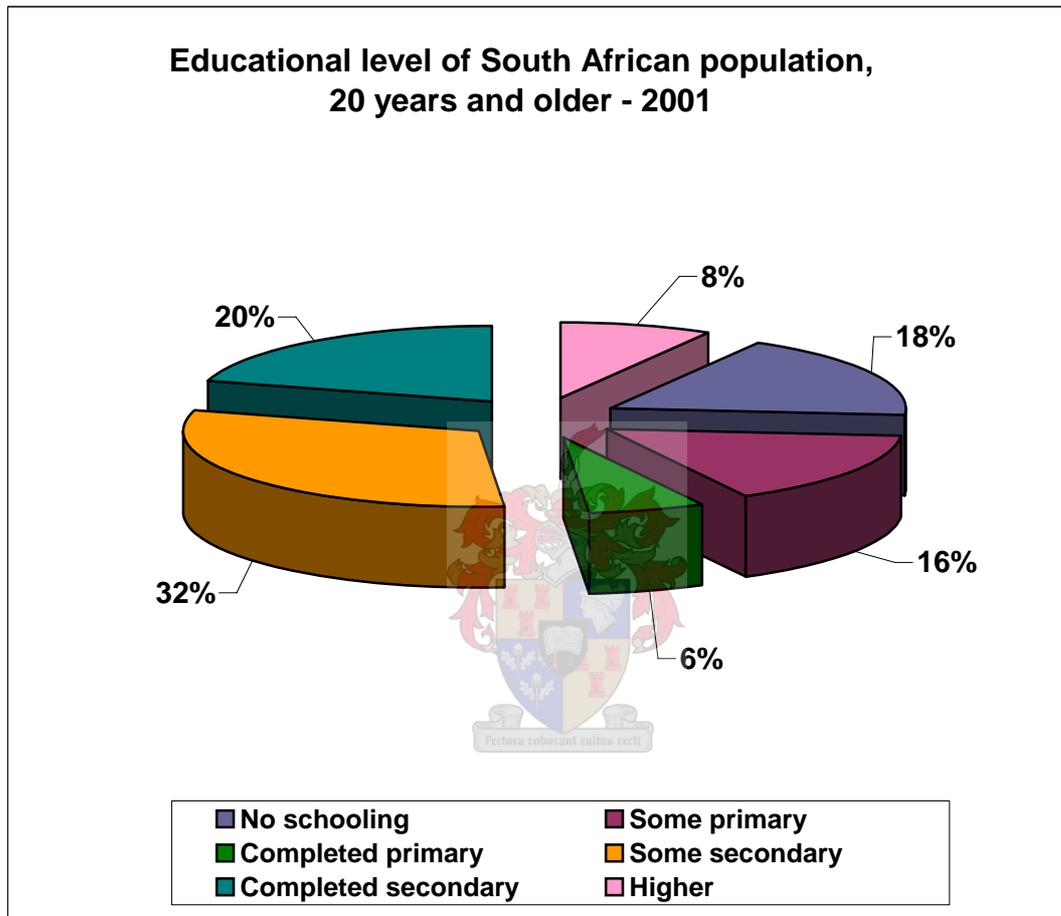
According to a study by the University of South Africa (Unisa), 39,000 South Africans left the country in 1999, to join the 1.6 million South Africans already living abroad. It is believed up to a 100,000 people have left South Africa from 1999 – 2002. In the period 1994-1997 24,196 professionals emigrated from South Africa (Kaplan et al, 1999).

And the figure seems to be on the increase – official statistics states that 11,671 South Africans emigrated in 2003 compared with 8,080 in 2002 (Brain drain colour blind, 2002). This increase dates back to post-1994. The annual emigration of professionals was 56% higher during post-1994 than for 1989-1994 (Kaplan et al, 1999).

The estimated number of skills permanently lost to South Africa becomes frightening when putting the skills migration in context. In South Africa only 8.4 % of the total population over 20 years of age had some form of a tertiary education in 2001 (Stats SA, Census 2001). With less than 10% of the population tertiary educated we really

can't afford to lose any HSP to other countries. Figure 3.1 on the following page details the highest level of education of population aged 20 years and above in 2001.

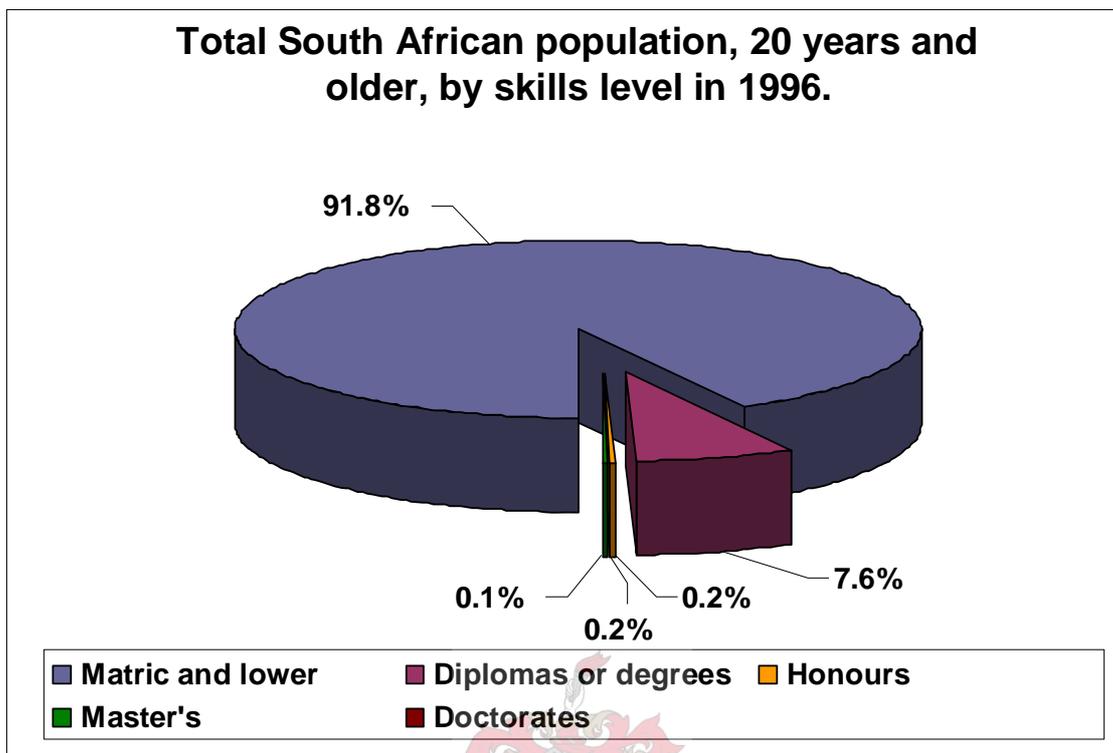
**Figure 3. 1 South African population (20 years and above) by educational level in 2001**



Source: Stats SA, Census 2001.

The Census of 1996 provided a further breakdown of the tertiary levels of South Africans. Unfortunately these statistics were not included in the Census report of 2001. Figure 3.2 below details the 1996 statistics.

Figure 3. 2 South African population (20 years and above) by skills level in 1996



Source: Stats SA, Census 1996.

It is likely that between one eighth and one fifth of South Africans with tertiary education now reside abroad (Kaplan et al, 1999).

Looking at the current trends and the increase per annum in the South African skills migration, it is likely that the brain drain will continue. An international survey of the well educated found that the likelihood of them remaining in the country of origin was lower for South Africa than for any other country, except for Russia which was marginally lower (The Economist, July 10, 1999, p.116).

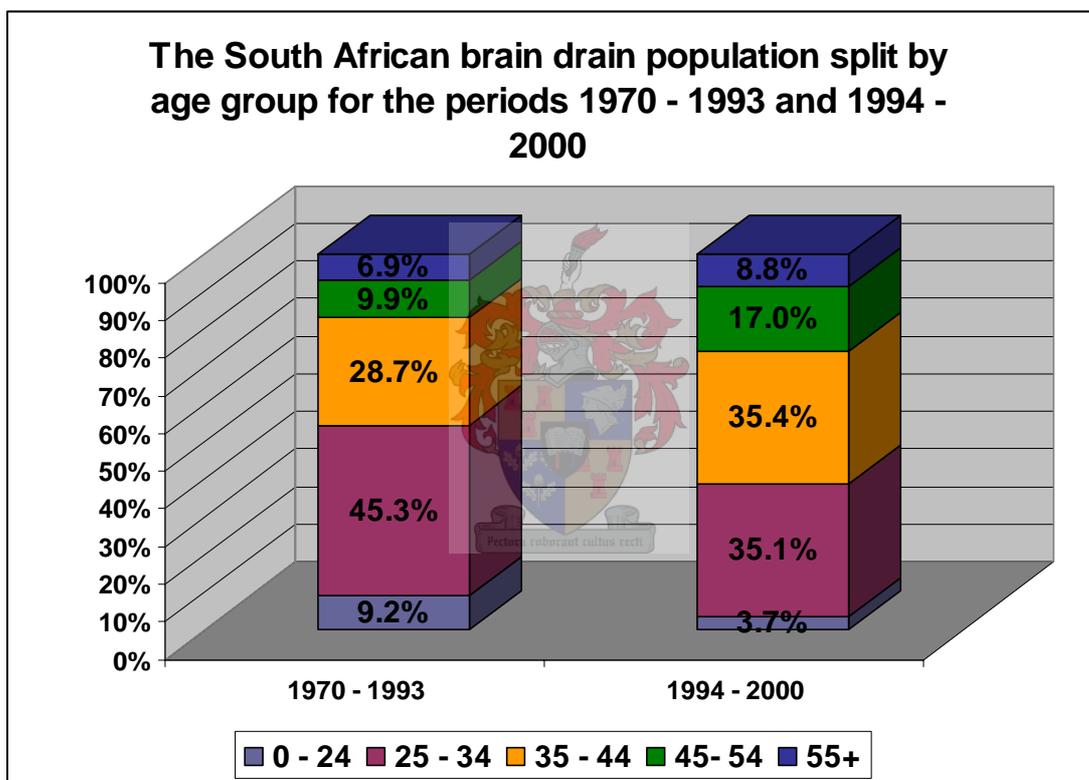
SAMP (South African Migration Project) developed a methodology in the late 1990's to assess the real emigration potential of the skilled population. In the case of South Africa the Emigration Potential Index showed 2% of the skilled population with very high emigration potential (32,000 individuals), a further 10% (192,000) with high potential, and 25% with moderate potential (Crush, 2004).

### 3.2 Demographic analysis of emigrating South Africans

By reviewing data from the Central Statistics Service of South Africa and various other research studies on South African skills migration, a more detailed picture of the demographics of these South African migrants can be established. This section provides an overview of emigrating South Africans by age, gender and race.

#### 3.2.1 Age group

**Figure 3. 3 The South African brain drain split by age group for the period 1970 – 1993 (during apartheid) and 1994 – 2000 (post-apartheid era)**



Source: Central Statistical Service (CSS) (1974-1986) *Tourism and Migration* (Report No. 19-01-02 to 19-01-13);  
 Central Statistical Service (CSS) (1987-1998) *Tourism and Migration* (Report No. 03-51-01 for years 1986 to 1996);  
 Stats SA (1999-2001) *Documented Migration* (Report No. 03-51-03 for years 1997 to 2000)

The chart above illustrates the emigration of South African professionals by age group, 1970 – 2000. A significant shift in the age group of emigrants occurred in the post-apartheid era. In the apartheid era most emigrants fell in the age group of 25-34, in the post-apartheid era the dominant age group is almost equally split between the two age groups of 25 – 34 and 35- 44. A higher percentage of older South Africans emigrate

now than before. This is cause for concern, as these HSP probably have approximately between 10 – 30 years of work experience by the time they migrate abroad. HSP with this amount of work experience and of these age groups would probably be on the management levels within companies and is an asset to the country's economy.

Interesting enough the number of people emigrating below the age of 24 declined in the post-apartheid era. There could be many possible reasons for this. One possibility could be that the younger generation is more optimistic about the “New South Africa” than the older generation. Other possibilities are that they focus on acquiring critical competencies or skills first (for example completing university degrees etc) in order to broaden the possibilities for emigration later or they travel under study visas and are therefore not counted as potential emigrants.

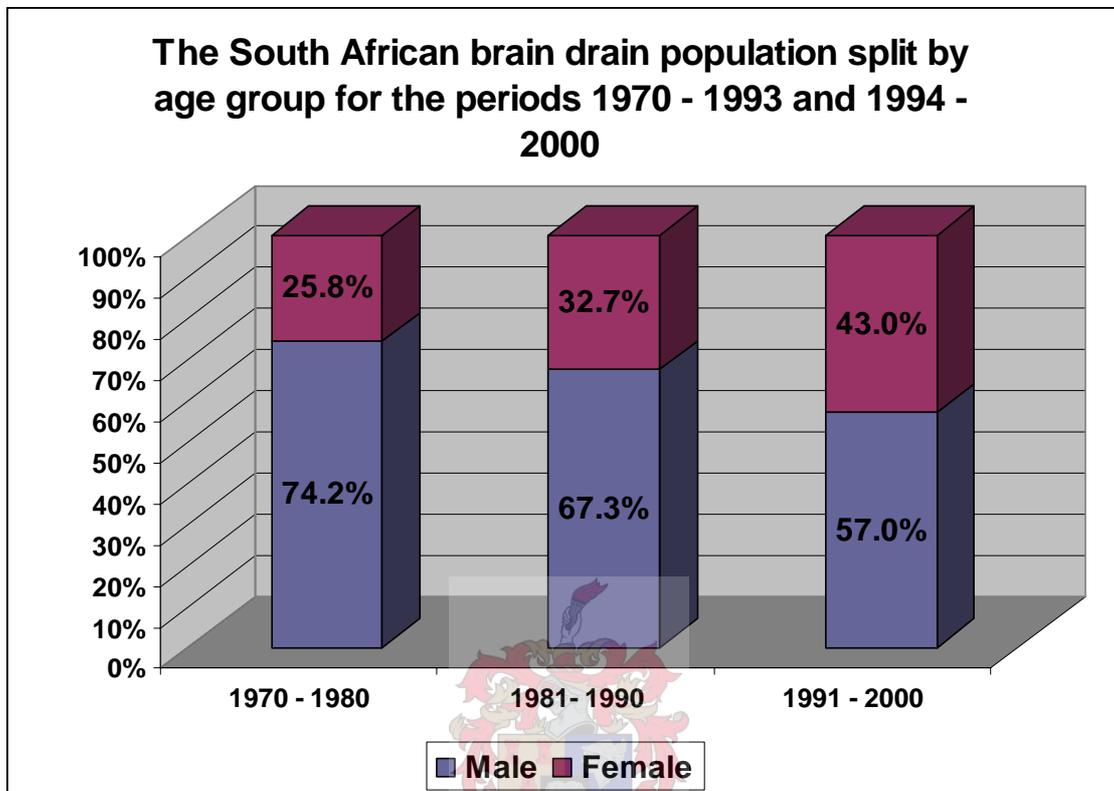
### 3.2.3 Gender

According to the study *Gender and the Brain Drain from South Africa* (Migration Policy Series vol. 23: 2001), South African men are more likely to emigrate than South African women. Some of the key findings of this study include:

- Almost three quarters (73%) of the men had given “some” or “a great deal of thought” of emigrating, whereas the equivalent figure for women was only 61%.
- Women were more likely to express a desire to live outside South Africa temporarily, whereas more men expressed a desire to leave permanently. (Thus woman would be more likely to form part of brain circulation, where men would be more likely to form part of a brain drain).
- Two-thirds of the women said they could not afford to emigrate, compared to almost half of the men surveyed.
- Overall women seem to be slightly more satisfied with their present quality of life than men, reinforcing the finding of women's lower emigration potential.

The emigration of South African professionals by gender 1970 – 2000, is illustrated below. Although more SA male professionals still emigrate than SA female professionals, in recent years the gap seems to be closing. “This trend reflects the changing gender profile in the domestic labour market” according to Bailey (2003).

**Figure 3. 4 The South African brain drain population split by gender for the period 1970 – 2000**



Source: Central Statistical Service (CSS) (1974-1986) *Tourism and Migration* (Report No. 19-01-02 to 19-01-13); Central Statistical Service (CSS) (1987-1998) *Tourism and Migration* (Report No. 03-51-01 for years 1986 to 1996); Stats SA (1999-2001) *Documented Migration* (Report No. 03-51-03 for years 1997 to 2000)

### 3.2.3 Race

The brain drain and brain circulation phenomena in South Africa are not necessarily race specific, as many tend to believe. Research commissioned by the Southern African Migration Project (SAMP) and done by Idasa, showed that skilled whites are not much more likely to leave than skilled blacks, and there is virtually no difference in the probability of emigration between white Afrikaner and white English-speaking skilled South Africans (Brain drain not a crisis, 1998).

According to Mr. Khumalo, senior partner at Leaders Unlimited, South Africa's largest recruitment firm, various reports suggest that around 2,000 black South Africans leave the country annually (Brain drain colour-blind, 2002). However since the black population is significantly larger than the white population in South Africa, the absolute

number of skilled whites constitutes a much higher percentage of the white population. A study by the SA Medical Association (Sama) found that while the majority of doctors leaving are young, white graduates, the number of black professionals being recruited internationally is also on the increase (Catalogue of woe, 2001).

### **3.3 Receiving countries of South African skills**

From the previous section, we know now who the skilled South Africans are forming part of the brain drain, but where are these South Africans immigrating to? Do they follow the same patterns as other international skill migrants, i.e. do South Africa's HSP migrate to more developed countries with better career opportunities? This section aims to provide an overview of the top destination countries for emigrating South Africans.

Studies show that the most popular destinations for South African skills migration are Australia, Britain, Canada, New Zealand and the United States, although official statistics suggests that the Netherlands is also a popular destination for emigrating South Africans (Brain drain colour blind, 2002). A labour trends survey done in 1998 confirms the above-mentioned countries as favourite destinations for South Africans emigrating, but also included Israel (Brain drain worsening, 1998).

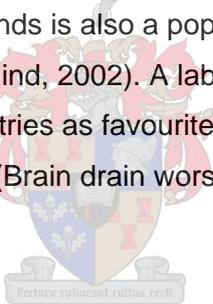
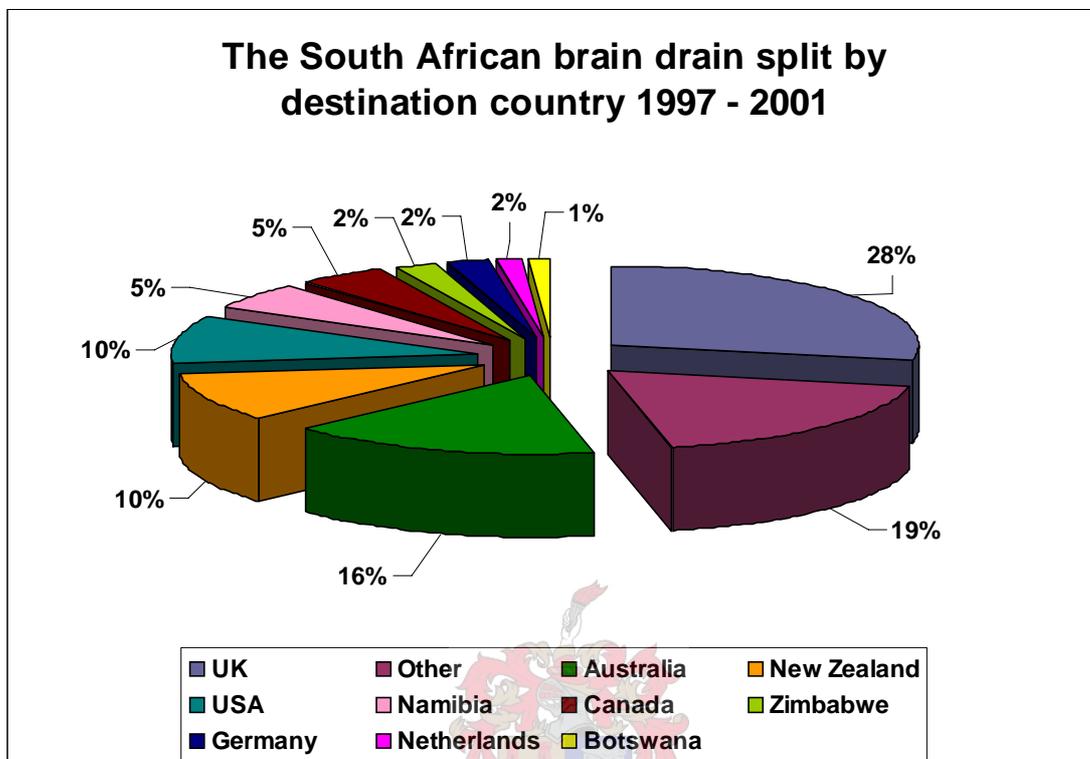
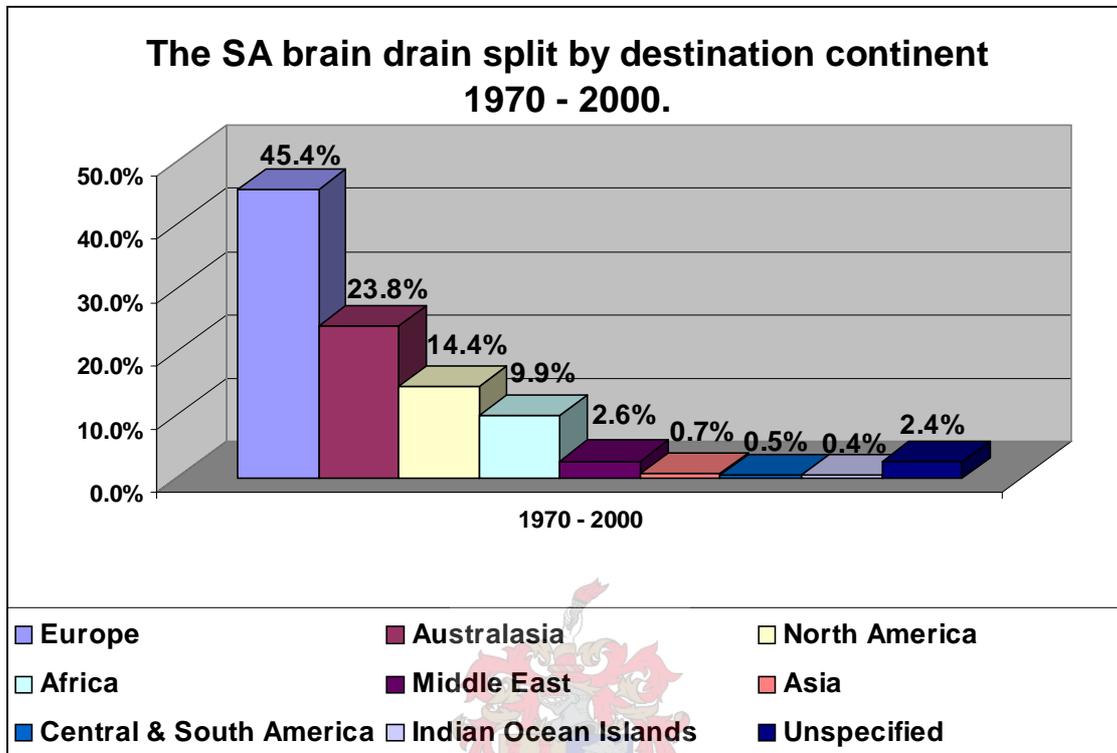


Figure 3. 5 The top ten destination countries for emigrating South Africans for the period 1997 – 2001



Source: *Flight of the Flamingos, a study on the mobility of R & D workers.* (2004). HSRC Publishers.

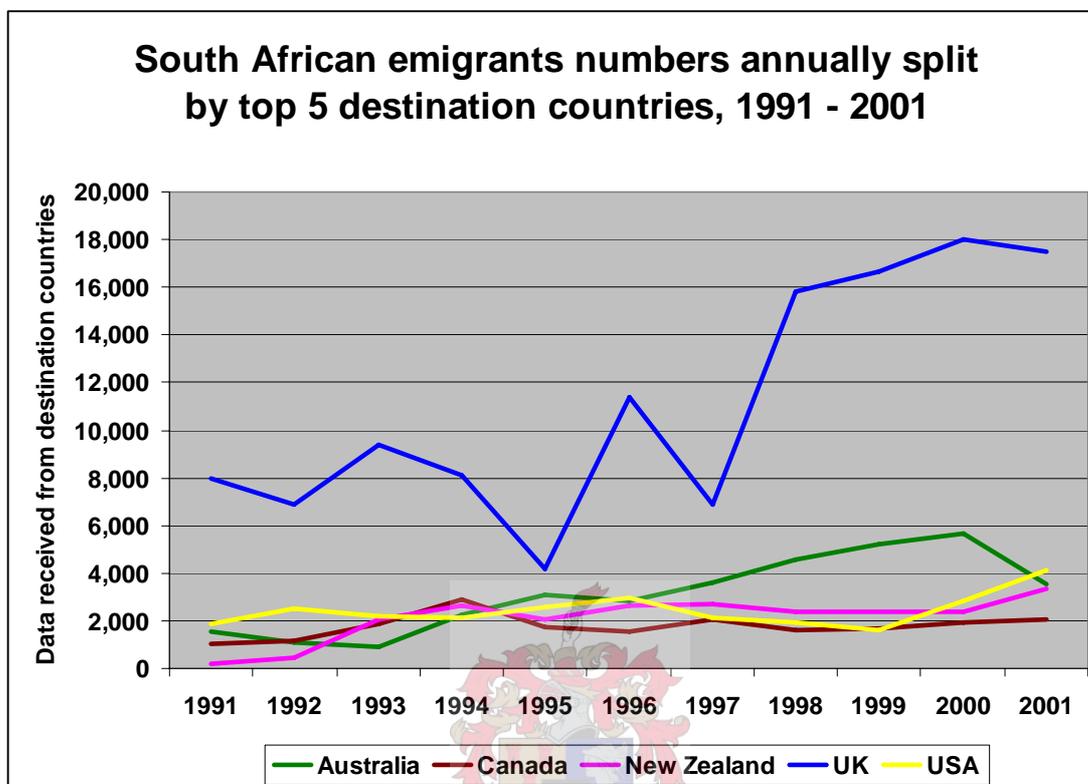
Figure 3. 6 The emigration of South African professionals by destination 1970 – 2000 is shown in the graph below



Source: Central Statistical Service (CSS) (1974-1986) *Tourism and Migration* (Report No. 19-01-02 to 19-01-13);  
 Central Statistical Service (CSS) (1987-1998) *Tourism and Migration* (Report No. 03-51-01 for years 1986 to 1996);  
 Stats SA (1999-2001) *Documented Migration* (Report No. 03-51-03 for years 1997 to 2000)

This chart re-affirms that over a period of 30 years, most South African professionals prefer to migrate to developed countries. Europe is the most popular destination, with Australasia and North America in 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> position. Again, almost 10% of South African professionals migrate to other African countries. The Middle East came in as the 5<sup>th</sup> most popular destination with only attracting 2.6% of all emigrating South African professionals.

**Figure 3. 7 South African emigrant numbers split by the top five destination countries for the period 1991 – 2000**



Source: *Flight of the Flamingos, a study on the mobility of R & D workers*. (2004). HSRC Publishers.

\* Please note that the numbers for Australia and the UK for 2001 are based on estimates as actual data was not available.

From the chart above the most popular destination country for South African emigrants is the UK with the USA, Australia and New Zealand respectively the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> most popular destination countries. Canada’s popularity declined since 1994, probably due to restrictions placed on the emigration of medical practitioners. These restrictions are discussed in the counter measures section later in this chapter. An overall increase in the numbers of South Africans in all of the top 5 countries is evident since 1991.

The biggest migratory flows from Africa to the United States are from Egypt, Ghana, and South Africa, with more than 60 percent of immigrants from those three countries having a tertiary education. Migration of Africans to the USA with only a primary education is almost nil (Carrington & Detragiache: 1999). Confirming again that it is

especially the educated and skilled attracted to the promise of better opportunities in the developed countries.

In a survey by SAMP in 2005, 31% of Southern African students listed their most likely destination countries to be North America (31%) and Europe (29%) (Crush et al, 2005).

### **3.4 Implications of brain drain and brain circulation**

Even though migration is an age-old phenomenon, the increase in skills migration from Africa and especially South Africa over the past decades has serious implications for the countries of origin. "Migration is the most underestimated factor in the world economy today" according to UN Conference on Trade & Development (Unctad) secretary-general Rubens Ricupero (Haffajee, 2001). A discussion of this and other implications of the brain drain follow.

#### **3.4.1 Economical Implications**

The brain drain in South Africa does not only hit certain industry sectors, but has a negative impact on the country's economy as a whole. It is estimated that the South African brain drain costs the country R2.5 billion annually (Jones, 2003). A detailed study estimated that the emigration of graduates is lowering GDP by 0.37% per annum and that R67.8 billion of investment in human capital left South Africa in 1997 (Kaplan et al, 1999). In order to make sense of these figures we have to look at developing countries' greatest assets: skilled human resources.

One of the oldest questions in economics is why some countries are rich while others are poor. Economic theory has emphasised that differences in the educational levels of the population are an important part of the answer and that improved schooling opportunities should raise incomes in the developing countries. (Carrington & Detragiache, 1999). Still, many developing countries are losing their highly educated people which means that pouring money into education may not have the desired effect of faster growth (Naidoo, 1999) and efforts to reduce specific skill shortages through improved educational opportunities may be largely futile (Carrington & Detragiache, 1999).

The brain drain is depleting African countries of the skilled human resources necessary to build the institutions and infrastructure that support strong economies (Brain drain

colour blind, 2002). Skilled and unskilled jobs are more closely linked than we realise. According to a Unisa survey the loss of each skilled professional costs South Africa up to 10 unskilled jobs (SA hit, 2002). This could be detrimental to South Africa's economy, which is already struggling with a high rate of unemployment.

Kaplan et al (1999) estimates that R11 billion left the country in the period 1994-1997. This estimate is based on the assumption that each emigrant gives rise to an outflow of R100, 000 (excluding physical assets) from the country.

A further cost to the country is in terms of the increase price/wage for skilled and professional labour because of emigration leading to a decrease in supply. This is particularly true for internationally mobile occupations, for example IT, where high rates of emigration are a significant factor in keeping the labour market tight and wages high. Emigration now accounts for 15% of turnover, as opposed to traditionally less than 5%. With the cost of replacing executive or other skilled employees at some 30-35% of annual employment costs, staff turnover consequent upon emigration is calculated to cost the South African economy a further R2.5 billion per annum (Kaplan et al, 1999).

Besides the adverse effect on economic growth, brain drain is also responsible for a reduction in a nation's capacity to develop as a 'knowledge society' and therefore compete effectively in the global economy (HSRC Fact Sheet 5, 2004).



#### *3.4.1.2. Industry sectors affected by the brain drain*

Although a variety of HSP emigrate abroad, certain industry sectors within South Africa have experienced a higher percentage of brain drain than others. Some of these HSP in these specific sectors are headhunted precisely for their known high standard of skills, for example SA medical staff and teachers. At any one stage, up to 5,000 South Africans was teaching in London alone (SA brain drain dilemma, 2004).

Other industries that are affected by the SA skills migration abroad are the information technology (IT) industry, engineering, senior business staff, teaching and the health sector - predominantly doctors and nurses (The Star: 1 August 2001). This concurs with Table 2.1, displaying net losses in skills in almost all of the above-mentioned sectors. Business consultancy McKinsey agrees with this assessment noting that over 28% of the University of Cape Town's doctoral graduates now live overseas. Most are medical doctors (43%); others hold commerce (30%); education (27%); science (26%)

and engineering doctorates (Pile, 2001). Cohen's (1996/1997) research found similar results, but found 24% of the emigrants to have a professional background in accounting.

### 3.4.2 Social & Health Implications

In no other industry sector is the effect of the brain drain of HSP felt more by the general South African population as in the health sector. The brain drain of skilled nurses and doctors from Africa to better paid jobs in Britain and other overseas countries is jeopardising the global fight against the HIV/Aids epidemic (Africa's brain drain jeopardizes, 2004).

The flight of SA health skill professionals is taking place at a time when 11% or 5 million people of the total population of South Africa is HIV positive (Dorrington, 2004) and the Aids epidemic is already increasing the burden on the health system (Crush, 2004) by 'killing off' large numbers of people in their most productive years. Leonard Rubenstein, executive director of Physicians for Human Rights summed the situation up by saying "we have a terrible paradox, which is how can we possibly expect to meet the needs of people with Aids when the workforce is not only declining but the prospects for further decline are great" (Africa's brain drain jeopardises, 2004). Randall Tobias, the US Global Aids co-ordinator added: "In places like Africa, the Caribbean and Southeast Asia there is a desperate lack of health care workers and infrastructure. All the AIDS drugs in the world won't do any good if they're stuck in warehouses with no place to go" (Africa's brain drain jeopardises, 2004).

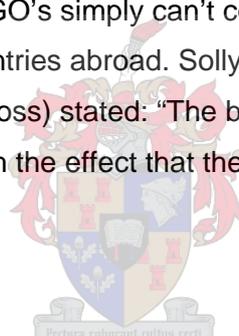
The scale of the problem is evident in countries like Malawi, where only 28% of nursing posts were filled in 2003, down from 47% in 1998, the government says. South Africa, which has the world's highest number of sufferers, has vacancies for 32 000 nurses. In Zambia, only 50 of the 600 doctors who have been trained since independence in 1964 remain in the country. Many of these English-speaking workers have headed for better careers and more pay in Britain, the US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. (SABC News, July 15, 2004).

More than 25% of all South African doctors who graduated between 1990 and 1997 are currently working abroad (Catalogue of woe, 2001). The number of doctors leaving the

country is so high that the Department of Health has been forced to request overseas countries to stop actively recruiting SA doctors (SA brain drain thrice, 2001).

Professor Daniel Ncayiyana, editor of the South African Medical Journal, says in a recent editorial:” The loss of practitioners in the public sector, and of highly qualified specialists in the academic complexes, undermines the country’s capacity to produce future doctors, to train future specialists, and to generate the research necessary of the effective planning of the nations’ health services, including primary care and public health. In terms of today’s actual cost of producing a doctor, this represents about R600-million of direct aid to New Zealand by South Africa which, on the face of it, is quite unconscionable” (Caelters, 1999).

The brain drain is also affecting the Non Governmental Organisation (NGO) sector in South Africa. Too few social workers are left in this sector to cope with the rising numbers of vulnerable people. NGO’s simply can’t compete with higher salaries offered in government and in countries abroad. Solly Mokgata, chair of the National Coalition for Social Services (Nacoss) stated: “The brain drain from the NGO sector has paralysed services with the effect that the poor are in distress” (Brain drain crippling, 2004).



### 3.4.3 Positive implications

Not everyone agrees that brain drain always has negative implications for host countries. There have been some indications that emigration can, in some contexts, have a positive impact on development through the influx of remittance, their possible return to their home country and the potential to harness the diaspora to assist economic growth at home (Hugo 2003, as cited in Hugo 2004). Remittance can be defined as sums of money that a migrant worker sends back to his or her country of origin. Remittances can be significant in terms of the GDP of developing countries and amount to 25% of the GDP of Tonga, Lesotho and Jordan (Wimaladharna et al, 2004). Table 3.2 details remittances by country for the year 2001 as a % of the exports and a % of the GDP.

**Table 3. 2 Remittances send back to their home country**

<b>Exploiting the brain drain</b>			
<b>What emigrants send back to their country of birth</b>			
<b>Country</b>	<b>Remittances (US\$)</b>	<b>% of exports</b>	<b>% of GDP</b>
Yemen	1,1bn	67.0	25.1
Bangladesh	974m	33.5	2.9
Eritrea	141m	83.2	23.4
Mali	109m	24.1	4.4
Comores	13.7m	31.1	6.0

Source: International organisation for migration. (June 2001). *Turning the brain drain into financial gain. Financial Mail.*

In Yemen remittances for 2001 accounted for 25% of the GDP. For the year 2005, remittances are set to exceed \$232 billion, nearly 60% higher than the number just four years ago, according to the World Bank, which tracks the figures. It is said that \$166.9 billion goes to poor countries; nearly double the amount in 2000. In many of these countries, the remittance money from migrants has now exceeded exports, and exceeds direct foreign aid from other governments, according to a recent article in Time Magazine (Follow the money, 2005). Dilip Ratha, a senior economist for the World Bank and co-author of a new Bank report on remittances, believes the true figure for remittances for 2005 is probably closer to \$350 billion, since migrants are estimated to send one-third of their money using unofficial methods, including taking it home by hand. The money is never reported to tax officials and does not appear on any records. One of the main advantages of remittances is that unlike aid or private investment flows, they reach the poor directly and the poor decide how the money is spent (Wimaladharna et al, 2004).

In migrants' countries of origin, escalating desires (for things like better education and bigger homes) help drive the remittances. Ironically, economists calculate that the poorer the migrants are, the more money they dispatch. "There is enormous social pressure to send money home," says Khalid Koser, a geography professor at University College London, who in October co-authored a report for the Global Commission on International Migration in Geneva, which researched governments' immigration policies. Koser found that many migrants scrape by in first-world cities, depriving themselves of basic comforts in order to "keep people alive" back home.

But it is not only the migrants that suffer - remittances can also have a less positive effect on the country of origin's economy. Experts argue that the remittance money allows poor countries to put off basic decisions of economic management, like reforming their tax-collection systems and building decent schools. "Everyone loves money that flows in with no fiscal implications," says Devesh Kapur, a specialist on migration and professor of government at the University of Texas in Austin. "They see it as a silver bullet." (Follow the money, 2005).

It is clear therefore that remittances from expatriate citizens can substantially boost a country's economy in the short term at least. The contribution of foreign skilled workers to economic growth and achievement in host countries, in particular to research, innovation and entrepreneurship is increasingly recognised. Examples of this are the number of foreign-born US Nobel Prize winners or creators of global high tech companies such as Intel or eBay (Cervantes and Guellec, 2002).

It is evident from chapter 2 that globalisation do play a part in the ongoing brain drain and brain circulation pattern. Rapid globalisation has created 'pull factors' that are hard to resist (Abedian, 2001). These pull factors are for example, much higher remuneration packages, the promise of less uncertainty and a more peaceful environment and generally a better lifestyle prospect. Crush (2004) has a different viewpoint, stating that 'push factors' are of much more importance than 'pull factors' in pre-disposing people to leave. 'Push factors' like crime, personal safety and poor working conditions rank very highly in South Africa. Globalisation however, is not the reason for the existence of these phenomena, but merely an attributing factor. Perhaps the reasons why HSP migrate are a combination of "push" and "pull" factors? The following section will discuss the possible motivators for HSP to leave South Africa and migrate abroad.

### **3.5 Push and Pull Factors causing South Africans to emigrate**

The World Competitiveness Yearbook, put together by Swiss-based business school IMD, reports that in a rating of countries where well-educated people are likely to remain, SA comes 46<sup>th</sup> out of a list of 60 (IMD: 2005). This statistic is disturbing to say the least. Therefore, besides refugee migration, why does South African HSP migrate when they seemingly enjoy a good quality of life / standard of living in their native country?

### 3.5.1 Pull Factors

Developed countries can offer certain benefits or opportunities for HSP that South Africa cannot match. According to an IMF report of 1999, pull factors in developing countries include: wage differentials, differences in the quality of life, educational opportunities for children, job security as well as the desire to interact with a broader group of similarly skilled colleagues (South Africa hit, 2002).

One of the main pull factors for the brain drain phenomenon seems to be financial. Dr. Dejene Aredo a senior economist at Addis Ababa University believes that higher wages, better access to information and the dominance of western culture and values act as a magnet to African professionals to relocate to the western countries. A key finding from an earlier ITWeb annual survey was that IT salaries in South Africa are not keeping up with inflation – with overall average increases in the sector coming in at 9% and the inflation figure at 11, 8% in 2003 (Stewart, 2003). Lower wages in Africa is also one of the reasons why African expatriates don't return. "An African professional will not resign from his 50,000-dollar-a-year job to accept a 500-dollar-a-year job in Africa", said Dale Emeagwali, a Nigerian scientist based in the United States (Brain drain colour blind, 2002).

Another major pull factor is the additional opportunities on offer in the developed nations. After the restructuring of South African sport teams and the consequent Kolpak agreement (that allows players from South Africa to play as local players in the English Leagues) the opportunity to establish them in the first class scene for young cricket players was a major pull factor (Brain Drain of SA cricket, 2004). South African rugby has also been affected by the brain drain. "Public discussion of a possible rugby exodus began when Rob van der Valk, former Springbok coach Nick Mallet's commercial manager, told a business breakfast last month that many top players were looking to further their careers abroad" (Cash lures Springboks, 2002). Many South Africans have seized opportunities thrown up since South Africa's economic isolation ended ten years ago (South Africa hit, 2002). Professionals in South Africa are eager to take advantage of the career opportunities in the advanced industrialised countries of the world (HSRC Fact Sheet 5, 2004).

### 3.5.2 Push Factors

Push factors for leaving South Africa to live and work in other countries, normally include crime in South Africa, perceptions of a high cost of living and levels of taxation, the perceived decline in the standard of public services, notably health and education delivery (HSRC Fact Sheet 5 2004). A South African migration consultant, Dirkje Oberholzer, regard the economy and crime as major push factors:” Every time something happens with the rand, or if there is a big crime splashed in the papers, the morning after we are flooded with calls and inquiries from people wanting to emigrate” (SA brain drain thrice, 2001).

South Africa is known for its high levels of crime and not surprisingly, crime has become one of the major push factors for leaving South Africa. A study done by Unisa found the main reasons behind brain drain to be fear of crime, fear of the Aids epidemic and the high unemployment rate (SA hit, 2002). The crime wave in South Africa is propelling the executive brain drain. Emigration was the third highest reason for turnover of executive personnel in the year to end July 1997, behind retirements (36.4%) and moving to another company (22.4%) (Business Times, 1997).

In South Africa political change has also pushed up the rate of skilled white emigration. South Africa’s skills migration is now among the highest in Africa (Haffajee, 2001). Even political changes in other neighbouring countries like Zimbabwe increase the brain drain of South Africans. A migration consultant states:” We also had a lot of inquiries after the farm invasions and violence in Zimbabwe” (SA brain drain thrice, 2001). As evident from the historical overview earlier in this chapter, one can assume that the political situation in the country was a major driving force behind the exodus of professionals during apartheid (Bailey, 2003).

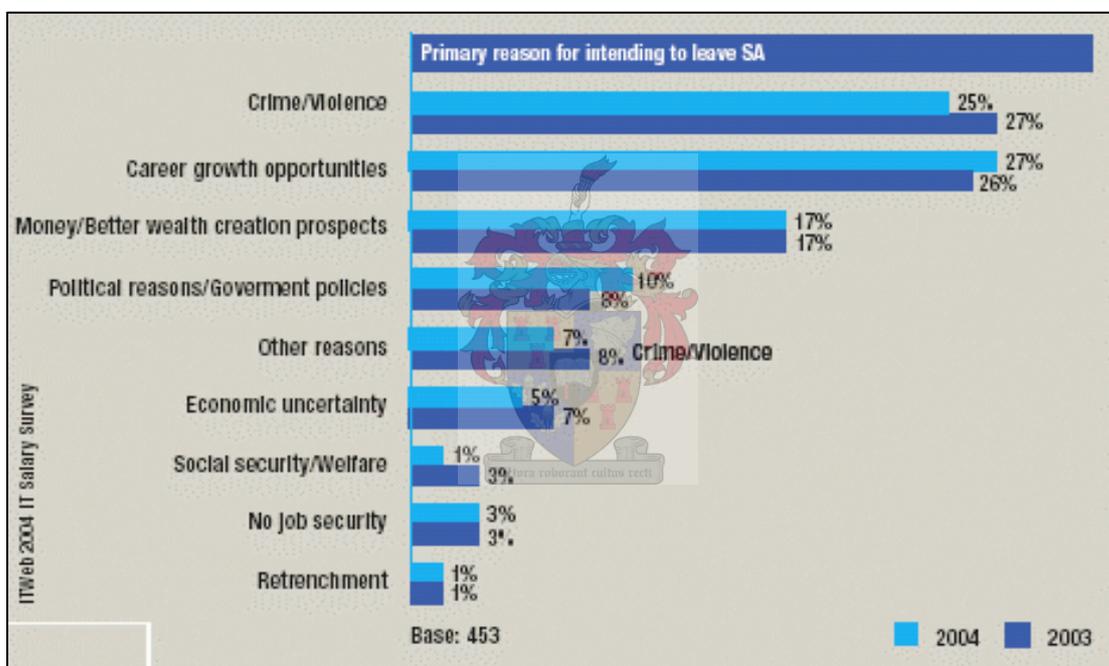
Professional South Africans are also being headhunted from abroad. South Africans have “earned a reputation as hard workers...” and are considered to have a good western education but will work for less money than other westerners. One recruitment specialist remarks: “The attitude towards South Africans is normally positive, so they are placeable” (Theobald, 2003).

According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), there is a renewed interest in the recruitment of new immigrant workers in many

industrialised countries, partly explained by their ageing populations. Many of these countries are seeking to attract highly skilled foreign workers (BBC Fact File, global migration).

In 1996 emigration of IT professionals accounted for 14% of the IT staff turnover (Emigration surge hits, 1996). Luckily for the IT industry, this trend seems to be slowing down and some overseas IT professionals are returning to South Africa (Burrows, 2004). During this period of rapid skills migration, IT Web researched the reasons for the IT brain drain.

**Figure 3. 8 The main reasons why IT professionals leave South Africa**



Source: IT Web, 30 April 2004.

According to SA Medical Association (Sama) a combination of “push factors” is to blame for the brain drain of health personnel. These “push factors’ include lack of adequate and appropriate public-sector facilities, shrinking personal income, crime, involuntary community service and affirmative action (Catalogue of woe, 2001). Failing standards in education was cited by 84% of HSP who emigrated as a contributing factor to emigration (Dispatch Online, 17 March 1998).

### 3.6 Containing brain drain

Most Southern African countries adopt a “brain train” strategy, rather than “brain gain” strategies (importing skills to replace those departing). Their rationale is that training of sufficient numbers of citizens in new skills is the only way to ensure that the skills base is not depleted in the long run. In theory, this makes a great deal of sense. Homegrown skilled people are more likely to be “loyal” and to remain when others might leave. But is it so? The whole argument looks rather suspect if it can be shown that governments are, in fact, providing students not with skills to invest at home but passports to leave. In a globalising world of increased skills mobility, the opportunities for using skills as a ticket to a better life elsewhere are growing. What are the implications if the next generation of skilled people are just as likely to leave as their predecessors? If new graduates are simply preparing to leave, governments will have to fundamentally rethink their strategies on skills retention (Crush et al, 2005). And some progress has been made in containing or at least slowing down the brain drain in recent years. Below is a discussion of these counter measures.

#### 3.6.1 Counter measures to the brain drain

The brain drain problem is not specific to South Africa and other countries have tried to contain or reverse the brain drain effect of their HSP abroad. Some of these strategies and counter measures according to Meyer et al (1997) and Cohen (1996/1997) include:

- The taxation theory. Taxation in theory could take two forms; either taxing the individual emigrant or the intended host country. This theory was popular in the 1970's and 1980's, however this policy was never implemented.
- Regulation through international norms. This policy was initiated by the UN and is based on agreements between developed countries and developing countries by which developed countries agree not to entice highly skilled people from developing countries to immigrate to their countries. The success of this strategy depends on the individual agreements between countries of origin and host countries.
- Conservation/Restrictive policies. These policies are aimed at delaying emigration, for example adding extra years to medical student's training.
- A relaxed market-driven solution is to ignore the emigration of HSP and let a brain drain from poorer countries replace lost skills. This strategy's success depends on various factors. Firstly, the availability of skills from poorer countries, secondly the ability to attract only HSP within industry sectors that are experiencing a shortage

of skills and thirdly the ability to regulate the numbers of the foreign HSP coming in, as to protect the national HSP from competition with foreign HSP.

- Another variation of the market solution is to recruit in target countries while developing immigration incentives (for example: in Canada foreign doctors working in rural areas are given accelerated immigration status).
- Replacement recruitment strategy. Again this solution ignores the emigration of HSP, but then actively recruits HSP from other countries to replace the skills lost (Crush 2004).

According to Brown, M and Van Staden, C (1998) “These policies were formulated in the hope of counteracting the brain drain, but they were not very successful. Alternative policies were thus needed to counter the brain drain phenomenon”.

Bailey (2003) argues that more recent and successful strategies have focused on brain gain. Unlike any of the other strategies, these approaches view the skills abroad as an asset rather than a loss.

- Repatriation – refers to physically relocating expatriates to their country of origin (Cohen: 1996/1997). One of the limitations of this policy is that it is very costly to repatriate skilled labour. A reason for this is the need to offer comparable salaries and up to date technological resources (Meyer, 1996). This strategy only attracts small numbers of expatriates will to return to their native country and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) was able to recruit only 52 South Africans from abroad during their campaign in 1992/1993. (Brown & Van Staden, 1998).
- Utilising the intellectual diaspora of a country. In other words, getting expatriates to contribute to the development process in their native country without returning home permanently (Meyer & Kaplan, 1998). This approach is increasingly evident in countries throughout the world and in South Africa. The South African Network of Skills Abroad (SANSA) is discussed in more detail later in this chapter. The apparent value of this approach is that it does not rely on a prior infrastructural investment in the home country since it capitalises on the resources in other countries. Through its intellectual diaspora, a country has access to the professional or knowledge networks in the host country, as well as resources, equipment and opportunities that are not available locally (Bailey, 2003).

- Countries like the USA, the UK, Germany, Canada, Australia and New Zealand enjoy various benefits because of their selective immigration policies. Their experiences show that for countries experiencing a brain drain, skills immigration can help to replace the skills lost through emigration in the short term and in many cases, add value to the local economy (Bailey, 2003).

Although only 4% of South Africans agreed the government should look into the brain drain problem in South Africa, according to a recent SABC-Markinor survey, the South African Government and other organisations are seriously looking for ways to combat this problem (SA wants more, 2004). This has been most prevalent in the health sector in South Africa.

#### *3.6.1.1 Health Sector Counter Measures:*

In late 2001, South Africa undertook not to recruit any physicians or nurses, except under specific agreements with countries of origin. At the same time the country concluded agreement with Cuba and Germany for the temporary import of doctors. There are now close to 500 Cuban doctors practising in rural areas and townships in South Africa (Crush, 2004). Although this “replacement recruitment” strategy was a quick fix, it is not the only possible solution for the health sector brain drain in SA.

According to the Minister of Health, Manto Tshabalala-Msimang, the health ministry is working on a strategy to retain health workers based on financial and non-financial packages. The Health Department and Finance has set aside more than R60 million to improve security at health centres throughout the country to protect health workers. The ministry is working closely with other Commonwealth members to complete recruitment strategy of health professionals (Bid to fight, 2003). By improving the security at health centres across the country, the ministry is improving the working conditions of health professionals. Working conditions emerged as the single most important pre-disposing factor for health professional emigration (Crush, 2004).

In a further bid to stem brain drain from the health sector in 2004, the Minister of Health finalised an agreement between trade unions, the Public Service Health and Welfare Sectoral Bargaining Council that allows for the payment of scarce skills allowances and rural allowances to designated health professionals in the national and provincial health departments. The aim is to attract and retain health professionals with scarce skills to

the public service and to entice them to work in rural areas. The rural allowance, which would apply to 33 000 full-time health professionals, would vary from 8% to 22% of the practitioner's annual salary, depending on area and occupational category. The scarce skills allowance, ranging from 10% - 15% of annual salary, would apply to 62 000 full-time health professionals (Health sector will get more, 2004). It is too early to tell if this strategy was successful.

Even if the new strategies provide SA health personnel with safer environments and / or higher wages, nothing was in place to stop developed countries from headhunting these skilled health professionals. Therefore, a new Draft Resolution on International Migration of Health Personnel is being sponsored by South Africa at the World Health Assembly in Geneva, Switzerland. The new resolution proposes that rich countries that are poaching health professionals from developing countries might soon be forced to compensate countries they poach from. The resolution also proposes that an international convention on the recruitment of health personnel be drawn up in order to manage the brain drain. More than 20 countries have already signed the South African sponsored resolution and more are expected to come on board. Countries that are poaching health workers include Canada, the United Kingdom, Saudi Arabia and Austria (Poachers to pay up, 2004).

It is unlikely that one strategy alone will solve the health sector brain drain dilemma, but hopefully a few of the new counter measures can slow it down.

#### *3.6.1.2 Education sector counter measures*

There are conflicting views on whether South Africa is currently experiencing a shortage of teachers. According to Professor Kader Asmal, South African Minister of Education (in a BBC interview in April 2004), there is not a shortage of teachers in South Africa, but the brain drain of teachers to the UK and other countries should be closely monitored to ensure that we are not in a position where our teachers are needed and not available.

South Africa is now participating in the Commonwealth Working Group on Teacher Recruitment, which is developing a protocol that will govern the way in which teachers are recruited and utilised internationally.

The Group deals with the concerns of Commonwealth countries and especially focus on smaller states that are worst affected by the brain drain of teachers. It also deals with teachers on an individual basis, some of who have been subjected to very unpleasant and exploitative practises in the past. It will ensure that if teachers are recruited, this is done within the labour laws of the “source country”. For the Group, this would be on a non-discriminatory basis, including race and gender, but also outlawing exclusion on the basis of a positive HIV status. The protocol will also ensure that teachers are provided with full information before taking up a position in a foreign country, and that the source country is informed about the numbers recruited (SA’s brain drain dilemma, 2004).

Professor Asmal summarised the potential problem of brain drain of teachers by saying that any country should have the right to refuse any organised or systemic international recruitment of its teachers, whether by governments or agencies, should the circumstances require it.

### **3.6.2 Higher local salaries**

As in the health industry, higher wages in most industries seem to be the best counter measure for brain drain in South Africa. Brain Khumalo, a senior partner of Leaders Unlimited Korn/Ferry, the largest executive recruitment firm in South Africa states:” It is imperative that employers invest in their workers to prevent them from leaving the country. An employee is hardly going to look for greener pastures when he or she is paid appropriately and treated well in their home country.” As discussed earlier in this chapter, this could eliminate one of the pull factors of South Africans emigrating.

Mr. Khumalo further stated that South Africa desperately needed the input and expertise of these men and women succumbing to brain drain to help grow the economy and to create jobs for the more than one million unemployed people in South Africa (International salaries, 2004).

The Congress of SA Trade Unions (Cosatu) agreed with Mr. Khumalo that ways have to found to increase skilled workers salaries to convince them to stay in South Africa. Cosatu spokesperson, Patrick Craven, further said that if South Africa could expand its skills development programmes and end the skills shortage, South Africa would have enough workers with the skills South Africa requires (International salaries, 2004).

### 3.6.3 Organisations focussing on stemming the brain drain problem

#### 3.6.3.1 SANSA

The University of Cape Town, the National Research Foundation (NRF) and the South African Government are attempting to stem the brain drain by using the skills of South Africans abroad. The South African Network of Skills Abroad (SANSA) has been set up and is calling on South African expatriates to make their skills available. SANSA is an example of a project aimed at making use of the intellectual diaspora of its HSP abroad. (This strategy was discussed earlier in this section). The thinking behind SANSA is that skilled expatriates are seen as an available human asset if the country of origin knows how to take advantage of it (Kaplan and Meyer, 1998; Kaplan 1996). The human resources of this “diaspora” could contribute significantly to the achievement of South Africa’s cultural, social and economic goals (SANSA, 2005).

The National Research Foundation (NRF) is responsible for the development of the SANSA programme to the benefit of its members and stakeholders. The network has been formally endorsed by the Department of Science and Technology. It has strong support from universities, science councils and from prominent South Africans – both in South Africa and abroad.

The range of contributions envisaged for expatriates include helping local graduates to study abroad, participating in training or research with South Africans, transferring technology, transmitting information and research results, facilitating business contacts and initiating research and commercial projects.

SANSA has now gathered almost 1800 members, spread in 57 countries across the globe. Their qualifications, professional experience and positions as well as their motivation to contribute to development in South Africa are very high. They are involved in a wide range of fields of expertise and work sectors. Therefore, they offer numerous possibilities to expand South Africa’s knowledge base (Kaplan et al, 1999).

#### 3.6.3.2 Homecoming Revolution

The Homecoming Revolution has grown into a multi-pronged campaign that not only offers a mass of inspiring reasons to come home but also assists in the nitty-gritty of arranging relocations. This campaign initially started out as an informal communication

project run by a small group of “home comers” to encourage South Africans to return to South Africa.

It is the brainchild of Angel Jones and Nina Morris, who in early 2003 began spreading the following message to South Africans scattered across the globe: “Don’t wait until it gets better, come home and help make it better.”

“The Homecoming Revolution is here to fight the global war for human capital. We need people with skills to come home and build this country. We need to spread the news about how great South Africa is doing so that we can increase international investor confidence,” Angel Jones says.

The initiative gained momentum in 2004 when First National Bank came on board as its sponsor, and it has also since partnered with top-notch companies that assist people who have decided to come home. This extends from helping “home comers” search for jobs; homes; schools; sort out legal and financial matters; and even assisting them with pet vaccinations (Come home, 2004).

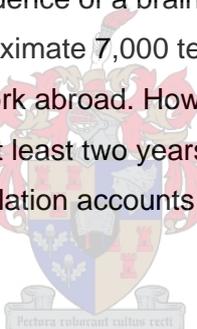
### **3.7 Evidence of a South African brain circulation pattern**

Recently skills migration diversified to not only include brain drain but also brain circulation. As stated in the chapter 2, brain circulation refers to professionals leaving their home country to work and live in another country, but return permanently to their home country at some point in time. Research done by the HSRC (Fact Sheet 5, 2004) points to globalisation as an increasingly pervasive influence on skills migration and brain circulation; "... the global village offers an open market for employment and career opportunities to the highly skilled and, in recent times, the term 'brain circulation' has been used to capture the increasing flow of professionals around the world. “ This phenomenon is also evolving in South Africa – Tracy Bailey reports that: "Apart from the brain drain, we have some evidence of what we call the brain circulation. This is the return of people to the country after about five years. They go overseas to pay off debts or on a gap year and then come back" (Robinson, 2003).

Even though many emigrating South Africans may intend to do so permanently, more and more South Africans are leaving South Africa to work in other countries, only to return after a period of time to South Africa for a variety of different reasons.

Sometimes the grass is not greener on the other side and others never intended to stay permanently in the host country. In certain instances brain circulation is much more common than brain drain. For example, the brain circulation pattern is especially applicable to South Africans living in the United Arab Emirates where foreigners are not allowed to become UAE citizens. The sponsorship of the employment company allows foreigners temporary residency permits. However since 2002 residence permits are provided to foreigners owning freehold property in Dubai, UAE.

IT Web Magazine's Salary Survey 2004 backs reports from recruiters who say South Africans working abroad are flocking back home, while locals are not inclined to rush overseas anymore. Local specialist ICT recruiters polled ahead of the Salary Survey this year said the brain drain reversal began last year and this trend is growing (Burrows, 2004). This brain circulation of IT professionals seems to be due to the collapse of Information Technology Industries abroad (SA brain drain under spotlight, 2002). There is recent evidence of a brain circulation in another South African industry sector as well. Of the approximate 7,000 teachers that graduate annually, 1,890 (27%) leave the country to work abroad. However, most of these teachers grab the opportunity to work abroad for at least two years and then return (Rademeyer, 2005). This confirms that brain circulation accounts for at least some percentage of the brain drain.



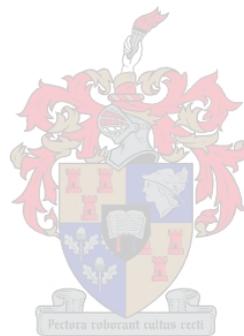
According to a poll done by Homecoming Revolution on their web page, 43% of South Africans currently living abroad would like to return home on a permanent basis to South Africa (Familie is geelwortel, 2004). These expatriates form part of a potential brain circulation pattern of South Africans which could benefit South Africa's economy tremendously in the long run.

Herewith follow a summary of the main conclusions from the literature reviewed in this chapter:

- It is evident that the brain drain and brain circulation phenomena are very real and present in the South Africa. Even though the brain drain has been in process prior to the end of Apartheid (pre-1994), the figures suggest an increase in the number of skilled and educated South Africans emigrating abroad. There is some evidence of a brain circulation movement, but currently there is no way of assessing the number of expatriate South Africans who could potentially form part of this phenomenon.
- The official statistics on the number of South Africans emigrating is flawed and independent research suggests that the actual number could be three times as many. Analysing data from receiving/ host countries of the number of South Africans immigrating provide more reliable estimates.
- South African emigration outweighs South African immigration by far. A high number of immigrants are economically inactive and cannot replace the skills lost.
- The brain drain is more prevalent in certain industry sectors in South Africa. Health personnel, teachers, IT professionals, engineers and senior business staff are more likely to emigrate.
- The average age of skilled South Africans emigrating is between 25 and 44 years of age, but older emigrants are on the increase.
- Although the majority of skilled South Africans that emigrate are white, the number of black skilled South Africans emigrating is increasing. It seems that race is no longer a determining factor for the South African skills migration.
- Men are more likely to emigrate than women, although the gap seems to be closing in recent years. Women are also more likely to live outside of South Africa temporarily and thus more likely to form part of brain circulation rather than brain drain.
- Most of the emigrated South Africans now reside in developed countries and a large percentage is divided between the UK, Australia and New Zealand, the USA and Canada and the rest of Europe. Only a small percentage of South Africans migrate to the Middle East.
- The brain drain has several economical and social implications for South Africa.
- When assessing the motivators for leaving South Africa to live and work abroad, reasons can be divided into push and pull factors. Push factors relate to unattractive or negative aspects of living in South Africa, for instance high

crime levels and high levels of unemployment. Pull factors relate to attractive or positive aspects of living in the country abroad, for instance higher wages and safer environments.

- Several strategies have been implemented to counter the brain drain in South Africa. Most of these strategies have focussed on the health and education sector. The government is not alone in the fight to restrict the effects of the brain drain; recently other private organisations have launched initiatives as well.
- Although a brain circulation pattern is becoming evident, it is unclear how many South Africans form part of this migration vs. the brain drain. As not much literature exists on the brain circulation of South Africans, few conclusions can be made at this stage.



## **Chapter 4**

### **The United Arab Emirates as a receiving country of South African emigrants**

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#### **4.1 Introduction**

Due to a good bi-lateral relationship between South Africa and Dubai, several trade agreements and the added advantage of no tax duties, Dubai and the UAE is fast becoming one of the top destinations for South Africans wanting to live and work overseas. The South African embassy in the UAE has reported that South Africa's exports to the UAE have increased from USD 251 million in 2002 to USD 410.5 million in 2004. Exports during the first quarter of 2005 stand at USD 120.7 million (Etihad to fly to Johannesburg, 2005). The total number of business and holiday travellers who spend a minimum of 48 hours in the UAE has far surpassed the 40,000 persons mark annually, according to H. E. Dikgang Moopeloa, South African Ambassador to the UAE (Etihad to fly to Johannesburg, 2005).

The UAE differs from other developed countries favoured by emigrating South Africans like England, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and America in a number of respects, which are discussed later in this chapter. Firstly, a general overview of Dubai and the United Arab Emirates is given to place the research study into context. This overview was compiled from various sources listed in the bibliography at the end of the chapter.

Dubai is the emirate with the largest expatriates' population and it is believed that the majority of South Africans living in the UAE reside in Dubai. Dubai is therefore discussed in more detail than the other emirates.

#### **4.2 Overview of Dubai and the United Arab Emirates**

The thriving economy of Dubai, the state-of-the-art infrastructure and standard of living that is unsurpassed almost anywhere else in the world, has earned Dubai the name: "Pearl of the Gulf"

**Figure 4. 1 Map of the Arabian Gulf, showing location of Dubai**



#### **4.2.1 Location**

The United Arab Emirates lies along 83,600 square kilometres and includes over 200 islands and coral reefs on the Arabian Peninsula in the Middle East. Strategically located at the crossroads between the East and the West, Dubai is recognised as the gateway to the Gulf. The country is largely desert with some agricultural areas. The climate is hot and humid with a low annual rainfall. Temperatures range from a low of 10 degrees Celsius in January to the high 40 degrees Celsius in July.

#### **4.2.2 Historical Overview**

Dubai was originally a small fishing settlement until it was taken over in approximately 1830 by a branch of the Bani Yas tribe from the Liwa oasis led by the Maktoum family. Traditional activities included herding sheep and goats; cultivating dates; fishing and pearling and trading. By the 1900's Dubai was reputed to have the largest souks (markets) on the Gulf coast, with 350 shops in the Deira district alone. But while trade developed, especially with India and Iran, Dubai remained politically a protectorate of Britain as part of the Trucial States extending along the northern coast of the Arabian Peninsula. On the British withdrawal in 1971, Dubai came together with Abu Dhabi, Sharjah, Ajman, Umm Al Quwain, and Fujairah to create the federation of the United Arab Emirates. Ras Al Khaimah joined the federation a year later. The highest federal authority in the country is the Supreme Council of Rulers, made up of the hereditary

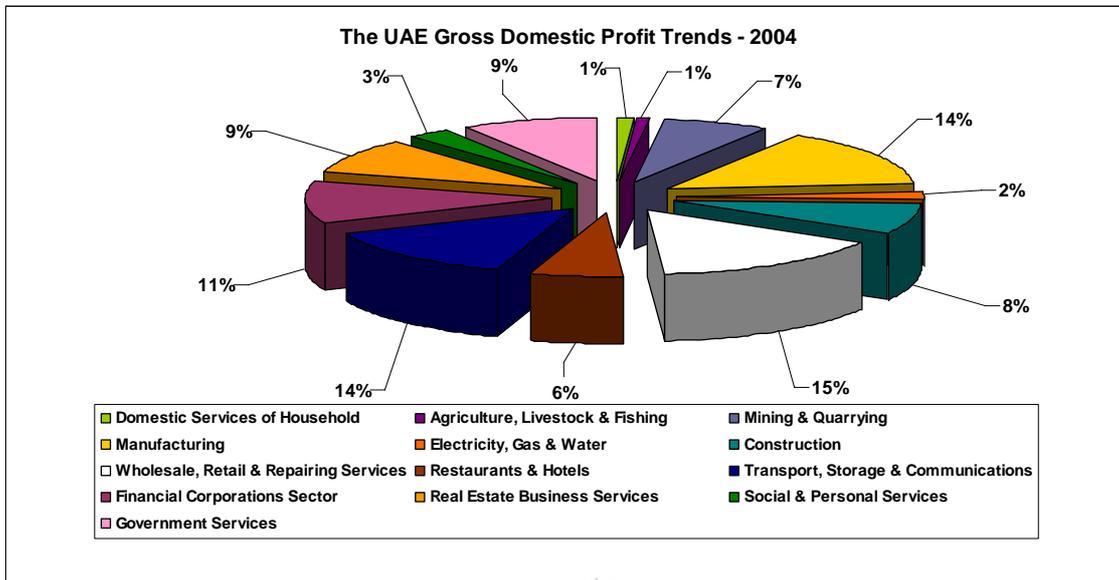
rulers of the seven emirates. Each emirate has its own ruler and under the constitution reserves considerable powers, including control over mineral and oil rights.

Modern Dubai is the product of the past 30 years of intensive development. This development has been greatly facilitated by the discovery of oil and its production from the 1960s, but Dubai's growth has always depended partly on its inhabitants' own entrepreneurial abilities. A lot of credit for Dubai's development can be traced to the vision of the late Ruler, His Highness Sheikh Rashid bin Saeed Al Maktoum, who ensured that Dubai's oil revenues, despite being relatively modest in comparison to other countries in the region, were utilised to maximum effect. His work has been continued by HH Sheikh Maktoum bin Rashid Al Maktoum, and his brothers. The result is that Dubai is constantly building up its infrastructure of transport facilities, schools, hospitals, tourism developments and other amenities of an advanced society. Dubai was transformed into one of the most prosperous countries in the world at an alarming pace and today has a mixed economy with the most productive assets owned by the government of the individual Emirates, but considerable scope is given to private enterprise. An economic overview of Dubai and the UAE is given below.

#### 4.2.3 Economic Overview

The 2003 UAE GDP was approximately AED 293 billion. The two largest emirates, Abu Dhabi and Dubai provide over 80% of UAE's income. The latest figures indicate Dubai's GDP as AED 98.1 billion for 2004. GDP growth of Dubai in 2004 according to the Dubai Municipality was 16.7%. Dubai has a diverse economy which is 90% non-oil based. Currently the booming real estate sector contributes 9% of the GDP, with construction at 8% of the GDP. The oil sector is responsible for only 6% of the GDP. As seen below, other major contributing sectors are transport, storage & communications; manufacturing and wholesale / retail trade and repairing services.

**Figure 4. 2 Pie Chart detailing the gross domestic profit trends of Dubai for the year 2004**



Source: UAE Ministry of Planning

The UAE has one of the most liberal business environments in the Middle East and foreign investment is actively encouraged. Investments that aid the diversification of the economy are particularly favoured. Fuelled by low rates of inflation and a strong GDP, the UAE economy continues to grow. Substantial growth in the resident population has also assisted in developing the retail markets in the UAE (Source: Dubai Municipality, 2004).

#### 4.2.3.1 Real Estate Overview

According to the Dubai Municipality, Dubai is a city with a 20-year track record of strong economic growth and will continue to attract foreign and regional inward investment. In the pursuit of excellence the Government has always looked upon the private sector as full partners. With no personal, corporate or sales taxes, foreign direct investment has expanded strongly and mega projects have become synonymous with Dubai's development.

Since the freehold property market opened up to foreigners in 2002, Dubai has become known world wide for several unique major real estate developments. This overview of Dubai wouldn't be complete without a short summary of these projects.

Dubai boasts the highest skyline in the Middle East and famous developments in Dubai include the following:

- The 2 Tallest Hotels In The World (Emirates Hotel Tower and the Burj Al Arab)
- The World's Tallest All Residential Building (21<sup>st</sup> Century Tower)
- The World's Largest Themed Mall (Ibn Battuta)
- The World's Largest Retail Development (Dubai Mall)
- Soon To Include The Tallest Tower In The World (Burj Dubai)
- The 8<sup>th</sup> Wonder Of The World (The Palm)

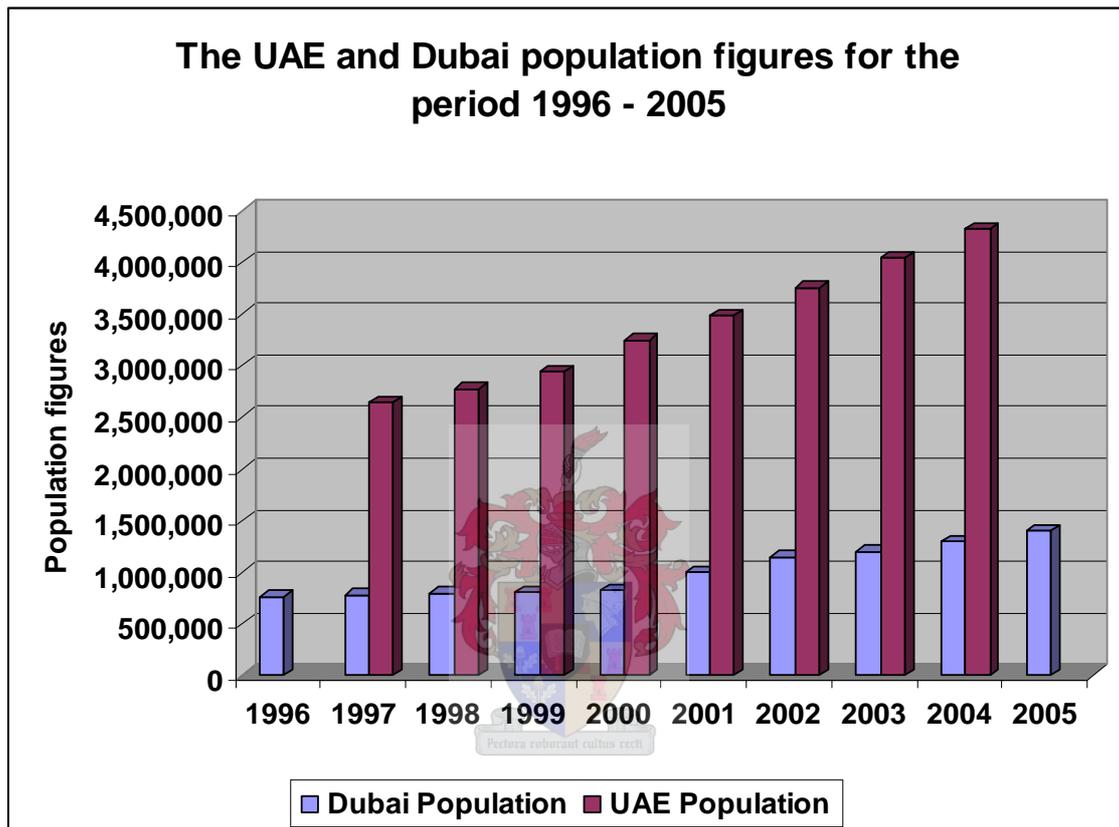
These major projects have transformed Dubai from a desert town into a futuristic city.



## 4.2.4 Demographic Overview

### 4.2.4.1 Population

Figure 4. 3 Graph showing the UAE and Dubai population growth per annum from 1996 – 2005



Source: UAE Ministry of Planning

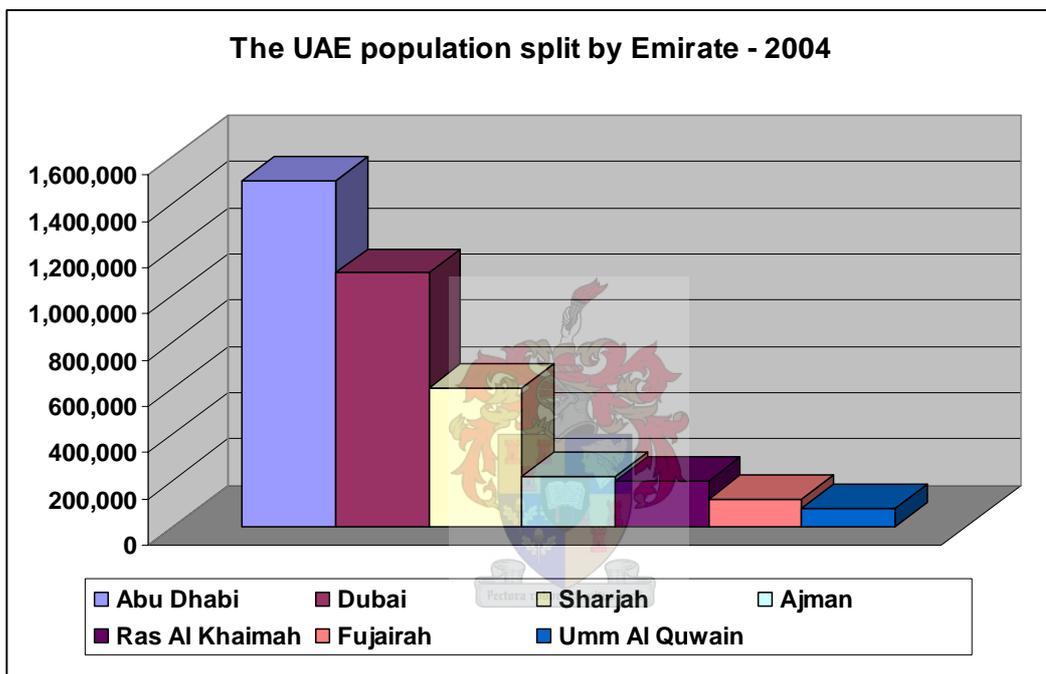
\* Statistics for the UAE population for the years 1996 and 2005 could not be verified and was therefore omitted.

Little attention has been paid to the relationship between economic growth and the demographics of the UAE. According to official estimates, the total population has increased by at least 68 percent since the last census – from 2.41 million in December 1995 to 4.04 million in mid 2003. Little information is in the public domain relating to changes in the composition and characteristics of the population.

The total population official estimate of the UAE in December 2004 was 4.330 million, of which locals form just 19%. An official source estimated that the UAE population would reach five million by the end of 2005 (Gulf News, 20 March 2005, p.2). Although

the UAE conducted censuses in 1968, 1975, 1980, 1985 and 1995, official details of the nationality distribution have never been released. The number of UAE nationals would be less than these figures since national households typically include some expatriates such as domestic servants. Furthermore, it is illegal for a man and women to live together in the UAE and census results are therefore not always accurate as many couples omit their partners' names and details in the census forms.

**Figure 4. 4 Column chart detailing the UAE population split by emirate for 2004**



Source: Dubai Municipality

With the exception of Qatar, the UAE has the highest percentage of foreigners of any country in the world, estimated at around 88%. There are long-established communities of expatriates.

After Abu Dhabi, Dubai has the second largest population in the UAE, with approximately 1.40 million residents in the metropolitan area of the Dubai emirate. Dubai comprises of a diverse and multi-cultural population with more than 185 nationalities. South Asians constitute around 60% of the total population. Other nationalities of the expatriate population in the UAE and Dubai include: Palestinians,

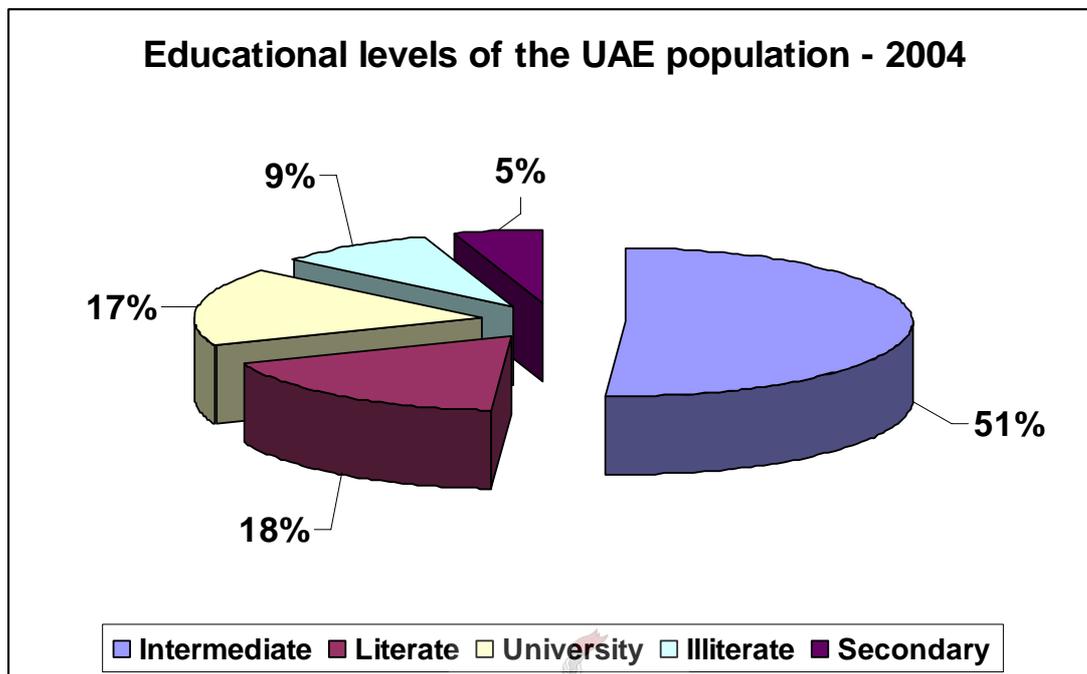
Egyptians, Jordanians, Yemenis, Omanis, Iranians, British, Americans, Australians, Russians, other western Europeans and South Africans.

#### *4.2.4.2 Age and gender distribution*

The ratio of males vs. females in the population of the UAE has been increasing gradually since the 1995 census, and is now one of the highest in the world. According to official estimates, as of mid 2003 the population of the UAE consisted of 2.75 million males and 1.30 million females. The UAE national population is almost equally divided, which means the UAE expatriate population has a male: female ratio of 2.6 to 1.

The UAE expatriate workforce is male dominated. It is standard to have male office boys (tea ladies) in companies in the UAE and the cleaning staff in the hotel industry is all male. Job advertisements in the local newspapers specify the gender (and sometimes even the race or nationality) of the prospective employees. Possible explanations for the high male to female ratio amongst expatriates in the UAE could be that the booming industries are either related to oil and gas or construction. Both are very male dominated career fields and the UAE has a large single expatriate bachelor population. A further explanation is that most companies' headquarters for the Gulf are seated in the UAE. Although the UAE is liberal in its views towards females in the work place, business travels for female employees alone to other Middle East countries (where branch offices or clients are based) like Saudi Arabia is not possible.

**Figure 4. 5 The education levels of the UAE population for 2004**



Source: UAE ministry of Planning

The UAE population is relatively young by world standards. The median age is approximately 27 years, which has not changed significantly from the 1995 census to 2003. The male population is somewhat older, with a median age of about 30 years compared to 20 years for females. In certain age brackets, especially over 40 years, there are 4 males for every 1 female. Expatriates mainly fall into the 20 - 44 age bracket and total approximately 1.8 million of the UAE labour work force. Although the UAE national population is maturing, immigration of young foreigners has kept the median age relatively low.

With the substantial commercial development forecasted for Dubai over the next 10 years, the government of Dubai has projected substantial increases in the resident population over this period. A high number of residences are needed due the high dependence on expatriate workers.

It is important to note that Dubai has an extremely high proportion of employment compared to its population, with an expected rate of 64% by 2008. 51% of the UAE population has an intermediate education, with 17% of the population graduating from

University. Unfortunately the education of women has been lagging behind in most Arab states. The UAE is working hard to remedy this inequality with more and more women enrolling for tertiary education in recent years. UNESCO estimated the literacy rate for the UAE population as 78% for woman vs. 74% for males in 2002 (Arab States Regional Report 2002: p.33).

According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (Arab Human Development Report, 2002), the Arab region has the lowest rate of women's participation in the work force. UNESCO (Arab States Regional Report 2002:p.11) states "One man in three in the Arab states is illiterate and one woman in two". It is important to add that the UNDP acknowledges the significant gains made in women's literacy and education in the Arab states: "Arab women have made considerable progress over the decades. The Arab region shows the fastest improvement in female education of any region, with female literacy expanding threefold since 1970, and primary and secondary enrolment doubling" (UNDP: Arab Human Development Report, 2002).

In demographic terms, the UAE market is profoundly segmented. Income levels, expenditure patterns and lifestyles differ widely depending on demographic characteristics such as age bracket and nationality group.



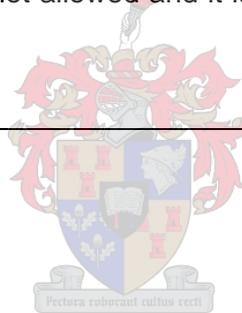
#### **4.2.5 Religious Overview**

This area was converted to Islam in the 7<sup>th</sup> century. Islam brought the basis of regional unity. It still dominates the cultural, social, moral, economic, legal and political spheres of life in Dubai. Approximately 96% of the UAE population is Muslim; other religions include Christians and Hindus. Religious freedom apply, with Catholic churches standing side by side with mosques in some areas in Dubai.

The UAE has no political parties and the rulers hold power on the basis of their dynastic position and their legitimacy in a system of tribal consensus. Rapid modernisation, enormous strides in education, and the influx of a large foreign population have changed the face of the society but have not fundamentally altered this traditional political system.

To summarise, the UAE differs from other South African brain drain and/or brain circulation destination countries in the following respects:

- The United Arab Emirates is located in the Middle East – a predominantly Arab speaking continent vs. Europe, Australasia and the Americas where English is widely spoken.
- The United Arab Emirates is a Muslim country vs. Europe, Australasia and the Americas where the predominant religions are Christian based.
- A royal family and not a democratic government like Western countries etc rule the United Arab Emirates.
- The UAE is a very young country especially vs. other destination countries like Great Britain.
- The local population in the UAE only accounts for 20% of the total population.
- Foreigners are never allowed citizenship in the UAE.
- The UAE is more conservative than other destination countries, for instance display of public affection is not allowed and it is illegal for couples to live together if they are not married.



## **Chapter 5**

# **Empirical investigation into South Africans in the United Arab Emirates**

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### **5.1 Methodology**

The aim of this in-depth study is to provide answers to the research problems by collecting mainly quantitative data from a non-representative sample of the South African population in the UAE.

#### **5.1.1 Target Population**

The target population for the survey was economically active South African passport holders currently living and working in the United Arab Emirates. This target population automatically exclude children, housewives and pensioners. The primary reason for this exclusion is that the brain drain and brain circulation phenomena focuses on the migration of skills; and therefore the loss or gain of these skills and education per country. If a person is unemployed (housewives) or uneducated (children) the country of origin won't necessarily "feel the loss" when the individual migrates. On the same principle the host country won't benefit from an unemployed expatriate. No person was excluded on grounds of race, gender or age as long as the individual met the above-mentioned criteria.



#### **5.1.2 Research design**

A lot of research has been done on skills migration and the brain drain phenomenon, but none has been done on the brain circulation and or brain drain reasons and patterns of South Africans in the UAE. In order to use the proposed study's newly generated information and to generalise the findings to other South African communities living abroad it was decided to do a quantitative study. A quantitative study generates more knowledge in this field that in turn can provide a basis for future and/or more specific studies.

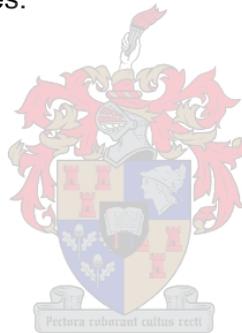
The information was gathered via a web-based survey. As the study is mainly descriptive and explanatory in nature, a survey as instrument tool was deemed appropriate. Babbie and Mouton in "The practise of Social Research" (2001), states survey research is useful as a tool of social inquiry and that surveys are particularly useful in describing characteristics of a large population. Furthermore self-

administrated surveys make large samples feasible. Later in this chapter the strengths and weakness of the web-based survey as a research tool is discussed.

### 5.1.3 Sampling Method

The researcher requested the co-operation of the South African Embassy in Abu Dhabi, the UAE, to specifically aid in obtaining an accurate source of the number and demographics of South Africans living and working in the UAE. It was the only existing list containing details of South Africans living and working in the UAE and had to be requested from the United Arab Emirates Immigration Department in Dubai. For safety and security concerns this list could not contain any contact details. With the help of the South African Ambassador, H.E. Dikgang Moopeloa and the Consular in Dubai, Mr. Willem Botes, a statistical list was requested from the United Arab Emirates Immigration Department. The official request from the South African Embassy to the UAE Immigration Department asked for statistics on South Africans in the UAE pertaining to the following variables:

- Gender
- Age
- Educational background
- Marital Status
- Dependants
- Religion
- Job title
- Industry Sector
- Location (Dubai, Abu Dhabi etc.)
- Date of arrival
- Date of cancellation of residency permit
- Number of South African residents in Dubai over the past 15 years per annum



The researcher planned to use these statistics obtained from the UAE Immigration Department to "map" the South African population in the UAE. For example: 30% of South Africans living and working in the UAE are female, 80% are Christian, 50% are single, etc. The target sample would then be determined as a percentage of the overall number of South Africans living and working in the UAE, broken down into the above-mentioned variables. The target sample would match the criteria of the overall

South African population in the UAE. This list was crucial for a truly representative sampling method to be used in this research study.

Furthermore it was envisaged that the official statistics from the UAE Immigration Department would be compared with the Official South African Statistics to determine if the South African Statistics is indeed undercounted as stated in other research studies, previously mentioned in the Literature Review chapter. It was discovered however that no official South African government statistics on South Africans emigrating to the UAE exists and therefore no comparison could be made.

When the comprehensive list was obtained, the researcher proposed to use the probability sampling method for sampling the target group. According to Babbie and Mouton (2001): "To provide useful descriptions of the total population, a sample of individuals from a population must contain essentially the same variations that exist in the population. Probability sampling provides an efficient method for selecting a sample that should adequately reflect variations that exist in the population. "The sample should mirror several variants of the total South African working population in the UAE. These variants include: race, gender, language group, religion, and family status. These variants would have been adjusted when a complete list of the UAE South Africans was obtained.



The researcher experienced severe problems in getting accurate data on the number of South Africans living and working in the UAE from the UAE Government. Other sources varied significantly in their estimates, from 16,000 to 40,000.

The number of South Africans living in the UAE as of 31 December 2004 according to data obtained from the UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs (see Appendix 5) is 5,782. According to the South African Ambassador to the UAE, H.E. Dikgang Moopeloa, this number constitutes only economically active South African citizens (Etihad News, 2005). According to Managing Member of South African Business Council in Dubai, Mr. Roger Wilkinson (personal communication 30 November 2004), the amount of South Africans living in the UAE (including non-economically active) is closer to 40 000. An article published in the Sunday Times in 2002, stated the number of South Africans living and working in Dubai to be 16 000. This number also includes children and housewives who do not form part of the employed target population.

The researcher was therefore forced to use the official UAE government statistics despite sources claiming that these figures are undercounted. In the initial stages of the research project, before the government statistics were obtained, the sample size was based on the estimated number of 20 000 South Africans in the UAE. The sample size at this stage was set at 1000 respondents. However after obtaining the UAE government confirmed statistics the sample size was subsequently set at 250 respondents.

#### **5.1.4 Questionnaire format**

The questionnaire (presented in Appendix 2) contained four major sections, namely:

- Demographical questions
- Reasons for leaving South Africa and current links with South Africa
- Perceptions of life in South Africa vs. life in the UAE
- General questions

##### *5.1.4.1 Demographical section*

This section of the questionnaire focuses on the demographical profile of the respondent, such as gender; race; age; marital status; occupation; academic qualifications etc. This information will be compared with demographical information from studies done on the brain drain of South Africans in other geographical areas, to establish possible similarities or differences between these groups.

##### *5.1.4.2 Reasons for emigration*

This section of the questionnaire explores possible reasons for the South Africa brain drain and brain circulation phenomena. This section includes an open-ended question asking the respondent to elaborate on possible reasons for leaving SA. Other questions in this section focus on the current links with South Africa from the UAE, for example if the respondent still owns properties in SA or maintains a South African bank account. It will be interesting to analyse this data to see if there exist a link between the South Africans that form part of the brain circulation phenomena and respondents that maintain links with SA.

##### *5.1.4.3 Perception section*

Section 3 of the questionnaire starts with 17 statements to which participants are asked to respond to. A 4-point Likert scale was applied for this question with possible

response options - *strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree*. The researcher decided not to include a *neutral* option, but rather to force respondents to choose between agreeing and disagreeing. These questions can be viewed as being sensitive to some respondents and the researcher found in the initial pilot study that respondents would choose the neutral option too often.

The statements were included in the questionnaire to try and assess the respondent's perceptions of their life in South Africa vs. their life in the UAE. Some of the statements included were: Income levels are higher in the UAE; Personal safety levels are higher in the UAE than in South Africa; and the cost of living is lower in the UAE than in South Africa. These 17 statements were chosen based on the literature reviewed prior to designing the questionnaire and on informal interviews with various individuals about their perceptions on life in SA and life in the UAE.

#### 5.1.4.4 General questions

Questions in this section focus on a variety of issues, from establishing if the respondents had previously worked and lived in countries other than SA and the UAE, to their social interaction with other nationalities in the UAE and their perceptions on terrorism in the Middle East Region.

The first question on the history of the respondent's expatriate life was included to try and ascertain how long the respondent was likely to continue to work and live outside of South Africa. A highly sensitive question was included in this section of the questionnaire on the safety and security in South Africa. This question asked respondents if they or any of their immediate family had been a victim of a criminal act in South Africa and provide a drop down list to identify these crimes committed against them or their family. In the analysis of the data collected from the completed questionnaires, the researcher aims to test the hypothesis that there is a relationship between victims of criminal acts in South Africa and their perceptions of life in SA and the UAE.

The questionnaire concluded with a question on factors that would motivate the respondents to return to South Africa permanently.

#### 5.1.4.5 Open-ended questions

Only two open-ended questions were included in the questionnaire, which will be coded before they are processed for computer analysis. Closed-ended questions were mainly used as it provides greater uniformity in the responses and are more easily processed, according to Babbie and Mouton (2001).

#### 5.1.4.6 Contingency questions

Questions 5a; 24; 25a and 25c are contingency questions. In the initial excel format of the questionnaire these questions used arrows to connect the contingency question to the answer on which it is contingent. In the on-line version of the questionnaire these arrows were omitted due to technical difficulties.

### 5.1.5 Advantages and disadvantages of web-based/online surveys

Every research tool has its own strength and weaknesses in its design and possible sources of error in their application. Although web-based or online surveys are a relative new addition to social science research methods, it is no exception and has several strengths/advantages as well as possible weaknesses or disadvantages.

#### 5.1.5.1 Advantages

The principal feature of using the internet and e-mail as a research tool is the speed and immediacy it offers compared to conventional postal survey research. Spender (1995) argues the concepts of race, gender, age and sexuality do not necessarily apply when communicating electronically. This type of research tool has the advantage of non-biased research as the researcher does not meet the respondents face-to-face or communicate directly with them while they are completing the survey. Any bias on the side of the researcher towards the respondents that could affect the data is therefore minimised. Furthermore, respondents are not constrained to synchronous communication but can respond at their own time, when and how they feel comfortable (Thatch 1995).

Early quantitative studies seem to indicate that electronic questionnaires have a very favourable response rate compared to the typical 20 – 50% response rate of conventional postal surveys, according to Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias (1996). Researches have also found that the e-mail response rate increased to 63% if an initial e-mail was sent requesting participation in the study, Selwyn & Robson (1998). In

this research study e-mail reminders were sent out to respondents with incomplete questionnaires.

Another advantage of electronic surveys is that they cost considerably less to administer, both in terms of money and time (Selwyn & Robson 1998). The digital format of the survey eliminates the time associated with data entry. According to Roztocki & Lahri (2002) web-based surveys can result in estimated cost reduction of as much as one-third of traditional “paper-and-pencil” surveys.

Roztocki & Lahri further argues that the quality of responses in electronic surveys is better than traditional surveys, as they show fewer missing entries and fewer completion mistakes. In addition, because the data is already in digital format, the possibility of human-error during data entry is eliminated.

#### **5.1.5.2 Disadvantages**

Despite the many advantages of the web-based survey, many researchers and authors feel that this methodology has some substantial disadvantages, Roztocki & Lahri. One of the disadvantages is that it is impossible to guarantee complete anonymity as their name (or at least their e-mail address) is automatically included in their reply. Thach (1995) however argues that this lack of anonymity does not preclude the researcher still guaranteeing the respondent confidentiality and the validity of the electronic questionnaire is not compromised in this way. To counter this problem, the researcher requested that the names and e-mail addresses of the respondents not be included in the final data file, received from the web host company. The e-mail addresses were only included to provide a unique identity key to every respondent, mainly to eliminate doubles and for those respondents wishing to complete the questionnaire later. All the data was handed over to the researcher at the start of the analysing process of the data. Furthermore all the data collected was protected with a password that only the technician and the researcher knows.

A further disadvantage of electronic surveys pointed out by Roztocki & Lahri is the lack of established history of “e-surveys”. These surveys are a relatively new addition to the primary data collection methodology and do not have an equally established history of research. The absence of extensively tested validation procedure demands from researchers higher justification skills for interpretation of on-line collected data. Before

and during the design phase of the questionnaire the researcher consulted with various skilled individuals with experience in conducting (mainly market) research with e-surveys. Research handbooks, articles and other literature on electronic surveys were also consulted during the conceptualisation, design and implementation phase of the survey. (Mouton, 1996; Babbie, Mouton, et al 2001; Sheehan, 2001; Fogliani 1999; Andrews et al, 2003; Roztocki and Lahri, 2002). This doesn't compensate for the lack of established history of electronic surveys, but hopefully minimised the possible sources of error with the design and implementation of the research tool.

As the survey could only be completed on-line, the sample of the study might not necessarily represent the target population, according to various research sources. This study focus on South Africans living and working in the UAE and the researcher assumed that most of these working South Africans would have access to the internet (and therefore to the on-line survey) at least at work. During the course of this study no complaints have been received by the researcher or the web-host company regarding lack of access to the on-line survey. The researcher is aware that this is a disadvantage of the chosen research tool used in this study.

#### 5.1.6 Counter Measures

One of the biggest disadvantages the researcher experienced with using an on-line survey as a research tool was creating awareness of the study and survey. With postal surveys, awareness of the research study is created automatically. With e-surveys, there is no guarantee that respondents will access the host's website or even know that the survey exists. The following steps were taken by the researcher to create awareness of the on-line survey:

- Local South African organisations and membership groups were contacted by the researcher and their help enlisted. The South African Group in Dubai (a social organisation) ran an advertisement of the survey on their website for the duration of the research project. The advertisement contained a hyperlink directly to the on-line survey.
- The South African Business Council in the UAE (a networking council) send an e-mail to more than 150 of their members requesting them to participate in the research study by completing the survey. This e-mail also contained a hyperlink to the survey and was written by the researcher.

- The researcher met with the South African Women's Group in the UAE, who sent their members a request to complete the survey on-line.
- Posters were printed and distributed at various supermarkets that South Africans are known to frequent. Posters were also distributed at a South African veterinarian, the South African consulate and residential buildings. This was only moderately successful.
- The researcher approached Homecoming Revolution and they placed an advertisement of the e-survey on their notice board in their monthly newsletter.
- An article was published (on South Africans in the UAE) in the main UAE newspaper, the Gulf News, which contained a paragraph on the research study and contained the website address of the survey.
- On the 28<sup>th</sup> of April 2005, South Africa's Freedom Day was celebrated in Dubai by almost 600 South Africans. The researcher printed individual business-type cards containing information on the study and the link to the online survey, which was then distributed to these South Africans informally.
- Any individuals the researcher met in social, work, sport etc occasions were given a business card with the survey's address and requested to complete the survey and ask their friends and family to do the same.

Examples of the media coverage and posters can be found in the Appendix 4 at the end of this chapter.



Despite this awareness campaign, the number of respondents remained below expectations. The sample target for completed surveys was 250 out of an estimated target group of 5,782 economically active South Africans in the UAE. However the final completed number of surveys was only 175 after hosting the survey on a website for a period of 11 months.

The web-based survey is attached as Appendix 2.

#### 5.1.7 Software tools

The results were analysed using the SPSS data analysis program and Ms Office Excel.

## 5.2 Pilot Study

The survey was tested in a pilot study to identify any problems with the flow of the questionnaire or identify questions that could be misunderstood or are not mutually exclusive. Fifty random names were chosen from a contact list obtained from a member of the South African business council and surveyed, feedback was requested via e-mail regarding the flow, the length etc of the questionnaire.

### 5.2.1 Feedback from the pilot study

Feedback received from the pilot study was overall positive. The main problems reported by respondents were related to technical difficulties in completing the survey online. Some e-mail addresses contained symbols or variations that didn't allow respondents to register for the survey. This was corrected within 48 hours. Other respondents worried about confidentiality of the study and the lack of anonymity. As mentioned earlier in this study, this is a drawback of online surveys. A form of identification has to be given to assure that respondents complete the survey once only and/or to cater for respondents completing the survey in stages over a period without losing previously entered data.

Question 24 of the survey focus on the attitudes towards South African membership groups and organisations in the UAE. The question reads as follows: Are you a member of a South African group or organisation in the UAE? If yes, please specify to which of the following:

- Church group
- South African Business Council
- www.sagroupdubai.com
- tokoloshe@sangue.com
- South African Sports Team/Group
- South African Network of Skills Abroad (SANSA)
- Other, please specify\_\_\_\_\_

Feedback from the pilot study led the researcher to remove the list of organisations from this question and replace it with an open-ended text box. It seems there is a huge divide between members of two of these organisations and by mentioning those; respondents became suspicious about the researcher's affiliation to any of the two.

Some of the respondents in the pilot study were worried that the survey data would be given to the government of SA and that they will be given up for tax evasion. (The UAE is a tax-free haven). Therefore supplying any financial data, no matter how general created a lot of paranoia. Question 16 used to read as follows:

Existing or current links with SA

In South Africa do you still:

- Own a house
- Own any other properties
- Have a bank account
- Have investments
- Have a job to return to
- Have family members

As the investments question wasn't essential to the success of the study the researcher removed the question to limit the number of financial questions and hopefully some of the paranoia under respondents.

In the transfer of the survey from paper to online, the instructions were not added with most questions. During the pilot study no respondents complained or remarked on the lack of instructions and seemed to be able to navigate their way fairly easily. The researcher then decided not to alter the online version to include this (initially the instructions were omitted due to a technical error and not on the request of the researcher).

As expected several respondents complained about the length of the survey, the researcher could not reduce the number of questions further, but warned respondents on the introduction page of the online survey that it would take approximately 10 minutes to complete.

### **5.3 Presentation of results**

This section is devoted to a presentation and first discussion of the results of the survey. The results are presented under the following headings:

- The demographic profile of the sample (5.3.1)
- Perceptions of life in the UAE (5.3.2)
- Push factors causing respondents to leave South Africa (5.3.3)

- Pull factors motivating respondents to come to the UAE (5.3.4)
- Possibility of brain circulation? (5.3.5)

### 5.3.1 The demographic profile of the sample

The demographic data of the respondents is detailed below. Table 5.1 presents the basic demographic distributions of respondents, whereas Table 5.2 summarizes the typical social status distributions – educational level, occupation and industry sector.

**Table 5.1 Table of demographics of the respondents (n = 175)**

Respondents' demographic information	
	% of respondents
<b>Gender</b>	
Male	65.5
Female	34.5
<b>Home Language</b>	
English	57.5
Afrikaans	40.8
Xhosa	0.6
Other	1.1
<b>Race</b>	
Caucasian	87.3
Coloured	5.75
Indian	4.0
African	1.7
Other	1.1

**Table 5.1 Continued**

<b>Age Group</b>	
15 - 19	1.1
20 - 24	6.3
25 - 29	25.3
30 - 34	21.3
35 - 39	16.7
40 - 44	13.2
45 - 49	6.9
50 - 54	5.2
55 - 59	4.0
<b>Marital Status</b>	
Not married, but attached	22.4
Married	56.9
Single	20.7
<b>Children</b>	
Yes	47.7
No	52.3
<b>Religion</b>	
Christian	89.7
Hindu	1.1
Muslim	1.1
Other	1.7
None	6.3

**Table 5.2 Table of educational and career levels of the respondents (n = 175)**

	<b>% of respondents</b>
<b>Educational Level</b>	
Matric / Grade 12	21.8
Diploma	24.1
Bachelors degree	29.9
Honours degree	14.4
Masters degree	8.6
Doctorate degree	1.1
<b>Industry Sector</b>	
Professional Services	29.9
Health	9.8
Retail	9.8
Transportation	9.8
Personal Services	9.2
Construction	8.0
Education	4.0
Media	4.0
Resource Industries	3.4
Banking	2.9
Process Manufacturing	2.3
Telecommunications	2.3
Finance	1.7
Discrete Manufacturing	1.1
Utilities	1.1
Government	0.6

**Table 5.2 Continued**

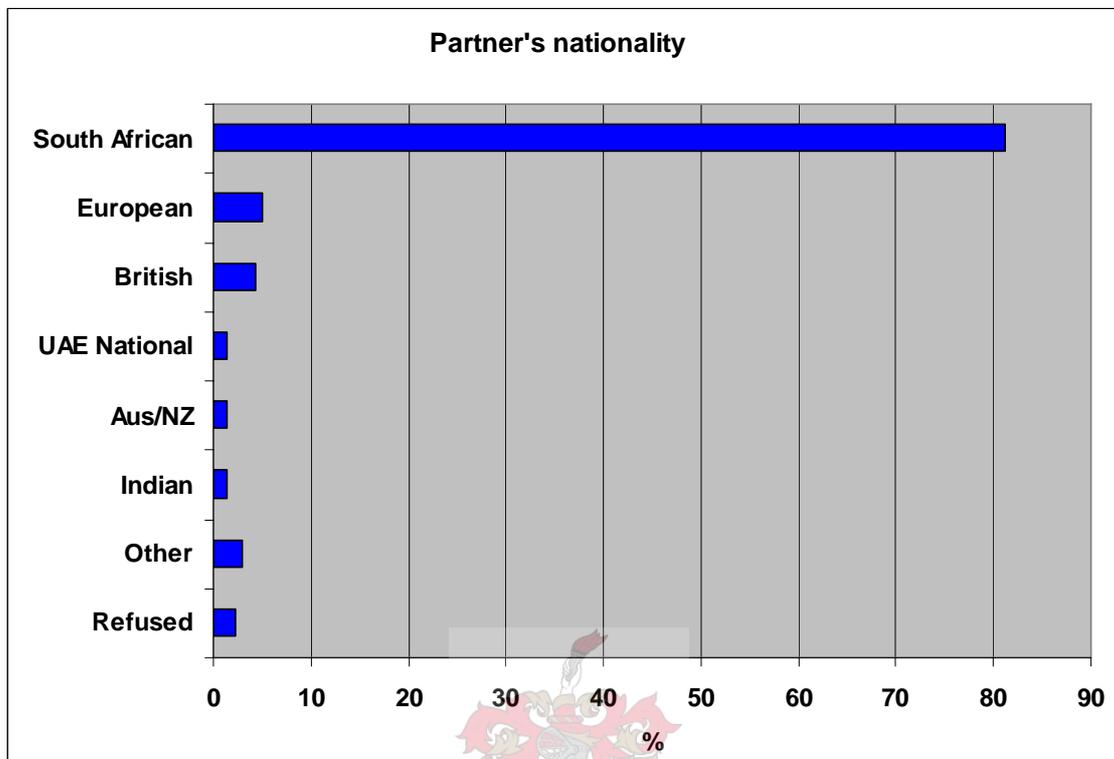
<b>Career Level</b>	
Mid Management	30.5
Professional	27.0
Top Management	17.8
Non Management	9.8
Managing Director	8.0
Entry Level	5.2
Owner	1.7

Based on the demographics presented in Tables 5.1 and 5.2, the profile of the sample can be summarized as follows:

- The respondents are mostly native English speakers.
- Are overwhelmingly a “young” respondent population, with more than half under the age of 35 years.
- The majority of the respondent population are males (65.5%). This statistic is not surprising, as we know from previous research that the South African males are more likely to emigrate than South African females (Gender and Brain Drain study, Migration Policy Series vol. 23: 2001). A further explanation could be that unemployed respondents did not qualify to complete the survey. This would automatically exclude housewives and full time mothers.
- The majority are either married or in relationships with other South Africans.
- Are overwhelmingly Christian.
- More than half are graduates with almost a quarter having post-graduate qualifications.
- The majority are employed within the professional services industry sector, but a variety of industry sectors are represented and most are appointed in managerial positions.

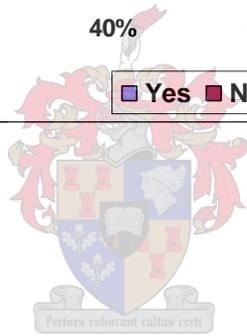
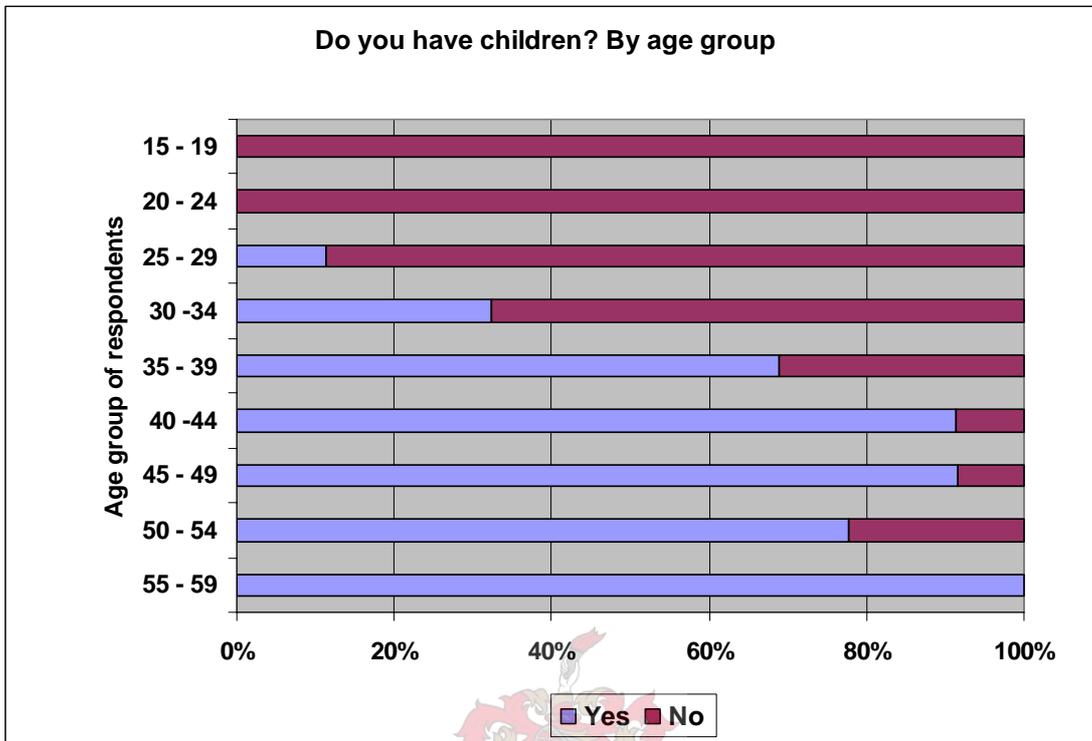
In the remainder of this section, we report on the nationality of respondents’ partners (Figure 5.1), the family by age profiles of respondents (Figure 5.2), in which industries they work (Figure 5.3) and the career level of respondents (Figure 5.4).

**Figure 5.1 Main nationalities of survey respondents' partners**



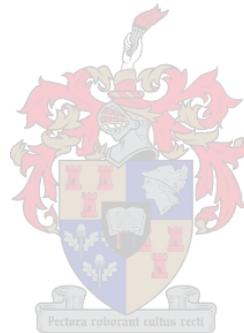
Although the vast majority of respondents have South African partners, the fact that nearly 20% do have partners from elsewhere, points to the rather cosmopolitan nature of the sample group. This fact is not insignificant, as we will see later when we comment on the sample.

Figure 5.2 Families by age group

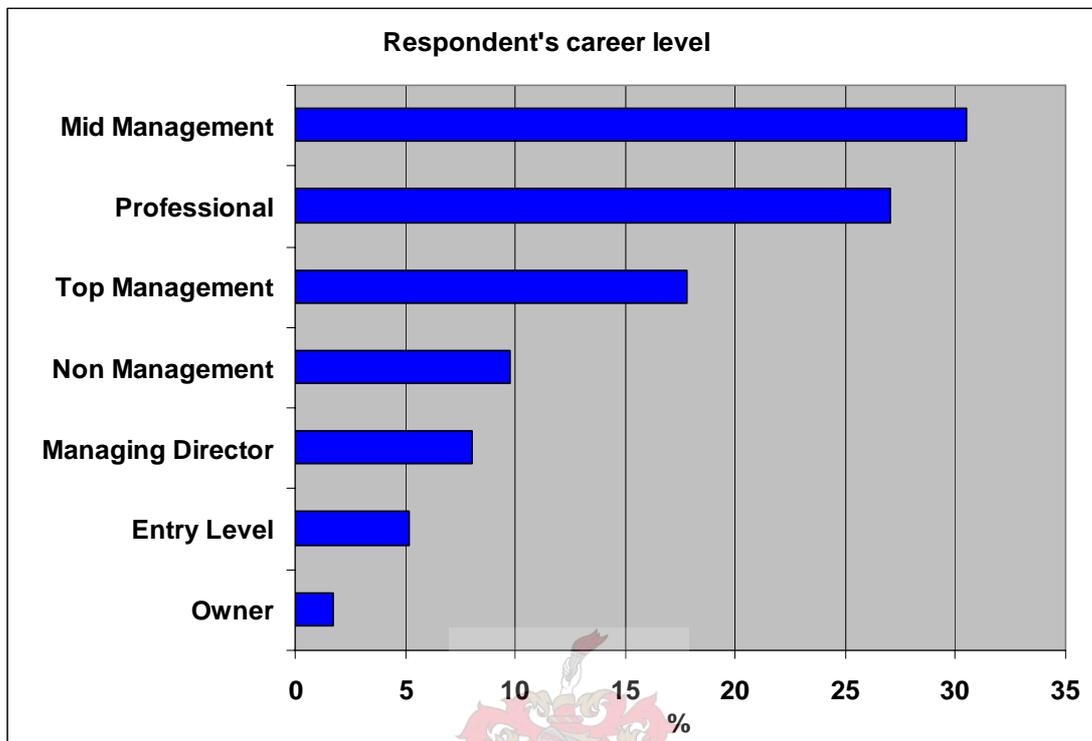


### Figure 5.3 Respondents by industry sector

**Industry Sector:** The number of South Africans employed by Emirates Airlines could account for the large percentage of respondents employed in the transportation industry in the UAE. The UAE and specifically Dubai's real estate boom accounts for the large percentage of respondents in the construction industry. The respondents employed in the resource industry are mainly employed in the oil and gas industry that still contributes a significant share of the UAE's GDP. The South Africans employed in the government sector refers to South Africans working for the South African Embassy or Consulate in Abu Dhabi and / or Dubai.



**Figure 5.4 Career levels of respondents by gender**



**Career Level:** Only 15% of all respondents were either in an entry level or non-management position. In the figure above the career level of the respondents is split by their gender. The top career levels of the respondents is still very much male dominated, with only 8% of all female respondents in top management positions in the United Arab Emirates. The majority of female respondents fall into non-management and entry-level positions in the UAE. In Fig. 5.2 we notice that more than the majority (almost 70%) of respondents of 34 years and below do not have any children. Therefore a larger percentage of respondent “career women” were expected, but this does not seem to be the case. An equal percentage of male and female respondents are owners of businesses in the UAE, but this number accounts for only 2% of male and 2% of female respondents and no further conclusions can be drawn from these figures. This concludes the demographic discussion and the next section will focus on the respondents’ life in the UAE.

### 5.3.2 Life in the UAE

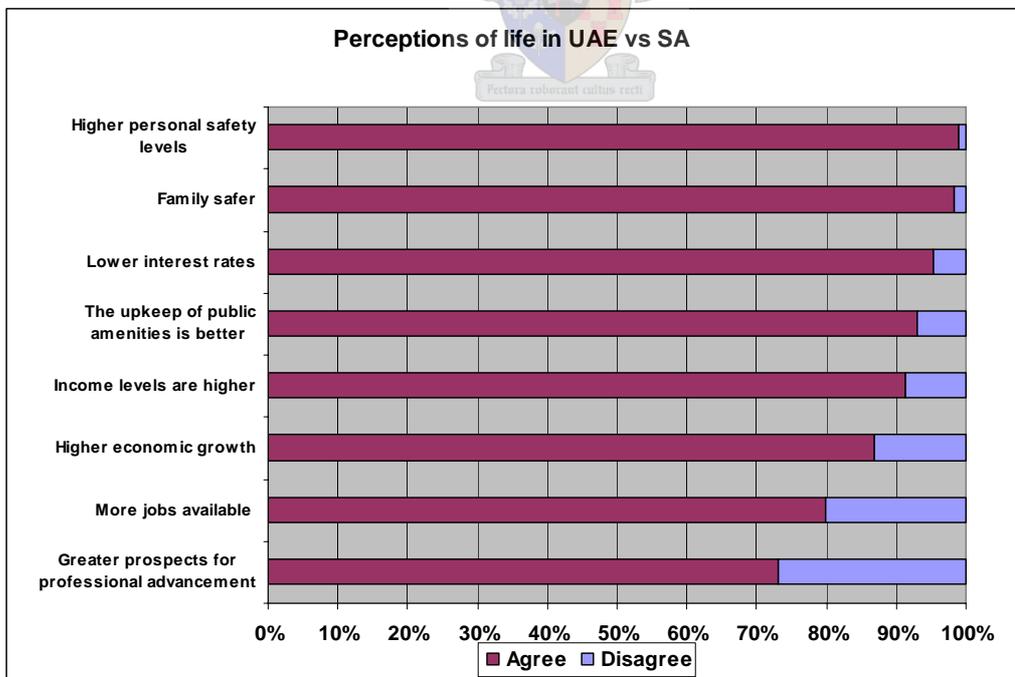
This section will discuss data collected relating to the life of the respondents’ in the United Arab Emirates. We start this section with the respondents’ perception of

their quality of life in the South Africa vs. the UAE (Fig. 5.6 and 5.7), possible adaptation problems that they have experienced by moving to the UAE (Fig 5.8 and Tables 5.3 - 5.8) next is the perceived attitudes towards South Africans in the UAE (Fig. 5.9) and then this section concludes with the nationalities of the respondents' social circle (Fig. 5.11).

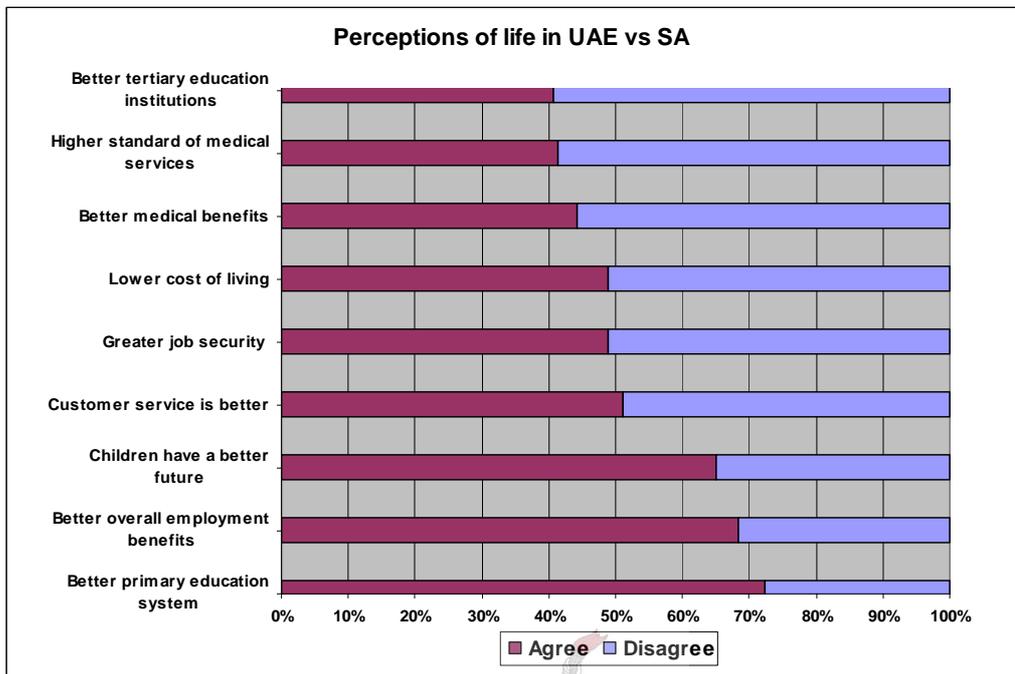
The two graphs below present the perceptions of respondents about the UAE in general (Figure 5.6) and in comparison with South Africa (Figure 5.7). In both cases, we collapsed the Strongly agree and Agree responses to one category (Agree) and the Strongly Disagree and Disagree to another (Disagree).

Not surprisingly, perhaps, the two most prevalent perceptions of life in the UAE refer to a more a safe environment, followed by positive perceptions about financial matters and economic prospects. It should also be pointed out that all the perceptions listed received high levels of support ranging from nearly 100% to more than 70%.

**Figure 5.6 Respondents' perceptions of life in the UAE versus life in South Africa**

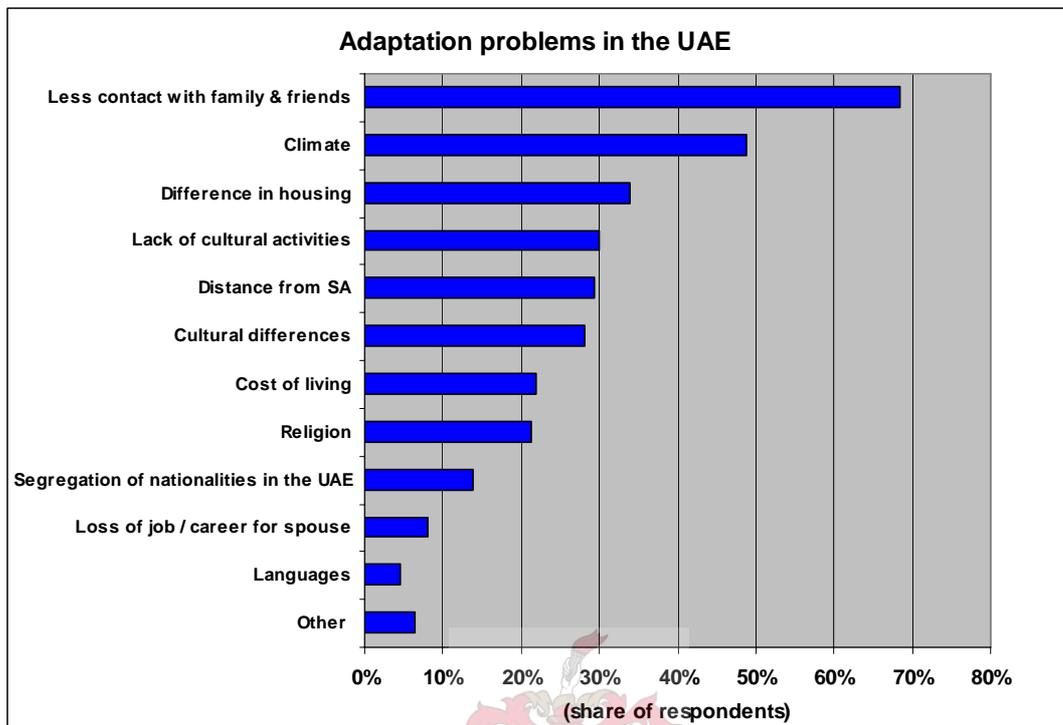


**Figure 5.7 Respondents' perceptions of life in the UAE versus life in South Africa**



When compared to life in South Africa, the results in Table 5.7 reveal an interesting pattern: many of the most strongly perceptions tend to refer to rather short term “positives”. Most of the respondents agreed that there are immediate career or financial benefits by living in the UAE rather than in SA. However less than half believed that their children have a better future in the UAE, have confidence in the tertiary education system or believed that they have greater job security in the UAE. Not surprisingly almost all of the respondents agreed that personal safety levels and the family safety levels are higher in the UAE. Interestingly health professionals were split almost 50-50 on their perception of higher standard of medical services in the UAE.

**Figure 5.8 Adaptation problems experienced by respondents**



The most common adaptation problems experienced by the respondents were less contact with family and friends. It is significant that 68% of both male and female respondents cited this as an adaptation problem. Other adaptation problems commonly cited included the climate in the UAE; the difference in housing; the lack of cultural activities in the UAE; the distance from South Africa and the cost of living. It is significant that “cost of living in the UAE” is cited as an adaptation problem by more than 20% of the respondents, especially when compared to Fig 5.7 where approximately half of the respondents’ were of the opinion that the UAE has a lower cost of living when compared with South Africa. The “difference in housing” refers to respondents that moved from a house in South Africa to apartment living in the UAE.

Cross-tabulations were run to establish which demographic variables are significantly associated with different adaptation problems listed. We report below (Tables 5.3 – 5.7) on results that are statistically significant.

**Table 5.3 Adaptation problems (religion) cross-tabulated with age group**

Demographic variables by adaptation problems in the UAE						
Religion					Statistics	
		Agree	Disagree	Total	Pearson Chi-square	Cramer's V
Age Group	34 years or younger	27.7%	72.3%	94	0.025	0.169
	35 years or older	13.8%	86.3%	80		

**Table 5.4 Adaptation problems (segregation of nationalities) cross-tabulated with age group**

Demographic variables by adaptation problems in the UAE						
The segregation of nationalities in the UAE					Statistics	
		Agree	Disagree	Total	Pearson Chi-square	Cramer's V
Age Group	34 years or younger	19.9%	80.9%	94	0.026	0.168
	35 years or older	7.5%	92.5%	80		

**Table 5.5 Adaptation problems (cultural differences) cross-tabulated with occupational level**

Demographic variables by adaptation problems in the UAE						
Cultural differences					Statistics	
		Agree	Disagree	Total	Pearson Chi-square	Cramer's V
Occupational Level	Manager	18.7%	81.3%	91	0.009	0.232
	Professional	40.9%	59.1%	66		
	Semi-skilled	29.4%	70.6%	17		

**Table 5.6 Adaptation problems (segregation of nationalities) cross-tabulated with occupational level**

Demographic variables by adaptation problems in the UAE						
The segregation of nationalities in the UAE					Statistics	
		Agree	Disagree	Total	Pearson Chi-square	Cramer's V
Occupational Level	Manager	11.0%	89.0%	91	0.025	0.206
	Professional	12.1%	87.9%	66		
	Semi-skilled	35.3%	64.7%	17		

**Table 5.7 Adaptation problems (segregation of nationalities) cross-tabulated with length of time spent in the UAE**

Demographic variables by adaptation problems in the UAE						
The segregation of nationalities in the UAE					Statistics	
		Agree	Disagree	Total	Pearson Chi-square	Cramer's V
Length of time spent in the UAE	Less than a year	22.7%	77.3%	44	0.048	0.213
	1 - 2 years	11.1%	88.9%	45		
	2 - 5 years	15.8%	84.2%	57		
	More than 5 years	0.0%	100.0%	28		

The salient points to emerge from these results are:

**Age and adaptation:** Somewhat surprisingly, those in the younger age group (below 35) were slightly more concerned about adapting to religious issues – however the correlation is not very strong. The second set of results also shows that those under the age of 35 listed adaptation as far as the segregation of nationalities as a problem. These two results prompted us to investigate whether there are other indications that the younger age group might be more “conservative” both as far as their political and religious views are concerned. Educational level is usually strongly correlated with political and religious conservatism; hence the cross-tabulation (below in Table 5.8) of age group with educational level. As expected, there is a moderately strong correlation with those in the younger age group with lower levels of education ( $p > 0.016$ ;  $V = 0.244$ ).

**Table 5.8 Educational level of respondents cross-tabulated by their age groups**

Educational level of respondents cross tabulated by age groups						
					Statistics	
		34 years or younger	35 years or older	Total	Pearson Chi-square	Cramer's V
Educational level	Matric	30.9%	11.3%	38	0.016	0.244
	Diploma	23.4%	25.0%	42		
	Undergraduate	24.5%	36.3%	52		
	Postgraduate	21.3%	27.5%	42		

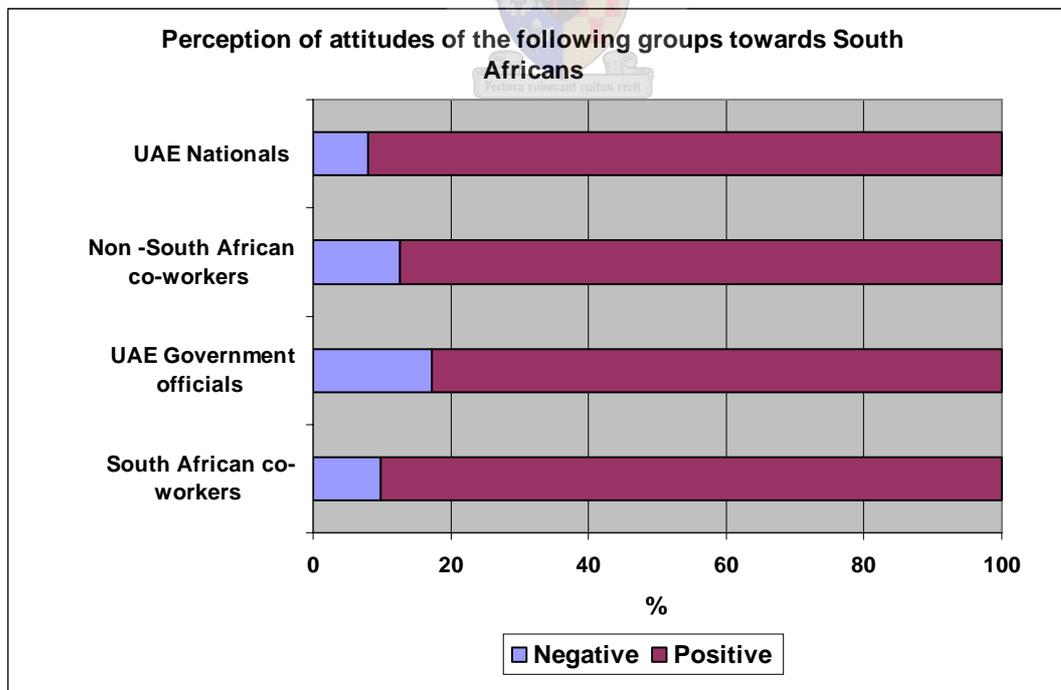
**Occupational level and adaptation:** In Table 5.5 cultural differences as an adaptation problem in the UAE is cross tabulated with the respondents' occupational level. It is significant that 40.9% of professionals cited this as an adaptation problem.

Respondents in the professional grouping include engineers, accountants, real estate

agents and researchers. These industries' has a lot of client interaction and with the UAE's diverse population; it is obvious why cultural differences are cited as an adaptation problem. The semi-skilled respondents experienced the segregation of nationalities in the UAE as a more severe adaptation problem than respondents in managerial positions or those in professional services (Table 5.6). A possible explanation for this could be that the semi-skilled respondents interact with a much more diverse population in their daily jobs than the managers, as most of the managerial positions in the UAE is occupied by western expatriates (European, American, British and South African employees) and is therefore more homogenous.

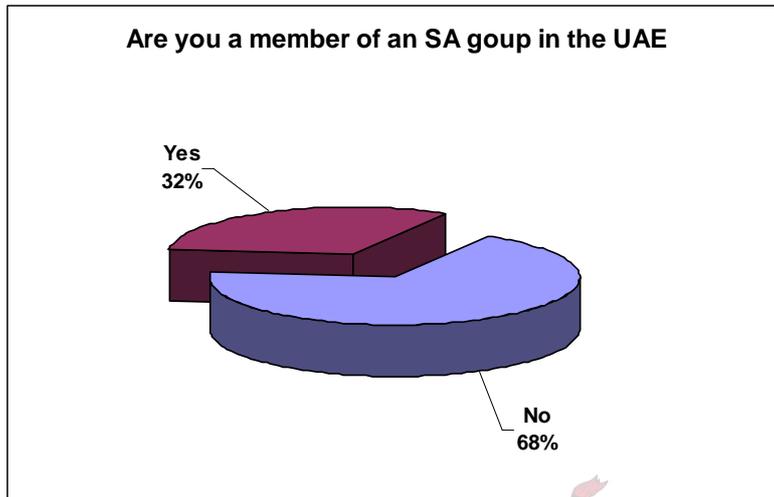
**Length of stay and adaptation:** It is noteworthy to point out the pattern in Table 5.7, initially the segregation of nationalities in the UAE can be an adaptation problem for respondents (22.7%), however over time the number of respondents experiencing this as an adaptation problem fall to 15.8% and after a five year period in the UAE, respondents report a noteworthy 0% discomfort with this.

**Figure 5.9 Perception of attitudes / behaviour towards South Africans by various groups in the UAE**



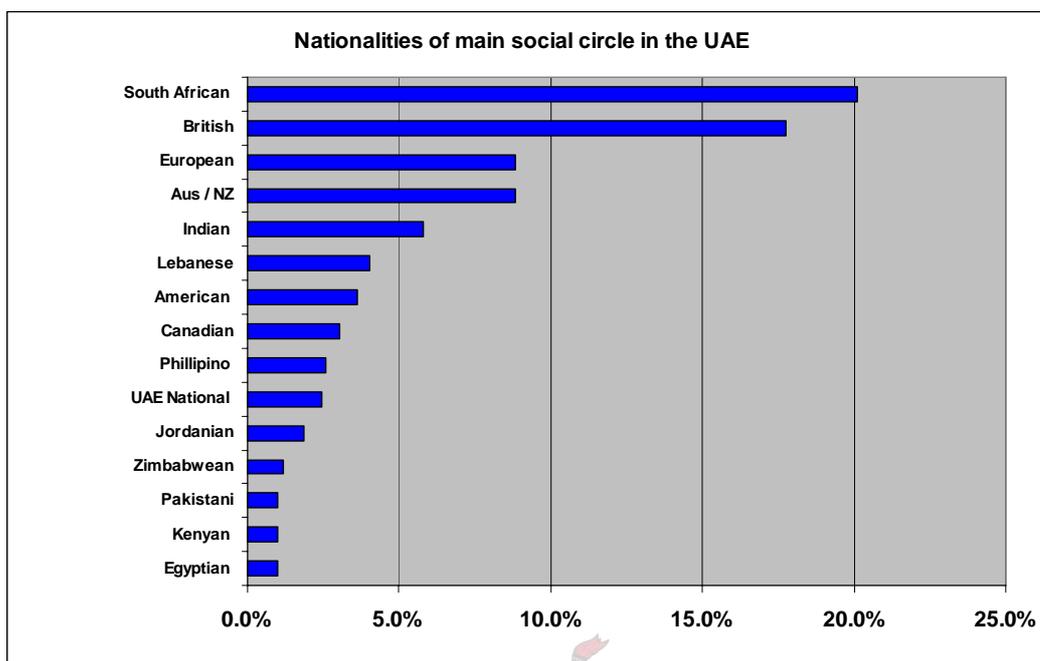
Results show that there is a generally positive overall perception towards South African respondent group in the UAE.

**Figure 5.10 Membership of South African groups or organisations in the UAE**



Only 32% of all respondents are members of a South African group in the UAE. This figure is surprisingly low, especially when compared to the nationalities of the social circle of these respondents in the UAE (see figure 5.18 below). It seems that although the respondents like socialising with other South Africans they prefer not to be members of South African groups in the UAE. The largest membership organisations for respondents were the South African Business Council; the South African Group in Dubai and the South African Women's Association.

**Figure 5.11 Nationalities of the respondents' social circle in the UAE**



Respondents listed 57 different nationalities forming part of their social circle in the UAE confirming the cosmopolitan nature of the UAE with a current expatriate population consisting of more than 180 different nationalities.

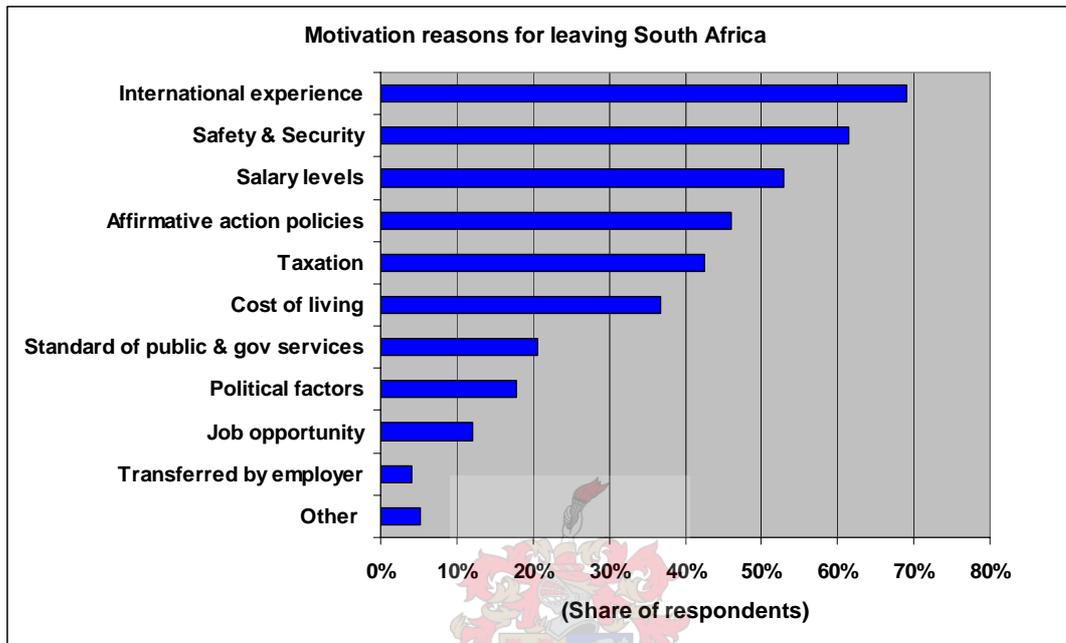
**In conclusion:** The results presented in the last few figures reveal an interesting emerging picture: of a group of people who, although positive about life in the UAE, do not seem to be unequivocally committed to the country. The positives mostly strong agreed with are short-term in nature, the minority indicated that they are members of some group or network in the UAE – and as we will see later – many indicated that they would seriously consider returning to South Africa if levels of crime were to drop. All of this point to people “in transit”; who have not made a very strong financial or emotional commitment to the UAE. This, in principle, suggests that the conditions for brain circulation are in fact present.

### 5.3.3 Push factors causing respondents to leave South Africa

This section will discuss push factors contributing to respondents to leave South Africa and which might contribute to the brain drain. The overall motivators for leaving South Africa are discussed first, followed by a more detailed discussion of crime as a motivator and the affect of victimisation of crime on the respondent's decision to leave

as well as a short discussion on how low salary levels can be a motivator to leave South Africa.

**Figure 5.12 Respondents' motivation reasons for leaving South Africa**



The most common motivation reasons for leaving South Africa is to gain more international experience. Crime and salary levels are the second and third most common motivator for moving abroad. Not surprisingly affirmative action policies in South Africa are the fourth most motivator cited reason to leave South Africa, especially when we consider that 87% of the respondents are Caucasian and more than 65% are male; and therefore most affected by these policies.

The following tables give an indication of the main push factors for South Africans leaving and are discussed in more detail below.

**Table 5.9 The cost of living of respondents cross-tabulated by their age groups**

Demographic variables by reason for leaving South Africa						
The cost of living in South Africa					Statistics	
		Agree	Disagree	Total	Pearson Chi-square	Cramer's V
Age Group	34 years or younger	50.0%	50.0%	94	0.00	0.297
	35 years or older	21.3%	78.8%	80		

**Table 5.10 The safety and security concerns of respondents cross-tabulated by their educational level**

Demographic variables by reason for leaving South Africa						
Safety and security concerns in South Africa					Statistics	
		Agree	Disagree	Total	Pearson Chi-square	Cramer's V
Educational Level	Matric	68.4%	31.6%	38	0.022	0.235
	Diploma	76.2%	23.8%	42		
	Undergraduate	57.7%	42.3%	52		
	Postgraduate	45.2%	54.8%	42		

**Table 5.11 The cost of living of respondents cross-tabulated by their occupational level**

Demographic variables by reason for leaving South Africa						
Cost of living in South Africa					Statistics	
		Agree	Disagree	Total	Pearson Chi-square	Cramer's V
Occupational Level	Manager	28.6%	71.4%	91	0.012	0.225
	Professional	40.9%	59.1%	66		
	Semi-skilled	64.7%	35.3%	17		

**Table 5.12 The salary levels of respondents cross-tabulated by their occupational level**

Demographic variables by reason for leaving South Africa						
The salary levels in South Africa					Statistics	
		Agree	Disagree	Total	Pearson Chi-square	Cramer's V
Occupational Level	Manager	42.9%	57.1%	91	0.018	0.215
	Professional	62.1%	37.9%	66		
	Semi-skilled	70.6%	29.4%	17		

**Push factors to young and semi-skilled respondents:** The results of the tables above are as expected with those in the younger age groups, with lower educational levels and semi-skilled jobs being more inclined to cite reasons related to cost of living and low salary levels in South Africa.

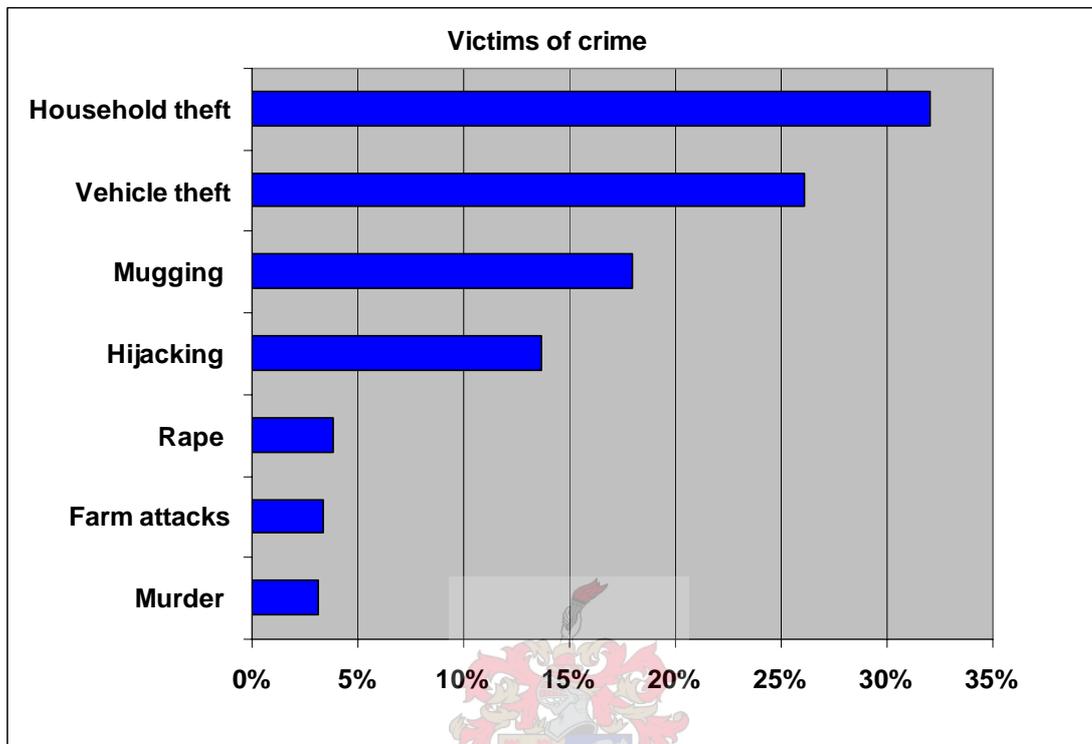
It is interesting to note that these respondents were also more concerned with the safety and security in South Africa. This might relate to the income levels of graduate vs. non-graduate respondents and their ability to either live in a safer environment or be able to secure their environment. The strongest motivators to leave for respondents in these groups are financial reasons and safety concerns. Given the very important role that perceptions and also experiences of crime have played in the decision to leave South Africa, a number of questions related to crime were included in the study.

**Figure 5.13 Respondents that have been victims of criminal acts in South Africa**



Most respondents or their immediate family members have been victims of criminal acts in South Africa. This figure corresponds with the high number of respondents that listed the high crime rate as one of the main reasons for leaving South Africa (Figure 5.12) and for moving to the UAE (Figure 5.16). The various criminal acts are shown in Figure 5.14 below.

**Figure 5.14 The specific criminal acts that respondents or their immediate family has been victims of in South Africa**



A number of bivariate analyses were run to check for any possible interaction effects between sets of responses. In the following four tables we present the results of cross-tabulations between “crime as a reason to leave SA” and various other questions related to victimization experiences in South Africa. In Table 5.13 we see that those respondents who were victims of theft in SA were much more likely to cite crime as a reason to leave South Africa ( $p > 0.01$ ;  $V = 0.196$ ).

**Table 5.13 Cross-tabulation of crime as a reason to leave SA and victimization**

Crime as a reason to leave South Africa						
Victims of theft by crime as a motivator					Statistics	
		Yes	Non	Total	Pearson Chi-square	Cramer's V
Theft	Victims of theft	64.9%	35.1%	154	0.010	0.196
	Non-victims of theft	35.0%	65.0%	20		

Four types of theft were listed as possible choices to respondents - Mugging, household theft, vehicle theft and hijacking. We were interested in seeing whether the (accumulative) number of thefts is correlated with citing crime as a reason to leave South Africa. As the results in Table 5.14 show, there is indeed a strong and statistically significant correlation between these two factors. Those respondents who indicated that they had been the victims of All FOUR kinds of theft were the most likely to cite crime as a reason to leave SA.

**Table 5.14 Cross-tabulation of crime as a reason to leave SA and number of thefts**

Crime as a reason to leave South Africa						
Number of types of theft as a motivator					Statistics	
		Yes	No	Total	Pearson Chi-square	Cramer's V
Theft (number out of 4 types of theft)	Non-victims of theft	35.0%	65.0%	20	0.000	0.346
	Victims of 1 type of theft	46.5%	53.5%	43		
	Victims of 2 types of thefts	55.9%	44.1%	34		
	Victims of 3 types of thefts	77.3%	22.7%	44		
	Victims of 4 types of thefts	81.8%	18.2%	33		

In a further exploration of the responses, we grouped together rape, murder and farm attacks as “violent criminal acts”. Table 5.15 shows a moderate and statistically significant relationship between the violent nature of crime and citing crime as a reason to leave SA. Again, the relationship is in the expected direction with those having experienced one or the other form of violent crime, being more likely to cite crime as a reason to leave SA.

**Table 5.15 Cross-tabulation of crime as a reason to leave SA and being a victim of violent crime**

Crime as a reason to leave South Africa						
Victims of violent criminal acts by crime as a motivator					Statistics	
		Yes	Non	Total	Pearson Chi-square	Cramer's V
Violent criminal acts	Victims of violent criminal acts	78.1%	21.9%	32	0.032	0.162
	Non-victims of violent criminal acts	57.7%	42.3%	142		

Again, we find a moderately strong and statistically significant relationship between the number of violent criminal acts experienced and citing crime as a reason to leave South Africa (Table 5.16).

**Table 5.16 Cross-tabulation of crime as a reason to leave SA and number of violent criminal acts**

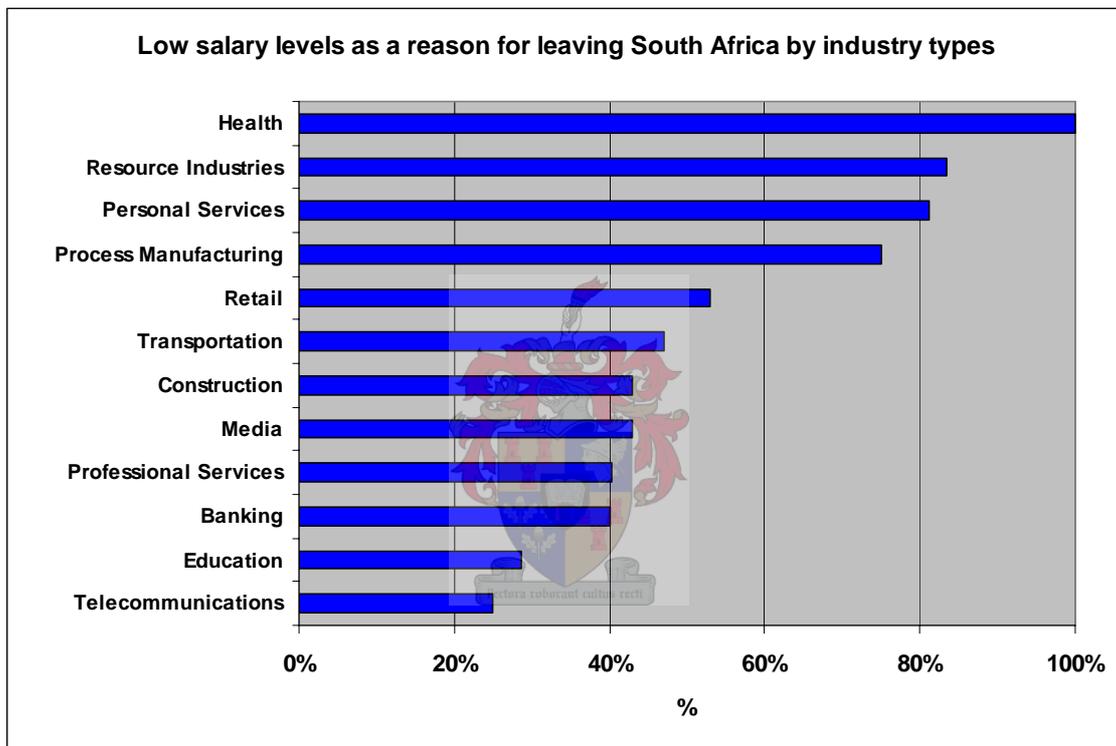
Crime as a reason to leave South Africa						
Number of violent criminal acts as a motivator					Statistics	
		Yes	No	Total	Pearson Chi-square	Cramer's V
Violent criminal acts (number out of 3 types)	Non-victims of a violent criminal act	57.7%	42.3%	142	0.023	0.208
	Victims of 1 type of violent criminal act	68.2%	31.8%	22		
	Victims of 2 or 3 types of violent criminal acts	100.0%	0.0%	10		

The more detailed analyses above confirm how salient crime as a push factor was in the lives and experiences of the respondents. These analyses show unequivocally that crime as a reason for leaving South Africa are for many of the respondents a reality and not merely a theoretical consideration.

We saw above (Figure 5.12) that low salary levels followed crime as one of the most often cited reasons for leaving South Africa. More than 70% of respondents between

the ages of 20 – 24 years indicated low salary levels in South Africa as a motivator for leaving South Africa in their age groups. Approximately half of respondents in their thirties cited low salary levels as a motivator. Since we were particularly interested in how “low salary levels” related to the industry sector in which people work, we present the results of this analysis in Figure 5.15 below.

**Figure 5.15 Low salary levels in South Africa as a motivating factor for leaving by industry type**

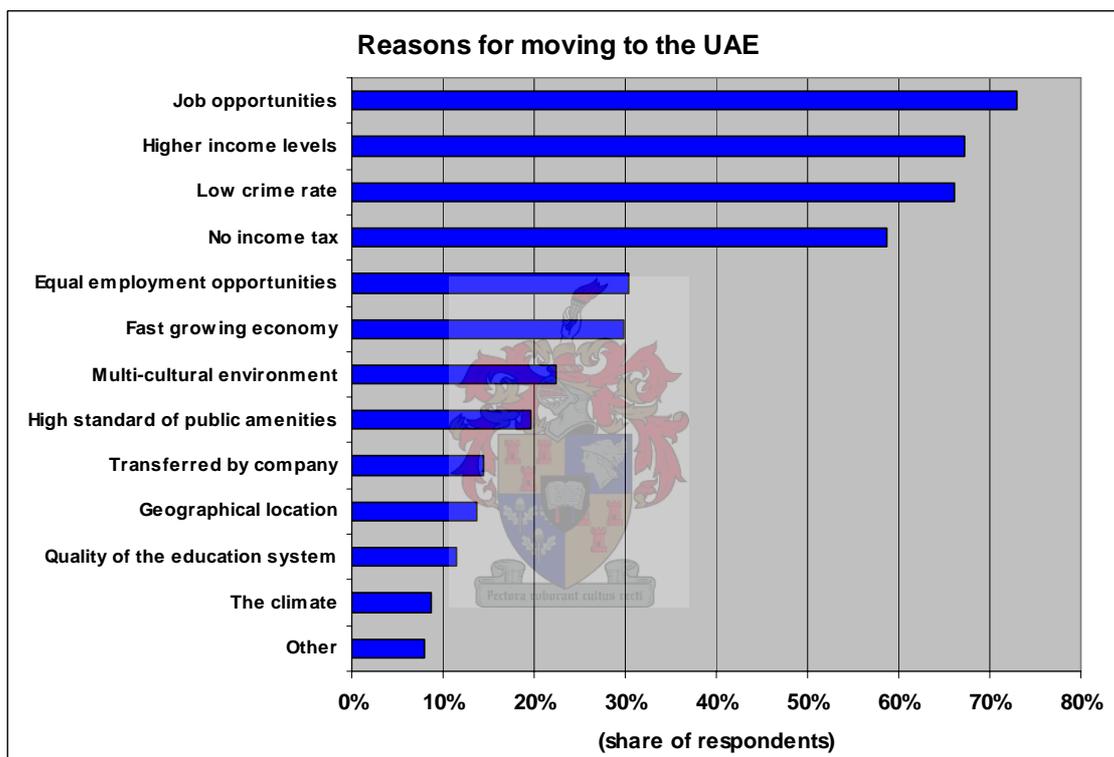


The industry sectors of finance, discrete manufacturing, utilities and government were not included in the figure above due to very low numbers of respondents in these industries (less than four respondents per industry). It is significant that 100% of the respondents in the health industry cited low salary levels as a motivating factor for leaving South Africa. In the literature review chapter the brain drain of health professionals was discussed in detail and we saw from previous research that financial reasons is often cited as a possible contributor to the health brain drain of South Africa.

### 5.3.4 Pull factors motivating respondents to come to the UAE

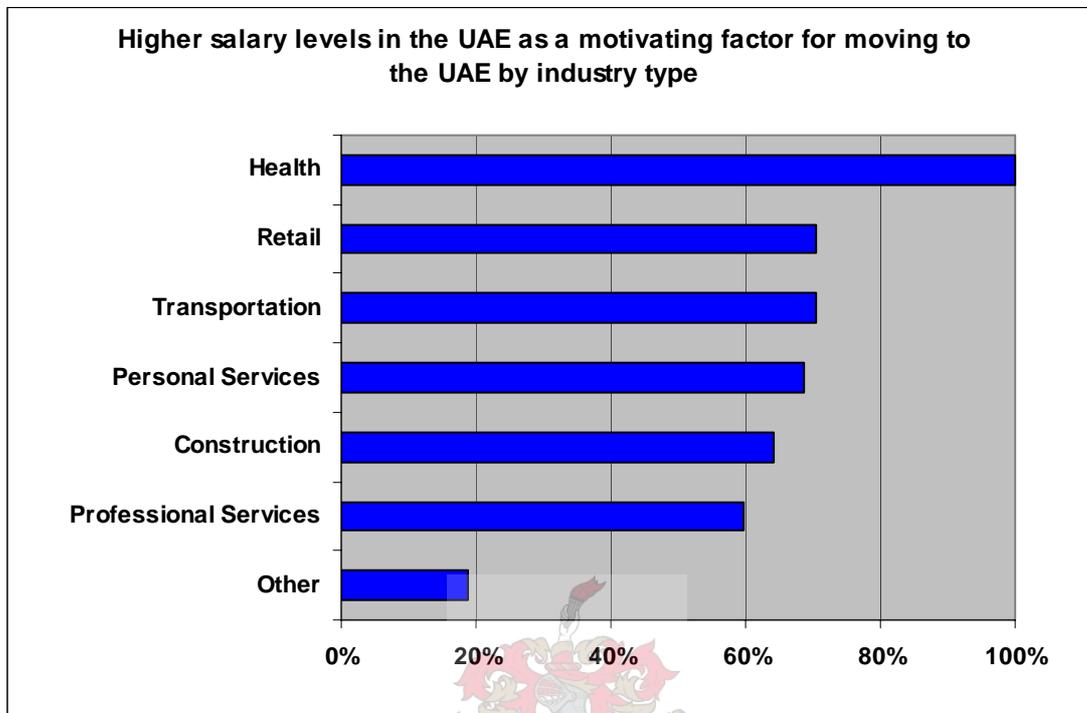
In this section we first discuss the various reasons why respondents to the UAE (pull factors) followed by the respondents' perceptions of their quality of life in South Africa vs. their quality of life in the United Arab Emirates. The section concludes with a number of bivariate analyses (to check for any possible interaction effects between sets of responses).

**Figure 5.16 UAE Pull factors – Reasons for moving to the United Arab Emirates**



From the results the UAE's main pull factors seem to be job opportunities, higher salary levels and an almost crime free environment. Interestingly, these pull factors are almost a mirror image of their reasons for leaving South Africa as discussed in the section above. Respondents in the professional services and the construction industries cited job opportunities in the UAE among their main motivating reason for moving to the UAE.

**Figure 5.17 Higher income levels as a motivating reason for moving to the UAE, split by industry type**



It is significant that 100% of the respondents in the health industry cited higher salary levels as a motivating reason for moving to the UAE. The personal services industry represents respondents in the hospitality, social services, amusement and recreation and automotive services sectors. With the UAE and specifically Dubai emerging as a major worldwide tourist destination, it is clear why respondents in the personal service industry would be attracted to the UAE's higher income levels.

Figure 5.18 Respondents' perception of better quality of life

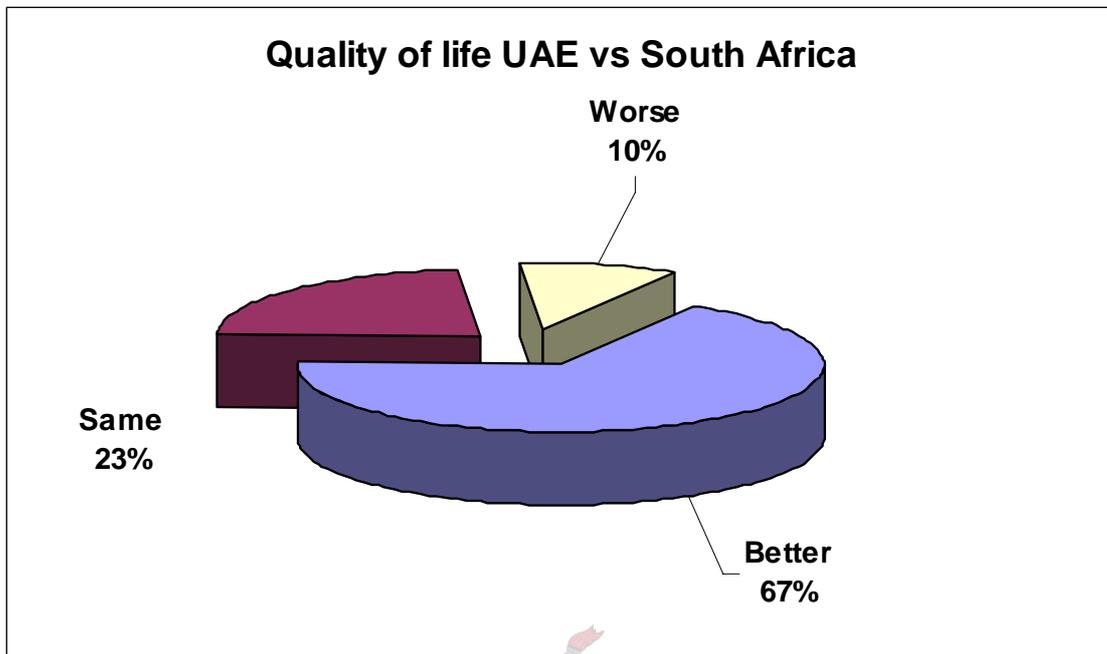
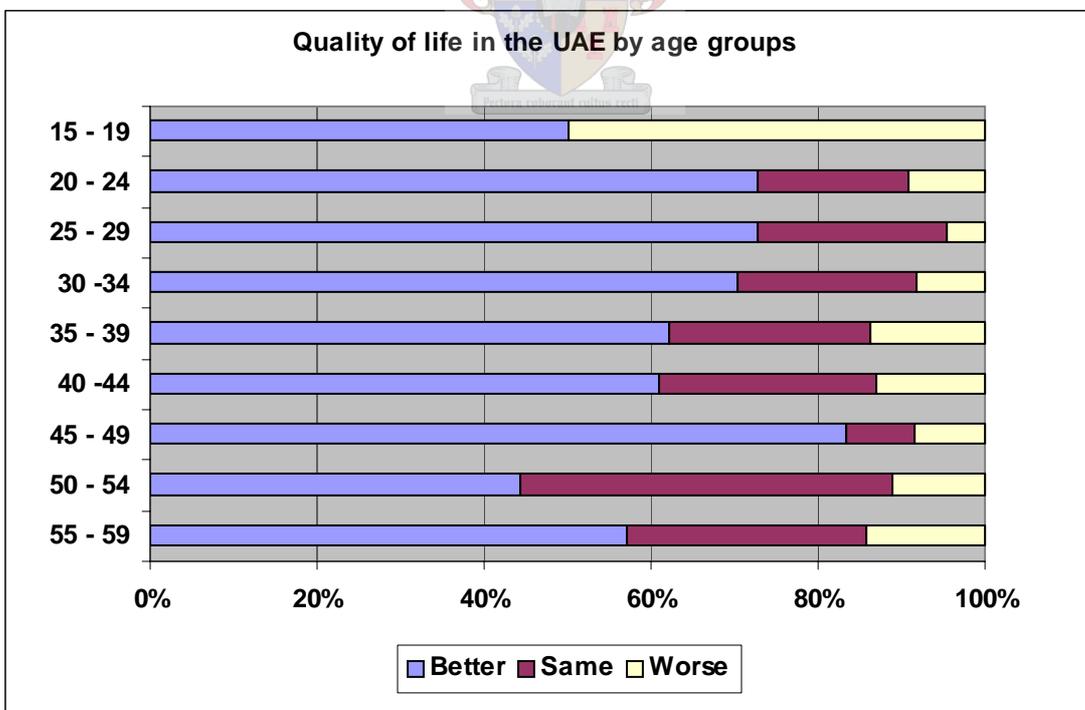
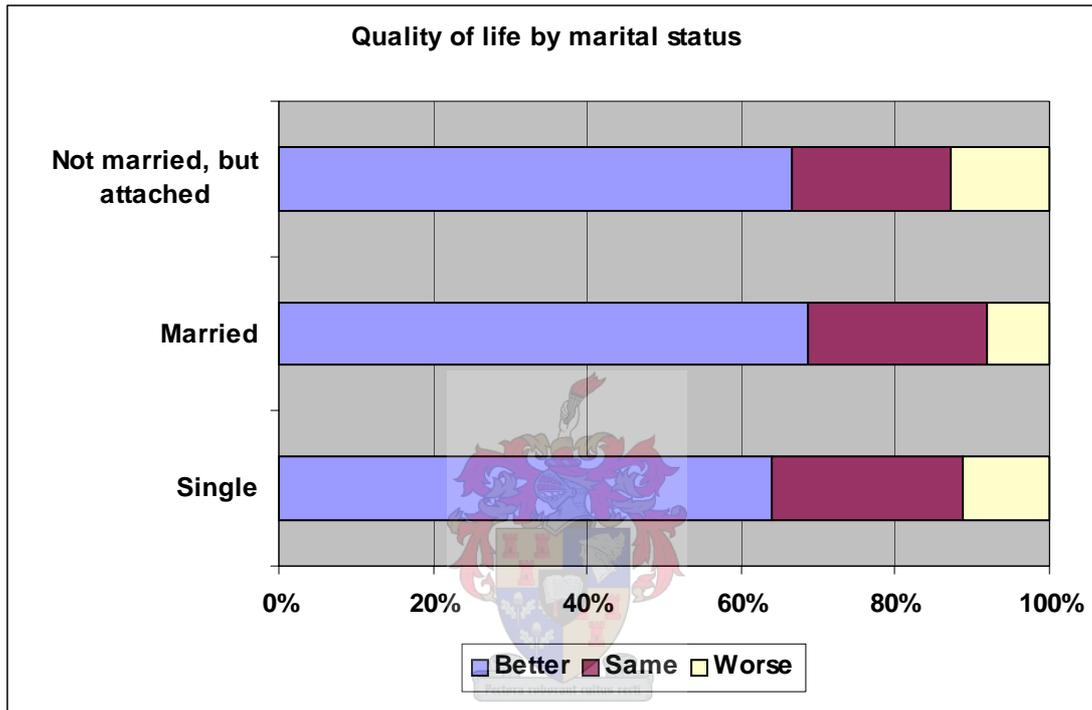


Figure 5.19 Respondents' perception of better quality of life split by age groups



The majority of the age groups are of the opinion that they enjoy either a similar or a better quality of life in the UAE vs. their quality of life in South Africa. The only exception is respondents in the age group 15 – 19 years. The sample size (2 respondents) for this age group is too small to draw any conclusions from this however.

**Figure 5.20 Respondents' perception of better quality of life split by marital status**



**Figure 5.21 Respondents' perception of better quality of life for respondents with and without children**

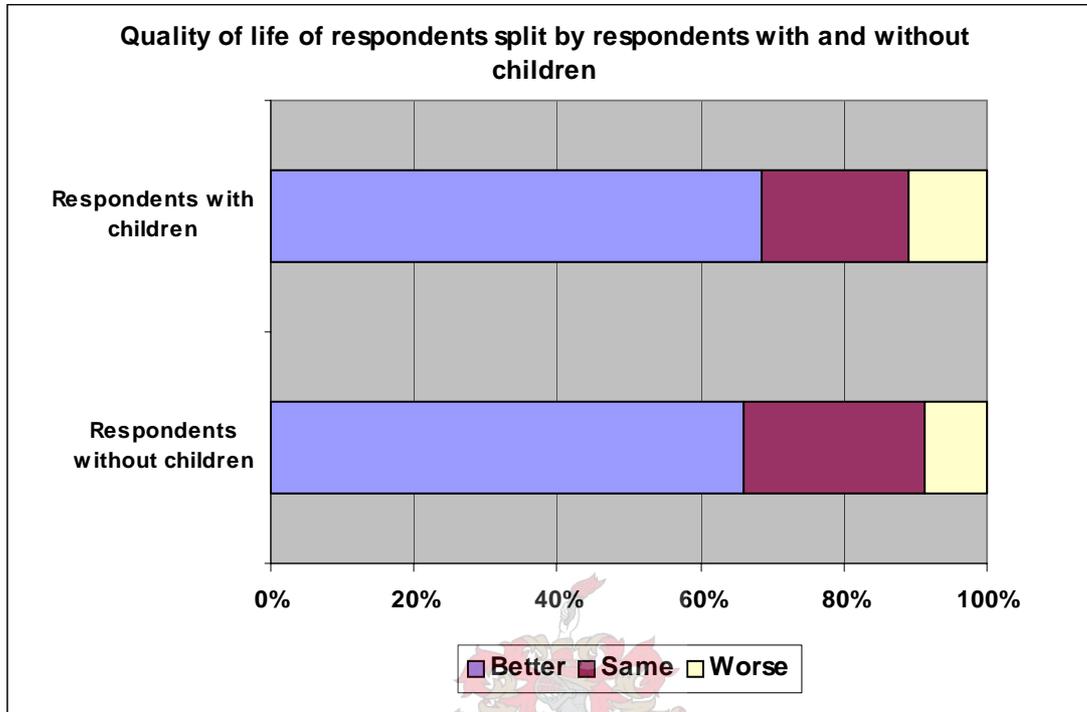
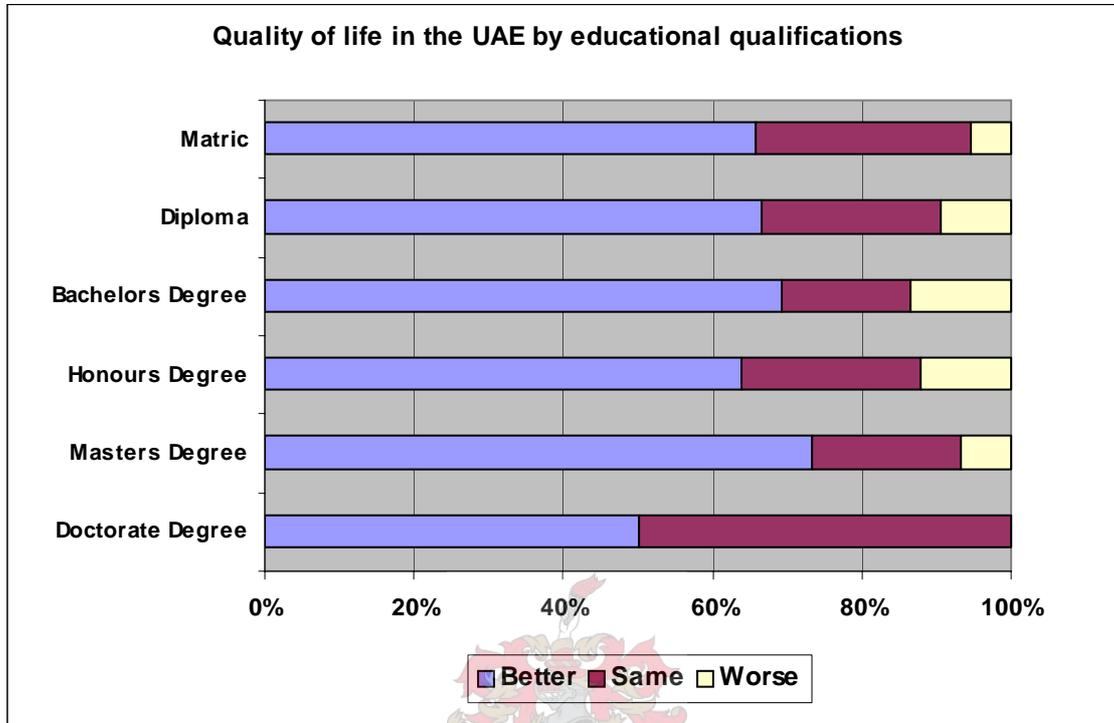
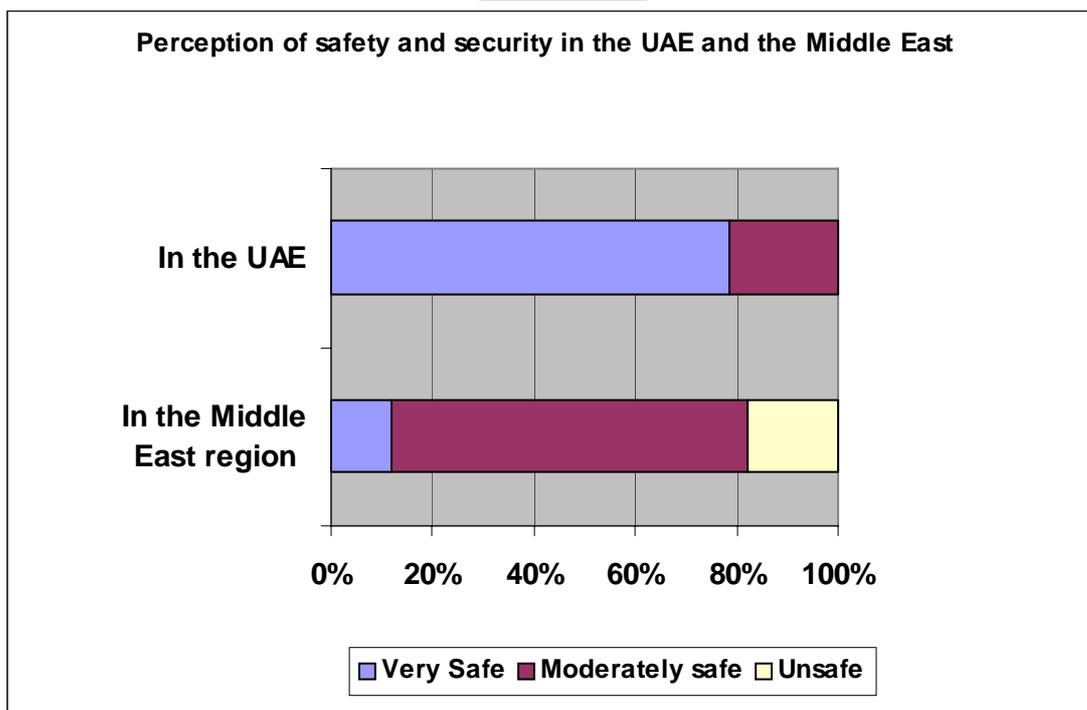


Fig 5.20 and 5.21 above shows no statistically significant difference between marital status or being a parent and opinions on quality of life in the UAE. This in itself is noteworthy since it points to the fact that the positive perceptions of quality of life (more than 60% of all three marital status subgroups) are held across all subgroups. Even when we compare the educational level of respondents with their perception of quality of life in the UAE, we find only a slight variance between the groups– doctorate degree holders are not as positive that they enjoy a better quality of life in the UAE vs. their quality of life in South Africa and corresponds with the respondents' opinion in the age group of 50 and above in Fig. 5.19.

**Figure 5.22 Respondents' perception of better quality of life by educational qualifications attained**



**Figure 5. 23 Perception of safety levels in the UAE and the Middle East region**



Most of the respondents perceive the UAE to be a very safe country and the Middle East region to be moderately safe.

**Table 5.17 Cross-tabulation of crime as a reason to move to the UAE and being a victim of theft**

Low crime rates as a reason to move to the UAE						
Victims of theft by crime as a motivator					Statistics	
		Yes	Non	Total	Pearson Chi-square	Cramer's V
Theft	Victims of theft	69.5%	30.5%	154		
	Non-victims of theft	40.0%	60.0%	20		

**Table 5.18 Cross-tabulation of crime as a reason to move to the UAE and number of theft**

Low crime rates as a reason to move to the UAE						
Number of types of theft as a motivator					Statistics	
		Yes	No	Total	Pearson Chi-square	Cramer's V
Theft (number out of 4 types of theft)	Non-victims of theft	40.0%	60.0%	20		
	Victims of 1 type of theft	67.4%	32.6%	43		
	Victims of 2 types of thefts	58.8%	41.2%	34		
	Victims of 3 types of thefts	68.2%	31.8%	44		
	Victims of 4 types of thefts	84.8%	15.2%	33		

**Theft as a motivator to move to the UAE:** Four types of theft were listed as possible choices to respondents - Mugging, household theft, vehicle theft and hijacking. In section 5.3.3 we discussed the correlation between number of thefts and crime as a reason to leave South Africa. In this section we discuss the correlation between the number of thefts and the low crime rate of the UAE as a reason to move there from South Africa. As the results in Table 5.17 show, there is indeed a strong and statistically significant correlation between these two factors. Those respondents who indicated that they had been the victims of All FOUR kinds of theft (Table 5.18) were the most likely to cite the low crime rate in the UAE as a motivator for moving to the UAE.

That the low crime rate and higher salaries are pull factors for South Africans moving to the UAE is evident. The following section focuses on less evident pull factors to the UAE. It should be noted that only a small percentage of the respondents cited these as pull factors and their significance is therefore limited.

**Table 5.19 Cross-tabulation of education system as a motivator to move to the UAE**

Demographic variables by reason for moving to the UAE						
Quality of the education system					Statistics	
		Agree	Disagree	Total	Pearson Chi-square	Cramer's V
Age Group	34 years or younger	5.3%	94.7%	94	0.006	0.210
	35 years or older	18.8%	81.3%	80		

**Table 5.20 Cross-tabulation of the quality of the education system in the UAE as a motivator to move**

Demographic variables by reason for moving to the UAE						
The quality of the education system in the UAE					Statistics	
		Agree	Disagree	Total	Pearson Chi-square	Cramer's V
Educational Level	Matric	5.3%	94.7%	38	0.016	0.244
	Diploma	9.5%	90.5%	42		
	Undergraduate	23.1%	76.9%	52		
	Postgraduate	4.8%	95.2%	42		

**Quality of the education system as a pull factor:** As seen in the demographic section, most of the respondents with children are 35 years and older and it is therefore logical that these respondents would be more concerned with the quality of the education system in the UAE than the younger childless respondents. In Table 5.20 the undergraduate respondents cited the quality of the education system in the UAE more often as a pull factor. It is not clear why these respondents would be more likely to cite this as a motivator, especially since we have established previously in this chapter that the older respondents (35 years and above) are higher educated than the younger group of 34 years and below. A possible explanation could be that they wish to further their studies in the UAE.

**Table 5.21 Cross-tabulation of the climate as a motivator to move to the UAE**

Demographic variables by reason for moving to the UAE						
The climate of the UAE					Statistics	
		Agree	Disagree	Total	Pearson Chi-square	Cramer's V
Age Group	34 years or younger	12.8%	87.2%	94	0.035	0.160
	35 years or older	3.8%	96.3%	80		

The younger respondents (below the age of 34 years) were more likely to cite the climate in the UAE as a pull factor. The UAE offers various outdoor activities during the winter months (the summer months are too hot) including many off-road activities, water and other team sports of which the younger respondents are more likely to take part in.

**Table 5.22 Cross-tabulation of the multi-cultural environment in the UAE as a motivator to move**

Demographic variables by reason for moving to the UAE						
The multi-cultural environment in the UAE					Statistics	
		Agree	Disagree	Total	Pearson Chi-square	Cramer's V
Educational Level	Matric	7.9%	92.1%	38	0.030	0.226
	Diploma	35.7%	64.3%	42		
	Undergraduate	23.1%	76.9%	52		
	Postgraduate	21.4%	78.6%	42		

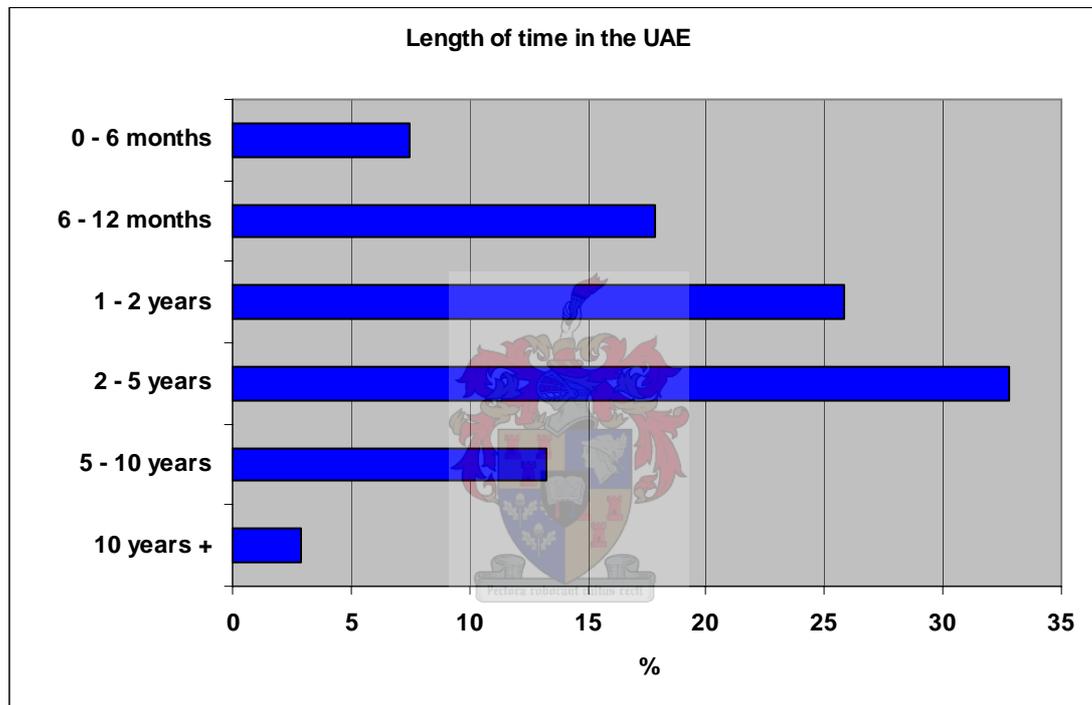
The main pull factors to the UAE are all either financial or career based, except for the safe environment. These pull factors correlate with the earlier finding in section 5.3.2 that respondents tend to perceive their stay in the UAE as short term. It is also noteworthy that these pull factors mirror many of the most cited push factors for leaving South Africa.

### 5.3.5 Possibility of Brain Circulation

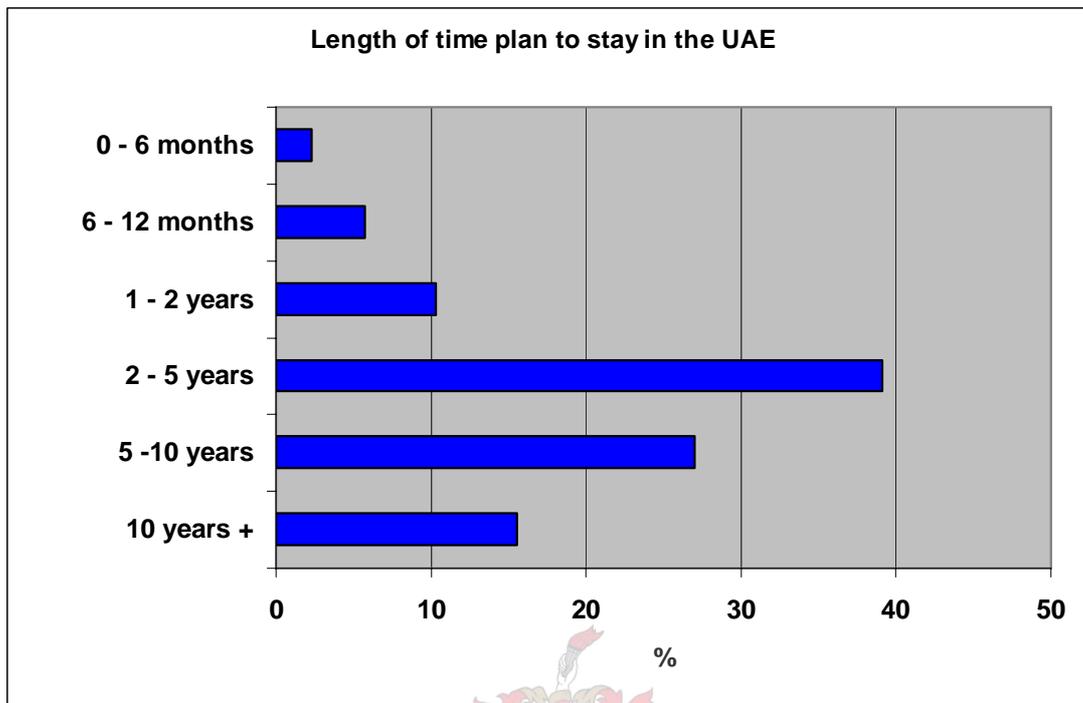
For brain circulation to occur respondents have to return to South Africa permanently. The following factors contribute either directly or indirectly in motivating respondents to return to South Africa. This section will discuss the data collected relating to the

possibility of these respondents forming part of a brain circulation pattern, rather than a brain drain. We start this section with the respondents' average length of stay in the UAE and also look at the length of time they still plan to spend in the UAE and then continue with the existing links the respondents have with South Africa, their average frequency of return to South Africa, the number of respondents that have lived and worked in other countries beside the UAE and South Africa and then conclude with possible motivators for them to return permanently to South Africa.

**Figure 5.24 Average length of time in the UAE for respondents**



**Figure 5.25 Average length of time planning to stay in the UAE for respondents**

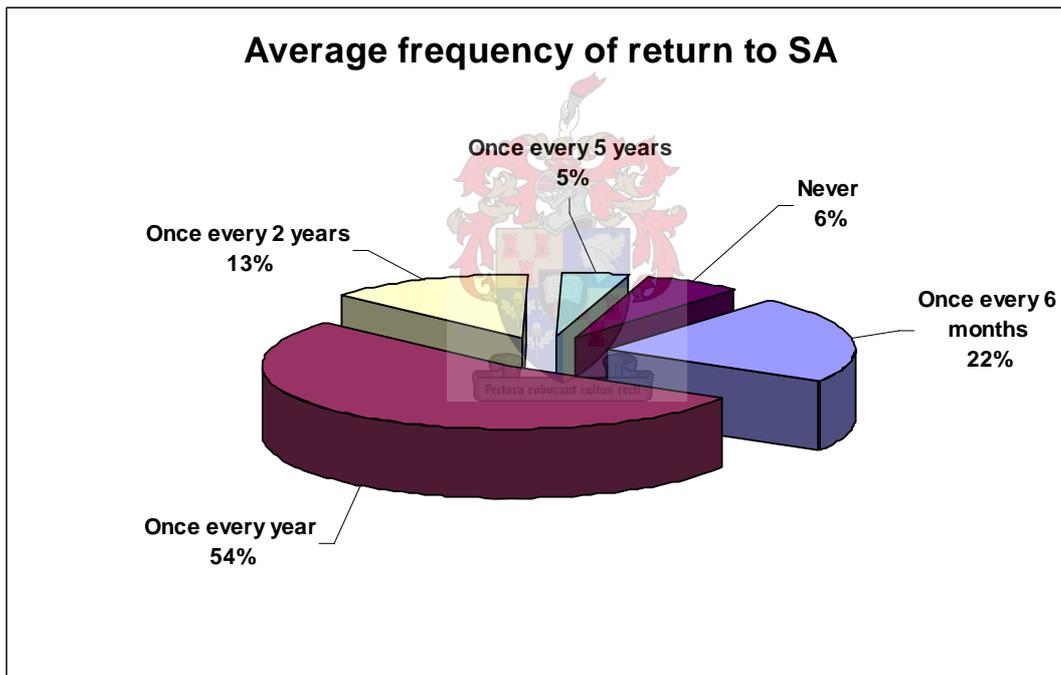


A large number of respondents (66%) plan to live and work in the UAE between 2 – 10 years, however a much smaller percentage (15%) of respondents plan to stay in the UAE longer than 10 years. With 85% of respondents indicating that they will leave the UAE during the next decade, it is hopeful that some of these respondents will return to South Africa during this time permanently, especially when we compare the results with Table 5.23 below. Almost half of the respondents still own a home in South Africa and 14% have a job to return to. In the literature review chapter we saw that family members and friends can also be a good pull factor to return home and this could affect the 93% of the respondents who still have family members in South Africa to return home permanently.

**Table 5.23 Table of existing links with South Africa by the respondents**

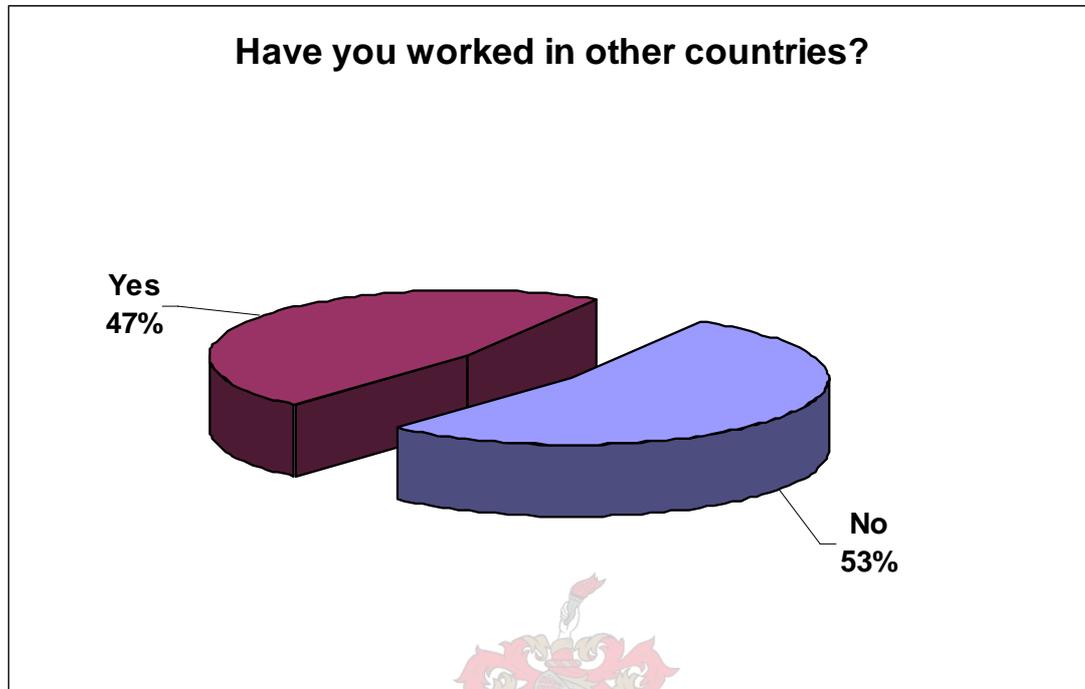
Existing links with South Africa	
	% of respondents
<b>Respondents that still:</b>	
Own a house	41.4
Own other properties	20.7
Have South African bank accounts	80.5
Have a job to return to	14.9
Have family members in South Africa	93.7

**Figure 5. 26 Respondents average frequency of return to South Africa**



Three quarters of all the respondents visit South Africa at least once per year. This figure corresponds with the large number of respondents who still have family members in South Africa.

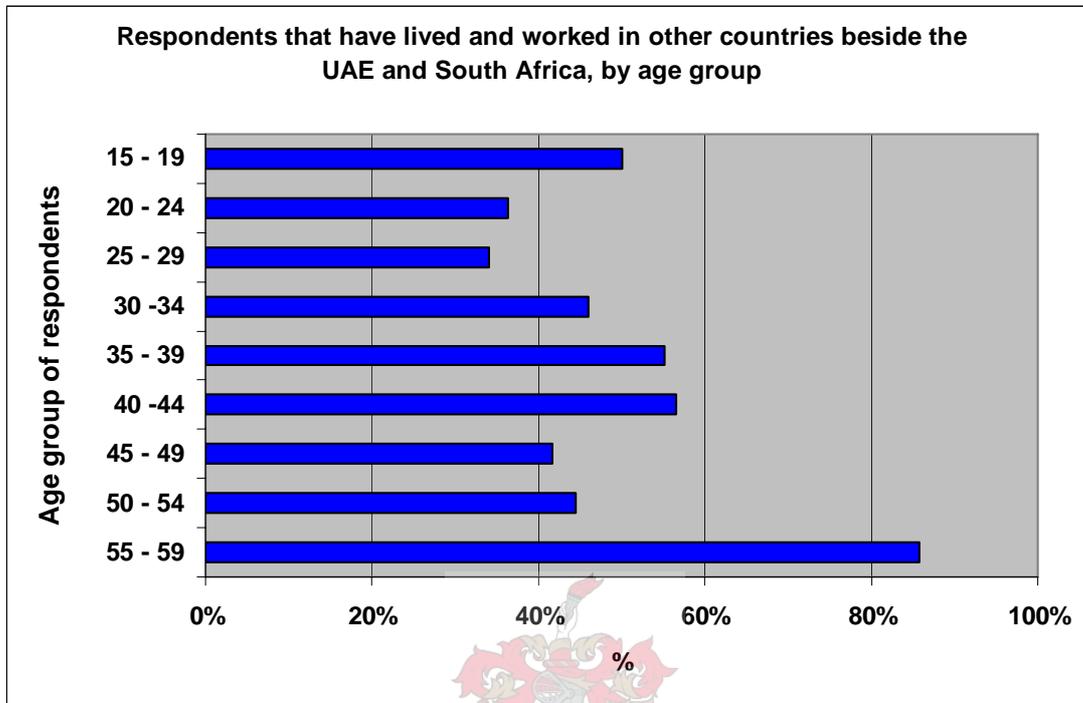
**Figure 5.27 Respondents that lived and worked in other countries besides South Africa and the UAE**



Almost half of the respondents have lived and worked in other countries besides South Africa and the UAE. These respondents truly represent an international work force.

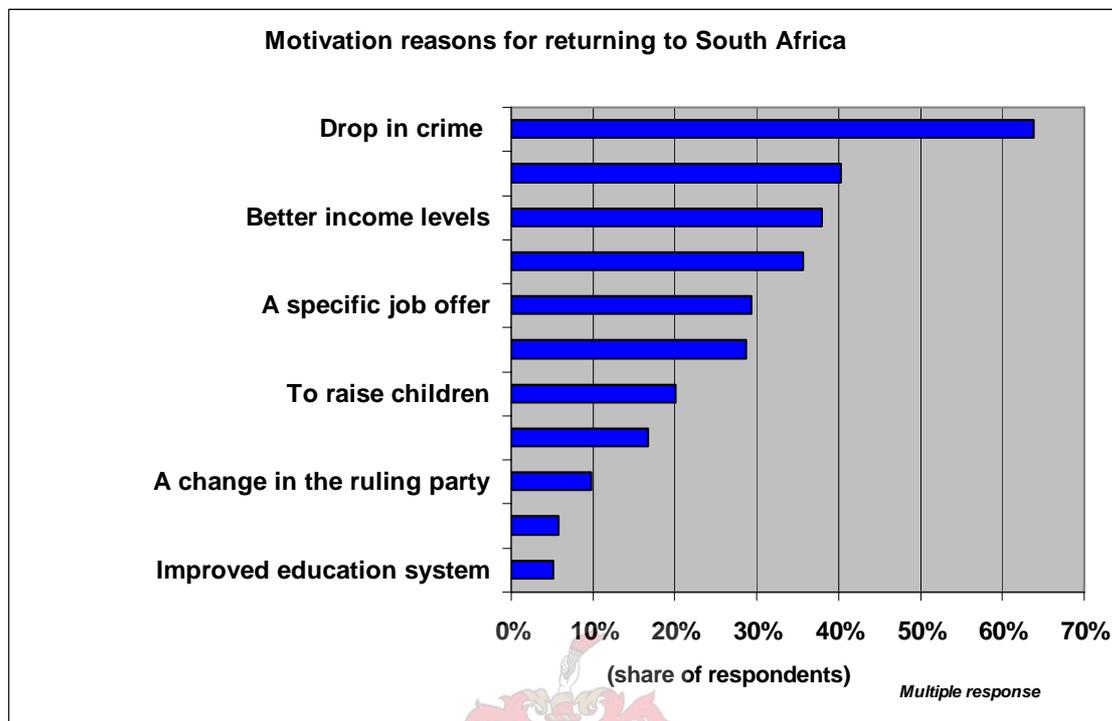


**Figure 5.28 Respondents that lived and worked in other countries besides South Africa and the UAE by age group**



From the figure above it seems that respondents between the ages of 35 - 44 years and 55 – 59 years are more likely to form part of this international work force. The respondents of 35 years and above are more likely to have several years of solid work experience combined with academic qualifications and are therefore probably in higher demand, explaining their tendency to work in various countries abroad.

**Figure 5.29 Motivating reasons for returning to South Africa**



Corresponding with the previous figures, by far the factor that would motivate most respondents to return home is a drop in crime levels in South Africa. Higher income levels and job opportunities were cited by almost half of the respondents as motivators to return. These motivators are again similar to the push and pull factors discussed earlier in this chapter. Interestingly several respondents would like to retire in South Africa, supporting the idea that they stay in the UAE is short term and wish to return to South Africa permanently. From this result it can be estimated that at least 40% of the respondents will form part of a brain circulation pattern, rather than a brain drain pattern. As discussed in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3, brain circulation benefits both the country of origin (South Africa) and the host country (the UAE). The respondents that form part of a brain circulation movement can bring back valuable experience and know-how to the local economy.

## Chapter 6 Conclusions

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### 6.1 Introduction

This chapter will elaborate on the survey results presented in Chapter 5 and compare these results with those of other studies and research projects as discussed in the literature review chapter.

The objective of the study was to answer the following questions:

Main research problem:

Who are the South Africans living and working in the UAE (demographic statistics)?

And the Sub research problems:

- What are the motivations for leaving South Africa?
- What are the motivations for moving to the UAE?
- What adaptation problems do South Africans in the UAE experience?
- What existing links do South Africans in the UAE still have with South Africa and what would motivate them to return?
- Do these South Africans form part of an international workforce, i.e. do they live and work in several countries abroad of which the UAE is only one?



In Chapter 2 the South African brain drain was defined as “tertiary educated or skilled South African professionals leaving South Africa for another country with the intention of moving there permanently”. From the results of the survey data it is clear that most of the respondents fit this definition. The respondents have all left South Africa and now live and work in the UAE. Although not all of the respondents intend to live in the UAE permanently and some may form part of a future brain drain circulation pattern, they do currently form part of the South African brain drain.

## **6.2 The demographic profile of the sample**

*Based on the demographics presented in chapter 5, the profile of the sample can be summarized as follows:*

- The respondents are mostly native English speakers.
- Are overwhelmingly a “young” respondent population, with more than half under the age of 35 years.
- The majority of the respondents are male.
- The majority are either married or in relationships with other South Africans.
- Are overwhelmingly Christian.
- More than half are graduates with almost a quarter having post-graduate qualifications.
- The majority are employed within the professional services industry sector, but a variety of industry sectors are represented and most are appointed in managerial positions.

Almost 20% of the respondents have non-South African partners - this points to the rather cosmopolitan nature of the sample group. The respondents are also a highly educated and professional group that contribute to their mobility patterns. These respondents perfectly fit the definition of skills migration and have a “transitional” nature. In contrast with the research presented in chapter 2, the results of this study did not indicate major difference between gender and skills migration perception, attitudes or behaviour.

## **6.3 Perceptions of life in the UAE**

The two most prevalent perceptions of life in the UAE refer to a safer environment, followed by positive perceptions about financial matters and economic prospects. Many of the respondents' most cited perceptions tend to refer to rather short term “positives”. Most of the respondents agreed that there are immediate career or financial benefits by living in the UAE rather than in SA. However less than half believed that their children have a better future in the UAE, have confidence in the tertiary education system or believed that they have greater job security in the UAE. Not surprisingly almost all of the respondents agreed that personal safety levels and the family safety levels are higher in the UAE.

The most common adaptation problems experienced by the respondents were less contact with family and friends. It is significant that 68% of both male and female respondents cited this as an adaptation problem. Respondents listed 57 different nationalities forming part of their social circle in the UAE reaffirming their cosmopolitan nature.

The results in chapter 5 revealed an interesting emerging picture: of a group of people who, although positive about life in the UAE, do not seem to be unequivocally committed to the country. The positives mostly strong agreed with are short-term in nature, the minority indicated that they are members of some group or network in the UAE – and as we will see later – many indicated that they would seriously consider returning to South Africa if levels of crime were to drop. All of this points to people “in transit”; who have not made a very strong financial or emotional commitment to the UAE. This, in principle, suggests that the conditions for brain circulation are in fact present.

#### **6.4 Push Factors contributing to the brain drain**

Push factors for leaving South Africa, as illustrated in Chapter 3, normally include crime, perceptions of a high cost of living, levels of taxation, a perceived decline in the standard of public services (e.g. healthcare and education). The respondents in this study were not only driven by political factors to leave South Africa, but also by international factors, such as globalisation.

The most common (69% of respondents) motivating reason cited by the respondents for leaving was to gain more international experience. In an increasingly global job market, a growing number of people are seeking to add international experience to their personal career portfolio and South Africans in the UAE are no different.

Nearly 84% of emigrating executives cited the crime and violence in South Africa as their reason for leaving in 1997 (Crime propels brain drain, 1997) and the results of this study were similar. More than 60% of respondents cited the high crime levels in South Africa as a major push factor. In chapter 5 (Tables 5.13 and 5.14) we found that those respondents who were victims of theft in SA were much more likely to cite crime as a reason to leave South Africa and the respondents who indicated that they had been the

victims of all four kinds of theft (mugging, vehicle theft, household theft and hijacking) were the most likely to cite crime as a reason to leave SA.

This mirrors results stating concerns about safety and security in South Africa as a main motivator for leaving South Africa and as pull factor for moving to the UAE due to the safe environment. Throughout the data analysis of this study results indicated serious concerns with the high level of crime in South Africa.

Almost half of the respondents cited economical reasons (the low salary levels, high levels of taxation and cost of living in South Africa) as main reasons for leaving South Africa. Respondents of 34 years and below with lower educational levels and semi-skilled jobs were more inclined to cite reasons related to cost of living and low salary levels in South Africa as push factors.

Not surprisingly affirmative action policies in South Africa are the fourth most motivator cited reason to leave South Africa, especially when we consider that 87% of the respondents are Caucasian and more than 65% are male; and therefore most affected by these policies.

### **6.5 Pull Factors contributing to brain drain**

Developed countries can offer certain benefits or opportunities for HSP that South Africa cannot match. According to an IMF report of 1999, pull factors in developing countries include: wage differentials, differences in the quality of life, educational opportunities for children, job security as well as the desire to interact with a broader group of similarly skilled colleagues (South Africa hit, 2002). The main pull factors for the respondents to move to the UAE were no different with 73% of respondents stating job opportunities as the main pull factor, followed closely by higher income levels in the UAE (67%), a low crime rate (66%) and no income taxation (59%).

There is a strong correlation between the number of thefts that respondents were victims of in South Africa and the low crime rate of the UAE as a reason to move there (Table 5. 17). Those respondents who indicated that they had been the victims of all four kinds of theft (Table 5.18) were the most likely to cite the low crime rate in the UAE as a motivator for moving to the UAE – indeed it is one of the strongest pull factors for the UAE.

That the low crime rate and higher salaries are pull factors for South Africans moving to the UAE is evident. It is clear from the results that there is a strong correlation between the reasons leaving South Africa and the ones motivating people to move to the UAE.

In the literature review several counter measures was discussed to contain the brain drain, especially in the health services industry. These counter measures included rural allowances and the implementation of a two compulsory community residency years. These counter measures would in all probability mainly target younger health professionals. Interestingly, the majority (65%) of the health professional respondents of this study were between the ages of 25 – 34 years. However, this sample size is too small to draw any conclusions about the effectiveness of the health sector counter measures in place in South Africa and is not the main purpose of this research project. This could however be interesting for future research projects.

## **6.6 Possibility of Brain Circulation between South Africa and the UAE**

The result of the final question of the survey, viz. “What would motivate you to return to South Africa?” indicates a largely positive response. Two main themes have emerged from the results. The first one, being the perception that South Africa still has a high standard of living, is illustrated by the large number of respondents wanting to retire in South Africa (40%) and the significant amount of respondents (20%) wanting to raise their children in South Africa.



The second theme is centred on socio-economic factors that could very well improve in the future, e.g. a drop in the crime rate, which would motivate the majority of respondents (64%) to return to South Africa. Salary levels, being a similar factor that could improve in the near to medium term (due to economic growth, or the strengthening of the rand), was also one of the main motivating reasons for return (38% of respondents).

Most of the respondents have been living in the UAE between 6 months and five years and this explains the strong links most respondents still have with South Africa. From the survey results more than 60% still own other properties and 80% still have bank accounts in South Africa. Almost all (94%) of the respondents still have family members living in South Africa and over 75% visits South Africa at least once per year. According to a poll done by The Homecoming Revolution, one of the main reasons for

expatriate South Africans to return is family and friends. (Familie is geelwortel, 2004). The results from this study seem to support this notion as 68% of respondents cited less contact with family and friends and 29% the distance from South Africa as major adaptation problem in the UAE. (17% of the respondents cited family pressure to move back as a main motivating reason to return to South Africa). These links with South Africa indicate a strong possibility that some of these respondents will return to South Africa permanently at a future date.

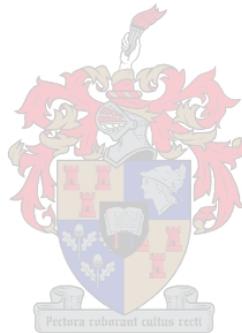
Interestingly almost half of the respondents would like to retire in South Africa, supporting the idea that their stay in the UAE is short term and that they wish to return to South Africa permanently. From this result it can be estimated that at least 40% of the respondents will form part of a brain circulation pattern, rather than a brain drain pattern.

The results are not all that optimistic however. A large percentage (66%) of respondents plan to stay in the UAE between 2 – 10 years and a significant percentage (15%) of respondents plan to stay in the UAE longer than 10 years. Although most respondents indicated that they only plan to live in the UAE for a number of years, this does not necessarily mean that they will return to South Africa at the end of this time. The respondents might migrate to another country instead of returning to South Africa and the fact that almost half of the respondents (mostly aged 35 years and above) have lived and worked in other countries besides South Africa and the UAE supports this idea. These respondents of 35 years and above are more likely to have several years of solid work experience combined with academic qualifications and are therefore probably in higher demand, explaining their tendency to work in various countries abroad.

Research suggests that returning expatriates can experience 'reverse culture shock' and other problems of adaptation (Foster, 1994 as cited by Hardill, 1998) upon their return to their home country. It has been suggested that after five years as an expatriate, re-entry is problematic; and after ten years it becomes impossible (Salt, 1998, p392 as cited by Hardill, 1998). This would suggest that the respondents staying in the UAE for ten years and above would probably never return to South Africa permanently and would therefore form part of the brain drain pattern and not the brain circulation pattern.

It is evident from the results in chapter 5 that the South Africans in the United Arab Emirates are a highly skilled, educated, professional, cosmopolitan and mobile group. Although some of these skilled migrants will return home due to family pressure or to retire, unfortunately many might not return until specific socio-economic conditions are addressed in South Africa. With the lights in the developed world shining bright and crime at our doorstep, it is foreseeable that South African skills migration -and more serious- South African brain drain will continue for years to come.

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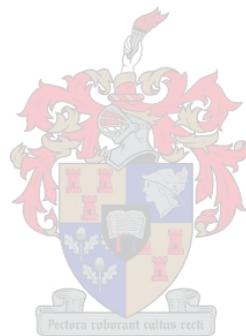
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# APPENDIX

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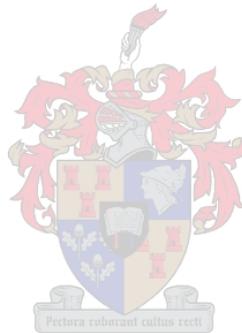
Appendix 1: Post pilot survey / Final version

Appendix 2: Web based survey

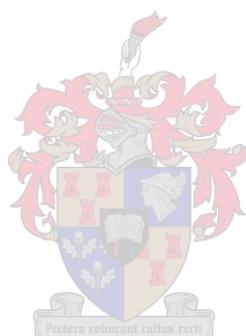
Appendix 3: Creating awareness of the survey

3.1 Posters

3.2 Homecoming Revolution Newsletter



## Appendix 1: Post pilot survey



## Appendix 2: Web based survey



REPLAY INTRO

**Outsourcing Consultants**

HOME COMPANIES VACANCIES JOB SEEKERS CONTACT US ASSOCIATES LINKS

**Outsourcing Consultants** is a young organisation with **NEW IDEAS**

YOU ARE NOW VISITING THE WEBSITE OF A PROFESSIONAL AND INNOVATIVE COMPANY, PURPOSEFULLY SERVING YOUR NEEDS.

WE FOCUS ON RECRUITMENT AND HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT IN GENERAL.

Outsourcing Consultants is based in **Dubai, United Arab Emirates**. We have a collective experience base of approximately 25 years in the Middle East.

 [Survey - South Africans in the UAE](#)  
Click here to enter

[Medical Division](#)  
Click here to enter 

Our services are designed to serve both individuals and corporates.

An ever-expanding list currently including job seekers from South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Germany, the United States of America, Canada, Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Saudi Arabia, the Sultanate of Oman, Kuwait and Qatar have been advised and/or placed by us.

Individuals that are seeking assistance click here to see our [Value Added Services](#) designed to enhance your employment profile and potential employment opportunities.

Corporates based in several Middle Eastern countries, the United Kingdom, Egypt and Australia are being served by us.

Site Last updated on: 05<sup>th</sup> April, 2004

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### Introduction

The Researcher, Anco Fourie, is completing a Masters degree in Social Science Research Methods and Project Management at the University of Stellenbosch, South Africa. Titled "Brain Circulation and Brain Drain of South Africans in the United Arab Emirates", the study is aimed at determining patterns in relation to South Africans relocating to the UAE for employment purposes as well as the same group of South Africans returning to SA from the UAE

Outsourcing Consultants is a UAE based Human Resources Management Consultancy. Their consulting division undertake surveys on behalf of corporates, including compensation surveys and attitude surveys. With this particular study, resources are being made available to the Researcher on a courtesy basis and Outsourcing Consultants is not directly involved in the study as such.

The study is for post-graduate and research purposes. Individual responses are considered to be confidential and all reasonable steps will be taken to keep data of the study secure. The Researcher will be contacting a small percentage of respondents on a random basis to verify content of responses. Findings of the study will be published as part of the thesis and will be available upon request after publication.

Completing the questionnaire is anticipated to take approximately 20 minutes.  
Thank you for participating in this survey.

**Click here to start Survey**

  
**Outsourcing Consultants**

### LOGIN

---

**Full Name**

**Email Address**   
eg: - [username@domain.com](mailto:username@domain.com)

---

Are you a South African citizen and raised in South Africa?

Do you live in the United Arab Emirates?

Do you work in the United Arab Emirates?

---

#### Personal Data

Gender

Home Language

Race

Age group  Years

Marital Status

Spouse / Partner's Nationality

Spouse / Partner employed in the UAE?

Do you have children?

Please specify their sex and age

Religion

Education Level

Industry

Occupation

Career Level

Length of time spent in the UAE to date

Length of time planning to spend

Motivation for having left South Africa

- Cost of living
- Taxation
- Safety and Security (crime levels)
- Standard of Public and Government Services
- Affirmative action policies
- Political factors
- Salary levels
- International experience
- Others

Please elaborate on the reasons selected above

Salary levels  
 International experience  
 Others

Please elaborate on the reasons selected above

**Existing or current links with South Africa**

**In South Africa, do you still:**

Own a house Select ▼

Own any other properties Select ▼

Have a Bank Account Select ▼

Have a job to return to Select ▼

Have family members Select ▼

**Average Frequency of Return to South Africa** Select ▼

**Perceptions of your life in South Africa vs. your life in the UAE**  
Please Indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements

There are more jobs available in UAE Select ▼

There are greater prospects for professional advancement in the UAE Select ▼

There is greater job security in the UAE Select ▼

Income levels are higher in the UAE Select ▼

Thos cost of living is lower in the UAE than in South Africa Select ▼

The medical benefits / plans are better / provides better coverage in the UAE Select ▼

The UAE offers better overall employment benefits Select ▼

The interest rate in the UAE is lower Select ▼

Gross Domestic Product growth is higher in the UAE Select ▼

about the same or worse than what it was in South Africa:

**Investments in the UAE Property Market**

Have you, or are you planning to invest in the property market in the UAE? Select ▼

**Adaptation problems in the UAE**

Religion  
 Climate  
 Less contact with family or friends  
 Cost of living  
 Cultural differences  
 Distance from South Africa  
 Difference in housing (eg: smaller space, apartment living)  
 Languages (eg: speaking English instead of Afrikaans)  
 Lack of cultural activities (eg: theater, ballet, opera, symphony)  
 Segregation of different nationalities in the UAE  
 Loss of Job / Career for spouse or partner  
 Others

**Perceived Behaviour / Attitudes towards South Africans in the UAE**

How would you classify the Behaviour / Attitudes of the following groups of people towards South Africans

UAE Nationals Select ▼

Non-South African co-workers Select ▼

UAE Government officials Select ▼

South African co-workers Select ▼

South African co-workers

Select

**Attitude towards South African Membership Groups and Organizations in the UAE**

Are you a member of a South African group or Organization in the UAE?

Select

If yes, please specify

**General Questions**

Besides South Africa and the UAE, have you lived and worked in other countries?

Select

If yes, please specify how many times you have worked in other countries and in which countries.

Have you lived and worked in the UAE prior to this occasion?

Select

Number of years **previously** worked in the UAE (prior to this occasion)

**Social interaction of South Africans in the UAE**

What are the nationalities of your main social circle / friends in the UAE?

1.   
2.   
3.   
4.   
5.   
6.   
7.   
8.   
9.   
10.

Have you or your immediate family been victims of any of the following criminal acts in South Africa?

- Mugging
- Household theft
- Vehicle theft

Have you or your immediate family been victims of any of the following criminal acts in South Africa?

- Mugging
- Household theft
- Vehicle theft
- Hijacking
- Farm attacks
- Murder
- Rape

Any other criminal act against your person

**Perceptions on Terrorism in the Middle East Region**

How would you rate your safety in the United Arab Emirates?

Select

How would you rate your safety in the Middle East Region? (Outside of the UAE)

Select

Do you think it is likely that the attacks on westerners in Saudi Arabia could spill over to the United Arab Emirates?

Select

**Motivation to return to South Africa?**

First Reason

Select

Second Reason

Select

Third Reason

Select

Other Reasons

Finish

Reset

## Appendix 3: Promotional tools

### Appendix 3.1: Posters

Displayed at

- various supermarkets in Dubai;
- various Emirates Airline Staff Residences in Dubai; and
- at the consulate in Dubai



If you are a South African living and working in the United Arab Emirates, we need your help!

Please complete a survey on motivation reasons etc. for leaving South Africa and moving to the United Arab Emirates. The survey is completely confidential and for research purposes only. The Survey can be located on the following website: [www.outconsult.com](http://www.outconsult.com) and takes approximately 10 minutes to complete.

#### More information:

Titled “Brain Circulation and Brain Drain of South Africans in the United Arab Emirates”, the study is aimed at determining patterns in relation to South Africans relocating to the UAE for employment purposes as well as the same group of South Africans returning to SA from the UAE. The Researcher, Anco Fourie, is completing a Masters degree in Social Science Research Methods and Project Management at the University of Stellenbosch, South Africa. The study is for post-graduate and research purposes only. Individual responses are considered to be confidential and all reasonable steps will be taken to keep data of the study secure.

If you have any further queries, please contact Anco Fourie on 050 559 1278.

## Appendix 3.2: Homecoming Revolution Newsletter

Happy Easter - Message (HTML)

This message has been replied to or forwarded.

From: Homecoming Revolution [info@homecomingrevolution.co.za] Sent: Tue 22/03/2005 6:23 PM  
To: anco@astecoproperty.com  
Cc:  
Subject: Happy Easter

Thanks for the continued support and keep sending those challenging queries.  
[WWW.HOMECOMINGREVOLUTION.CO.ZA](http://WWW.HOMECOMINGREVOLUTION.CO.ZA)

**NOTICE BOARD**

### Brain Circulation and Brain Drain of South Africans in the UAE

The Researcher, Anco Fourie, is completing a Masters degree in Social Science Research Methods and Project Management at the University of Stellenbosch, South Africa. Titled "Brain Circulation and Brain Drain of South Africans in the United Arab Emirates", the study is aimed at determining patterns in relation to South Africans relocating to the UAE for employment purposes as well as the same group of South Africans returning to SA from the UAE.

The study is for post-graduate and research purposes. Individual responses are considered to be confidential and all reasonable steps will be taken to keep data of the study secure. The Researcher will be contacting a small percentage of respondents on a random basis to verify content of responses. Findings of the study will be published as part of the thesis and will be available upon request after publication.

Completing the questionnaire is anticipated to take approximately 20 minutes. Thank you for participating in this survey - <http://www.outconsult.com/login.html>

### 01 Thabo Mbeki Salutes the Homecoming Revolution

Angel Jones tells the story of the day the President gave them a hug

We couldn't believe it. An invitation had arrived for myself and co-founder Marina Smithers from the President's office. He wanted us to be his V.V.I.P. guests at the Opening of Parliament and State of the Nation address in Cape Town! What an honour, but Oh What to Wear?

Thabo Mbeki salutes Zulu but with Ndebele description. Mbeki chose a Zulu...

start | Inbox - Microsoft Out... | Happy Easter - Mess... | 5:37 PM

Pectora roborant cultus recti