

UNIVERSITY OF ZIMBABWE



Irregular repeat migration among unaccompanied children in Plumtree

BY

TONDERAI CHAREHWA

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SUPERVISOR: PROFESSOR V.N. MUZVIDZIWA

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DECLARATION

I, TonderaiCharehwa Registration Number R0144902J do hereby declare that this work is of my own origin and it has not been submitted to any institution of higher learning for the award of any degree, diploma, certificate or any other qualification.

CANDIDATE:.....**DATE:**

TONDERAI CHAREHWA

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DEDICATION

To my late parents, Mr. JTM. Charehwa, and Ms. R. Dunduru.

ABSTRACT

The number of repeat irregular child migrants has been on the increase since the turn of the century. These children leave their homes to migrate into neighboring Botswana without legal travel documents through undesignated crossing points some of which are dangerous. When deported, these children still go back to Botswana without legal travel documents. This study sought to investigate the challenges that these children face when these challenges. This area has in the past not received adequate attention in the academia as it was overshadowed by child labor migration, child trafficking and child refugee migration among other popular areas. This study makes significant contribution to literature in terms of the irregular repeat migration among children. Qualitative methodology was employed to highlight these issues and in-depth interviews were used as the main data collection tool so as to obtain rich descriptions on the lived experiences of these children. The respondents in the study were selected through purposive sampling technique. The study was informed the new sociology of childhood, which argues that contrary to structural theories which emphasize the domineering of structures on peoples' lives, children are not passive recipients of stimuli, they are not persons 'in waiting' or half adults, but they are actually complete persons who have the agency to recreate their own social worlds. This study showed that while the children have agency in challenging the structure, putting measures to redefine their life worlds through engaging in irregular migration, caution must be exercised so that this agency is not overdrawn because some children in this study faced some structural challenges due to their age.

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1.0 Introduction and Background

This study focuses on the agency of children in navigating challenges that face them during the process of irregular migration and their stay in another country. Irregular migration, is also known as border – jumping, undocumented migration, asylum seeking, and illegal migration among many other terms (Yaqub 2009). It used to be a field largely dominated by adults, but children have also entered this field in large numbers especially from the turn of the century (Castles and Miller 2003). Sometimes migration is entirely initiated and executed by children and substantial studies are available that reveal children’s participation in the process (Huijsmans 2008, Carballo and Nerukar 2001, Camacho 1999). There are different reasons, political, economic, social, legal and technological factors that cause both adults and children to migrate irregularly and these vary from country to country (Castles and Miller 2003:67). Globally, children today make up nearly a third of all international migrants (UNICEF 2009). One major reason accounting for an increase in child migration globally is the increase in child labor migration, child trafficking and asylum seeking by accompanied and unaccompanied children. Castles and Miller (2003:67) further asserts that alongside children’s increasing participation in conventional labor migration, specific forms of migration targeting young girls have also emerged, and among them is the commercialized migration of domestic workers, the migration and trafficking of children in the sex industry, and the organized migration of girls for marriage (sometimes labeled ‘mail-order brides’).

According to Arhin (2012), 1.2 million children are trafficked every year globally, already matched to specific markets in line with their gender, age and appearance. The US Department of State’s Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report for 2011 found the problem of child begging in 61 countries, child soldiers in 15 countries, instances of child sex tourism in 105 countries and trafficking for the purposes of domestic servitude in 110 countries. Children are trafficked for the purposes of illegal adoption; commercial and non-commercial sexual exploitation and labour exploitation for purposes of work in prostitution, sex tourism, sweatshops and early marriage. Other children are trained to become child soldiers, domestic servants and athletes. Trafficked children suffer devastating effects: they are made to work long hours, are underfed, exposed to

toxic materials and dangerous machinery, punished and abused if they disobey or attempt escape (Arhin 2012:02). The ILO, IOM and Europol (Arhin 2012) sees child trafficking as a subset of child migration, with movement as the common denominator and exploitation as the common consequence. However, not all unaccompanied migrant children are necessarily trafficked, many unaccompanied actually migrate through their own volition.

In Zimbabwe, child migration has been a growing phenomenon since the turn of the century according to Hanke and Kwok (2009); IOM (2010). Hanke and Steve blame the economic meltdown during the period 2000 to 2010, for the increase of child migration in Zimbabwe. They argue that due to the economic collapse, many children dropped out of school because their parents could not afford school fees for their children and these children found their way out of Zimbabwe in search of gainful employment to start their careers and or support their families back home. Not only that, orphaned children, child headed families also suffered from the disappearance of safety nets and this forced some children to migrate in search of employment as a survival strategy (Save the Children (2011). Most of these children however, did not have passports and they migrated through undesignated entry points into countries such as Botswana, South Africa, Namibia, and Zambia among others.

In the border towns of Beitbridge and Plumtree, irregular child migration is a huge phenomenon as everyday children are returned from South Africa and from Botswana via Beitbridge and Plumtree respectively (Save the Children 2011). During the process of irregular migration children cross the border and live in the host nation, there are several challenges that these children face and due to fear of deportation, these children do not report the various forms of abuse that they face and they end up with their universal rights taken away from them. Their daily survival is that of playing 'hide and seek' with the police who patrol the streets of Botswana looking for irregular migrants to deport them back home, but sometimes after harassing, imprisoning, and canning them.

It is against this background that this study focuses on the agency of the children in managing the challenges that they face. This study begins by tracing the migration decision in the home environment from where the children are coming, it interrogates these home environments of the irregular migrant children, and the study goes further to unravel the survival strategies of children in the countries where they migrate to. In pursuance of these objectives, the research was conducted using qualitative methodology. It also employed semi-structured interviews because they allow for narratives, and helps in capturing the children's experiences in the process of migration. In sampling the children, the researcher employed the purposive sampling technique because the children were approached at a central point where they are deported, and accommodated until they are integrated with their families.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

This area of child irregular migration has not been well documented in literature. While the works of Arhin (2012) did very well to discuss the complexities around child trafficking and child migration, the overlaps and misconceptions, the research left a gap in documenting the agency of unaccompanied child migrants in managing the challenges they face. On the same note, researches by Yaqub (2009:07) focuses on unaccompanied child migrants in terms of individual and family characteristics of the children involved, decision-makers and decision-making processes that lead to children moving, why children migrate as individuals, situations of children at places of destinations. While the study went a long way to discuss these areas as highlighted, it fell short in terms of documenting the concept of return migrants because the study concentrated on first time migrants without following them up on when they get deported or leave the host and how or why they still come back. This study therefore, sought to document the experiences and agency in children in the way they stand up to challenges even when they get deported from their host countries and why they keep migrating in spite of the challenges faced.

This research sought to complement the body of knowledge in the area of child migration, particularly the new sociology of childhood. Of note, this study focused on the children themselves, because they are better positioned to tell their own story than anyone else. The majority of studies done in this area have focused more on adults as the main respondents while

the child's voice has not been illuminated, hence this study sought to illuminate the voice of the child.

According to Yaqub (2009:02) increasing research, debate and international motivation has focused on linking migration and development. Whilst these efforts have recognized to some degree children with migrant parents or left behind by them, it has not included children who migrate independently. Not only that scholars such Carballo and Nerukar (2001), Huijsmans (2008) and Camacho (1999) among others have tended to exclusively study child labor migration, and other studies funded by NGOs such as Save the Children have tended to be more quantitative, looking for trends among others. Not only that, Plumtree border post has received little academic attention, while Beitbridge has received most of the attention. The academic researches that I have cited, left a gap on return irregular migration using qualitative methods of enquiry focusing on Plumtree area. Hence, this research sought to address this gap.

1.2 Research Objectives

The main aim of the research was to understand why unaccompanied children without travel documents continue to migrate when the process of migration has challenges.

1. To investigate the causes of irregular repeat child migration.
2. To explore the challenges faced by irregular repeat child migrants
3. To establish the survival strategies of irregular repeat migration among children.
4. To explore the decision making process for the children to migrate irregularly.

1.3 Research Questions

The broad research question for this study was:

Despite the challenges faced by unaccompanied irregular children in migration, why do children continue to migrate?

Sub Questions

1. What are the push and pull factors behind irregular repeat migration among children?
2. What experiences do irregular migrant children encounter when migrating?

3. What survival strategies do children employ to navigate the challenges they face on their way to, and during their stay in the country(s) they migrate to?
4. Who makes the decision for the children to migrate irregularly?

1.4 Significance of the study

The area of child migration has received a lot of attention in the academia (Carballo and Nerukar 2001, IOM 2010, Save the Children 2012, Yaqub 2009, Huijsmans 2008 among others). However, there has been very little attention on irregular repeat migrants among children with a particular focus on their agency in standing up to challenges (structures) that these children face. This study therefore sought to complement the studies done in this area of migration by focusing on irregular repeat child migration paying particular reference to the children's agency in the wake of challenges they face, hence this study will be beneficial by bringing in new knowledge. This study investigating the causes of irregular child migration and explored the children's journey, the challenges they face and how they navigated them. The study went further to analyse how the children manage to settle in the host country with no single legal document that permits them to stay and work in those countries.

1.5 Definitions

Migration

Migration, according to SAMP (2006) is about people (children in this case) moving from their communities of usual residence to another community or across the border, for whatever length, composition or causes. According to Yaqub (2009) migration is understood as a change in the place of 'usual residence' (briefly defined as place of daily period of rest). This follows UN recommendations on migration statistics (UN 1978; UN 1998). International migration, which is the focus of this study further is defined as a change in usual residence from one country to another, this definition includes seasonal migration. Internal migration (which will be paid reference to) is a change in usual residence from one civil division to another, for example changing from living in Harare to live in Gweru or Tsholothso etc.

Independent or Unaccompanied children

According to Yaqub (2009) independent or unaccompanied children are those living or travelling across borders without either a parent or legal / customary adult guardian. Independence can be during travel or when the child arrives at the destination because one child can be independent at home but when they migrate they are not independent for example when a child migrates for family reunion or when migrating to their parents during school holiday (seasonal migration), while another child can be living with parents or guardian but migrate to start living in another country with friends or by themselves.

Child

A child is any person below the age of 18 according to the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) Article (1), ratified in Zimbabwe in 1992, although in some countries the applicable legislation allows for the legal age of majority is attained much earlier (Ruppel 1991:55) for example through marriage. In some Shona communities there is a general tendency to call a child “*murumemukuru* or *mukadzimukuru*” (an elderly person) when they start working or when they are taking care of their siblings in a child headed family. For the purposes of this study however, a child shall mean any person below the age of 18.

Irregular Migrant

According to International Migration Series No. 25 (2011) an irregular migrant is;

“a person who, owing to unauthorized entry, breach of a condition of entry, or the expiry of his or her visa, lacks legal status in a transit or host country. The definition covers inter alia those persons who have entered a transit or host country lawfully but have stayed for a longer period than authorized or subsequently taken up unauthorized employment (also called clandestine/undocumented migrant or migrant in an irregular situation). The term "irregular" is preferable to "illegal" because the latter carries a criminal connotation and is seen as denying migrants' humanity”.

Repeat migration

For the purposes of this research, repeat or return child migration shall mean unaccompanied children who are deported from the same or another country (international migration) more than once, or children who cross the border into the same country or another more than once. This is the definition that shall be used across this document.

2.0 Theoretical Framework

2.1 The new sociology of childhood

This study is informed by Antony Giddens theory of structuration. In 1984, Giddens presented an advanced attempt to move further the dualism of structure and agency and put forward the "duality of structure" - where the social structure can be both the medium and the outcome of social action, and with agents and structures as mutually constitutive entities with 'equal ontological statuses'. For Giddens, the interaction between agent and structure, as a system of norms, is described as "structuration". The word "reflexivity" is used to refer to the capacity of an agent to consciously reconstitute, or modify his or her place in the social structure. Because social actors are reflexive and they also monitor the ongoing flow of activities in the structural conditions, they adapt their actions to their evolving understandings, and that they have the power to shape their actions. Building from Giddens's theory, the new sociology of childhood emphasizes children's reflexivity in shaping their own lives against structural constraints.

According to Zelizer (1985) structural theories for example functionalism emphasize the external circumstances—economic forces, institutional arrangements, socialization, systems of belief that have shaped the lives of children in particular times and places. These approaches, such as the traditional socialization framework, make the assumption that children are relatively passive, and that their social lives are readily made from the outside them. Seeking to challenge this understanding of childhood, the new sociology of childhood emphasize children's agency, that is, their capacity to shape the circumstances in which they live. Based on their agency, children can

actually make rational decisions about their social lives, by way of finding means to improve their social lives. In this research, the new sociology of childhood theory guided the researcher's understanding of irregular repeat child migrants in the manner in which some of these children make migration decisions, the manner and reasoning behind irregular migration and their survival strategies in the host countries. More so the theory also assisted in the understanding of the children's ability to manipulate the deportation system to their advantage when they want to come back home on free transport.

According to Michael King (2007), before the 1990s, predominantly literature viewed children as minors, half adults, incompetent beings, persons waiting to become complete adults, frail and completely vulnerable and unable to rationally make decisions for themselves among others views (see, for example, Corsaro, 1997; James and Prout, 1997; James et al., 1998; Jenks, 1996; Qvortrup et al., 1994). The study of childhood, according to the pre-modern line of thought, was seen as a private affair, confined to the family which should be kept away from the public realm (Sandin 2011). One of the major tenants of the new sociology of childhood approach is a sharp rebuke to the idea that children are a product of the societal structure that shapes or controls children's lives and destiny, rendering children to be powerless under the societal institutions Giddens (1994), James et al (1998).

According to King (200:14) *"It would appear that academic sociology has now fully embraced into its fold the theoretical approaches to issues concerning children known in English speaking countries as the new sociology of childhood"*. Sandin (2011) further points out that children are active agents, who are capable, and are actively trying to change or renegotiate the structure of their lives which in most cases is dictated by the adults' norms and values, traditions, laws, religious beliefs among many other structures. Children have agency, and they are very well capable of giving sound evidence to their lives during research, and can also participate in the research process. Grover (2004) agrees with Jens Qvortrup et al, in what they termed an "epistemological break", which means moving research away from a 'pre-sociological child' premised on traditional theologies, romantic discourses and developmental theories (Hallden 2008)

According to the new paradigm theorists (Hallden 2008) children should be considered in the view of beings, as opposed to becomings. Taking children as beings and not becomings puts the children in the public realm and not private. This consideration also takes the child perspective, affords them with the attention they deserve. According to Freud (Hallden 2008), children are not passive recipients of stimuli, they do not just act without their own input, but rather they actively transform and recycle their view of the world. Piaget concurs (Hallden 2008), he argued that children create new knowledge, draw conclusions which are rational and intelligent considering their backgrounds. Freud and Piaget consider children to be competent human beings, who may not always make correct conclusions, but the point is that they do make their conclusions which are also rational, and they actively absorb stimuli which may be information, instructions, and they make sense of it. This is very much in tandem with the new sociology of childhood which emphasizes the competencies of children in shaping their lives as complete beings, and not becomings. The children in this study to a large extent demonstrated these competencies as will be shown below.

The movement, which was termed ‘the new studies of childhood’ seeks to put children at the centre of research, views children as experts in their field, competent beings, and persons in their own right (James and Prout 1990). It is this theory that provides the basis for this research, in that the research takes the view of the causes for child migration from the point of view of children, sees the child as the expert in this field who is well capable and competent enough to be an informant who does not need an adult to verify and authenticate their contributions,.

“children can be an integral part of the research process and contribute

to all aspects, such as:

- 1. ‘formulate or suggest research problems or discuss ethical implications*
 - 2. conduct social research on questions of concern to them with or without*
- the assistance of adult experts on research process*
- 3. contribute to the shape of data interpretations formulated by adults*

about children

4. provide data regarding personal reflections on the topic studied or their experience as a research participant;

5. provide input on what should be the policy Implications”

(Harwood 2008: 82).

Children are viewed as active agents, who are capable, and are actively trying to change or renegotiate the structure of their lives as dictated by the adults, traditions, laws etc. as active agents, the children in this research are constantly trying to change their destiny by moving away from the shackles of their present lives, however, they may sometimes face imposing challenges that they fail to address but the point is that they make conscious decisions to try and change their situations. Furthermore, the children from Bulilima and Mangwe and other parts of the country that were interviewed tried to change the migration process by renegotiating the migration routes (using the undesignated entry points instead of the state borders), defying the migration laws of crossing using passports, and by crossing without legal travel documents.

3.0 Literature on Children

3.1 Child Labor Migration

The search for gainful employment among children has been cited as one of the major reasons for child migration in most parts of the world whether regular or irregular (Yinger 2000). According to Huijsmans (2008), the vast majority of academic work has shown that children have for a long time been involved in the labor market, working in different occupations but as Huijsmans argues, very little work has shown how the children get to be employed, and most of these children cross the border but that migration part is not adequately mentioned. Some notable exceptions include among others, Camacho's work on child domestic workers in Manila, the Philippines (Camacho 1999), and Punch's ethnographic work on childhood and youth in rural Bolivia which shows the role of children in migration. However, the majority of studies done in

the area of child migration have tended to focus on economic factors, concluding that the majority of children who cross borders do so on economic grounds. Whilst these attempts have added significantly to the body of knowledge in the area of child migration, these studies do not adequately acknowledge the agency of children on the face of structures that pose as challenges in their life worlds. Not only that, these studies fell short in exploring the concept of repeat migration, which is the central focus of this study.

The Southern African Migration Project (SAMP 2006) talks of children migrating from Zimbabwe to Mozambique, from Mozambique to South Africa, and from Angola to Namibia to escape poverty from home. The SAMP project does very well in bringing out of the reason why children leave their homes and move to other countries. The project cites poverty as the major reason among others why children migrate. The studies goes on to show that when children migrate, they get into demeaning professions such as prostitution especially young girls, while young boys become farm laborers among others. However, this study by SAMP, does not investigate some of the social reasons, such as emotional or physical abuse by guardians, as reasons why some children migrate. Additionally, the studies do not acknowledge the agency that these children have in dealing with the challenges that they face.

Moving on Nancy Yinger (2000), looks at the global picture where children now make a substantial contribution to the world's total GDP as a result of their labor, and this is heavily contributed by child migration. Huijsmans (2008) studied the Lao children in Thailand who crossed borders into Thailand in search of employment and better living standards. He indicated that children leave their homes either by themselves or in the company of others to escape from poverty, and feel that they live a better life in the host country where they earn money which makes them afford a better life than they used to live. Children cross international borders to work in different occupations, boys work in industries, mines, farms, etc. while girls become maids, shop attendants, while others are forced into prostitution by their employers. These studies have focused on child labour migration in different parts of the worlds, however some of these children are accompanied, that is, and they migrate with their parents, while others are independent or unaccompanied. The gap that remains is that unaccompanied child migrants are

not accounted for in most of these studies. This study therefore sought to fill in this gap by focusing on unaccompanied migrant children.

3.2 Family Migration

Other studies have also focused on families migrating from one area or country to the other. This area has grown in importance in the academia but, as will be shown here, the gap remains that the voices that are captured and illuminated are those of the adults while those of children are sidelined (Yaqub 2009). There is therefore the need to fill this gap through focusing on the children and get their perspectives.

Researchers such as Ortiz et al (2001) for example worked on the borders of Mexico, though not essentially focusing solely on children, but the research focused on a family that includes children. Children also cross the same border, accompanying their parents, but sometimes they cross unaccompanied to seek employment. Whereas in family migration it is the whole or part of the family on the move, in this research, it is the children migrating on their own. This research could be the same as those mentioned above, but this research focuses on children, their use of agency in dealing with challenges that they face in migration. Not only that, the challenges which confront a whole family, are different from those that face children when they migrate alone so it is important to capture these challenges from a child's perspective (Amnesty International report 2009).

3.3 Migration for Socially Related Reasons

Social reasons have also been cited as push factors for child migration. On a study of the migrants in Dhaka, Hossain (2010) referred to some social reasons that propel families to migrate from the rural areas into the city of Dhaka. The book explores factors such as the household structure (female headed, child headed), displacement, social networks and kinship ties that are blamed for increasing the chances of rural – urban migration; this is because it becomes a lot easier than for families in rural areas to migrate when their relatives are settled in the city.

Closely related to our situation in Zimbabwe, Whitehead (2002), asserted that children migrate into neighboring countries, with their parents or by themselves, in search of wealth, education, and medical attention. They also run away from arranged marriages, rite of passage among other practices. In Zimbabwe as well as in other parts of Africa, early and forced marriage is rife, and has contributed to migration among children (Ras Work 2006). Ras – Work further comments that girls sometimes as young as 7 years old get married to older man. Young girls are very vulnerable to this practice, with parents looking for an exit from poverty by marrying their young daughters to older richer man and then get financial gain. Some girls are actually abducted and forced into early marriage. Castles and Miller in “The Age of migration” talks of arranged migration for marriage with regards young girls, and calls this practice ‘mail-order brides’, which is a practice of prearranging marriages for young girls who are then trafficked from other countries. Jackson (2002) in her book, *Aids Africa: continent in crisis*, comments on a practice in Africa where a young girl is forced to ‘take over’ the husband of her older sister after the sister’s death. This practice amongst a host of other harmful traditional practices have pushed children to migrate either within or outside the borders and for most children in Matabeleland (IOM 2010) they migrate to South Africa and Botswana in search of better lives.

Whilst these studies document some of the reasons why children migrate, the differences with this study are that the studies only focus on the push factors without looking at the pull factors of child migration. Not only that, these studies do not document the experiences of children in migration, the challenges they face and how they respond to those challenges. In addition, these studies do not explore whether these children migrate irregularly or regularly, moreover, whether the children stay in the host countries or are deported, and what happens when they are deported.

3.4 Child Trafficking

Arhin (2012) studied child trafficking in Canada, West Africa and South Asia. Child trafficking is the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation. This is without regard of whether or not this is done by force, abduction, fraud or

other means (IOM 2003). Arhin's study reveals that the global prevalence of child trafficking is growing by an estimated 1.2 million trafficked children annually, with most of these children being exploited by economic gains through working in pre-arranged jobs such as sex slaves, sweatshops, child soldiers etc. Other researches in child trafficking in Zimbabwe have been conducted by IOM (2010) UNICEF (2012), Save the Children (2009) among others. The IOM study for example, which was conducted by Kropiwnicki (2012) focused on child trafficking in Musina where young girls and boys are lured by traffickers who promise them better lives, good jobs in South Africa and only for them to be sold to slave barons such as drug dealers and brothel owners who exploit them as sex slaves, prostitutes among other. Having mentioned that, since the push-pull factors for child trafficking may resemble those obtaining in child independent irregular migration, independent child labor migration, according to Arhin (ibid), is at times mistakenly accounted for as labor trafficking. IOM studies for example supports the argument that labour trafficking and exploitation do occur as a segment on a migration continuum.

The above studies done on child trafficking, as Arhin argues, proves that there is need for better understanding for child trafficking on one hand and independent child migration on the other hand even though in both cases there is movement (crossing the border) and exploitation or abuse in most cases especially in child labour migration. To bring this understanding, there is need for more studies that focus on independent child migration in its own respect. It was therefore the purpose of this study to focus on independent irregular child migration as a separate phenomenon from child trafficking mainly because the decision making process in irregular child migration is different (Arhin (2012). Not only that, child trafficking research assumes that most children migrate for labor purposes whereas this study showed that sometimes children migrate for family reunion purposes, purposes that are not economically driven.

3.5 Children as Actors in Social Research

The new sociology of children theory referred to above acknowledges the competency of children in shaping and reshaping their own social lives, they are also very competent actors in social research. The theory further argues that children can fully express themselves in social

research without the need for an adult to confirm or amplify the children's feelings, and world view. In this light, my study focused on children as the target population and it is only this population that I focused on. As will be shown below, evidence is available showing studies done on children, with children themselves as the target population. The conclusions drawn from these studies are that children are competent actors in social research, studies with children as target population are equally useful (Sandin 2011). Alanen (1988) further argues that studies on children should not rely on adults' assumption about how children feel, and not informed by the children themselves. This challenge ascribes wrong policies for children because they are informed neither by children's experiences nor by children's contributions. Rarely do researchers pay attention to making questionnaires and interview schedules relevant to children's experiences and interests. A lot of research has been done about children and while migration is not an exception, most of the research work do not take children's perspectives on board. This research therefore sought to support the argument that takes a child perspective, gather data from the children themselves and not from adults. The meaning of behavior and practices, for example traditional practices cited, is best understood from the adults as well as children's point of view.

Literature has also gone on to show how competent children are as social actors in research. Judith Ennew (2003) for example, on a study done in Johannesburg using pictures, demonstrates the richness in children in terms of their ability to give meaning to their experiences, and this shows that children are competent in explaining their meanings and feelings, and can add value to social research. Further to that, William Corsaro (Harwood 2002) researching on "interpretive reproduction" observed preschools in the United States and in Italy, where he documented children's use of ideas from the adult world as they created distinctive peer cultures. He was impressed by the children's ability to participate in cultural production and change. In addition, Marjorie Harness Goodwin (1990) studied children from different racial origins and emphasized their capabilities in negotiating and recreating their social worlds, disrupting the social barriers through talk. It is high time children are regarded as experts in their own subjective experience. My research took this perspective of regarding children as experts in their own experience and it therefore focused on the children themselves as the primary respondents.

Adding on, research done by Davies (2008) in Makhutani, North West of Kenya on street children who are referred to by a derogatory term “chokrra”, which means scavengers. Davies has shown that the children have on the streets in Makhutani have agency which has allowed them to defy the odds by leading their own lives without the support of adults. These children formed their own subculture with their own language, dress, power structure and social networks and security. According to Davies (ibid), they actually feel better off than children living with parents and guardians. When it comes to research, these children were the main respondents that Davies used for his data collection. The children proved that they can contribute to social research as persons in their own right without the need for a third person to confirm or verify what they said.

The right to participation in research sets no lower age limit and is open to any child with a view that matters to them according (Lansdown, 2001), and in this respect, interviews were conducted with those children who agreed to be interviewed, and nothing to do with lower ages. There is robust evidence that children’s capacities are a sum of contributory factors such as the information available to children, their cultural experience, the experience of children, and the quality and level of support children are getting (Mayall 2001; and Alderson, 2004).

4.0 Research Methodology

4.1 Research Design

This section outlines the methodology, study population, sampling, data, design plan, administration of the data gathering tools and ethical considerations used in this study. The study employed qualitative methodology. According to AstaCekaite (2010:01) the goal of qualitative research is to seek rich descriptions on experiences of a social phenomenon. Denzin et al (2000:286) further argues that qualitative research has strength in its ability to provide complex textual descriptions of how people experience a given research issue. Qualitative

research provides information about the “human” side of an issue – that is, the often contradictory behaviors, beliefs, opinions, emotions, and relationships of individuals. In the study on children qualitative methods provide a richer content starting from the reasons ‘why’ children are involved in irregular child migration, the finer details of the situation at home, the emotions and the relations among others. During this research, the researcher was able to probe the children for further clarity, seek meaning from their statements and also observe their emotions during the interviews. Williams (2007), notes that qualitative research is a holistic approach that involves discovery. Qualitative research is also described as an unfolding model that occurs in a natural setting and this allows the researcher to develop a level which is detailed from high involvement in the actual experiences of the respondents (Creswell, 1994; 2003). Therefore, in order to gain insight into children’s experiences about migration, the use of qualitative research methods was the best option.

In addition, one prominent feature of qualitative research is that the social phenomenon is investigated from the participant's viewpoint (Williams, 2007). In this research, qualitative methodology gave the children the opportunity to express their views in line with the perspective of child participation as actors in social research.

4.2 Research Instruments

This research employed semi-structured qualitative interviews. This tool was selected because of the ability to answer the questions on ‘how’ and ‘why’ (AstaCekaite 2010:01). A semi-structured interview is a qualitative method of inquiry that combines a pre-determined set of open questions which gives the interviewer opportunity to discover particular themes or responses further. Open questions also go further to prompt for discussions. They can be used to ask people about their attitudes, past, present, or future behaviour, motives, feelings, perceptions and other emotions which cannot be directly observed (Burgess, 1984) A semi-structured interview, as used in this research, does not constrain respondents to a set of pre-determined responses, as opposed to a structured questionnaire. They also allow respondents to discuss and raise issues that the researcher may not have considered. During the study, semi-structured interviews guided the researcher in terms of the structure of questions but did not limit the researcher to those questions, this tool allowed for probing further the responses of the children that were being

interviewed. The children were probed to seek further clarity, more information, and meaning out of their responses. The behavior of the children during the interviews were also observed to give cues on non-verbal communication for example when they are showing signs of fear about what they are saying, or when they are uncomfortable to continue with a particular question or when they are happy to talk more about a particular section.

The field work was conducted over three and a half months, from October 2013 to mid-January 2014. A total of nine children were interviewed during this period.

4.3 Population of the Study

The population of the study were the irregular repeat child migrants in the Matabeleland South province.

4.4 Research Area

Plumtree is a town that is in between Bulilima and Mangwe districts. It is located in Matabeleland South province, about 500 km from Harare. Plumtree was chosen because of the frequency of deportations that take place from Botswana on a daily basis. Whilst Beitbridge is the biggest in terms of size and volume of traffic, at the time of the study, there were policy inconsistency from South Africa in terms of deportations such that Plumtree remained the busiest in terms of deportations. Deportations is the process of returning back irregular migrants from another country and at Plumtree border post deportees are dropped off at the IOM Reception and Support Centre. The government of Zimbabwe through the Ministry of Labour and Social Services in partnership with International Organization for Migration, UNICEF and Save the Children Zimbabwe established the Plumtree Child Reception Centre. The Plumtree Child Reception Centre provides interim care and protection to deported unaccompanied children from Botswana till they are reunified with their families. While at IOM, the children are housed at the Child Centre under the care of the Department of Social Service who provide psycho-social support, food, medical attention, transport, shelter and family reunification. The IOM Reception and Support Centre is situated about 100 meters from the border between Botswana and Zimbabwe. When children are deported at the Centre, they spend a few days, sometimes up to a week, whilst they wait for their reintegration documents to be processed. This process includes

contacting their parents or guardians before the physical reintegration with their families is finalised. Whilst some of these children have parents in Zimbabwe, some of these children are orphans whilst others have their parents in either South Africa or Botswana, so they get reintegrated with their guardians. For children heading families, they normally contact their relatives as part of the reintegration process. It is at this point at the Centre where the researcher met the children for data collection. During the time of the research, there were children waiting for either parents or guardians to be contacted before they can be escorted home, and this window provided the researcher with an opportunity to conduct interviews with the children.

4.5 Getting access to the field

The researcher had worked at the IOM Plumtree Reception and Support Centre (commonly known as 'the Centre') for about two years (from 2008 to 2010) as a Program Manager with Patsime Trust, and getting access into the Centre was not too difficult because of the connections and familiarity with the environment. Children in Zimbabwe fall under the Department of Social Services in the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare. The researcher first of all applied to the Director of Social Services requesting permission to access children at the Plumtree child centre. The permission was granted in about three weeks' time, copied to the Provincial office as well as the District office which oversees Plumtree. The letter of permission, together with the letter from the Department of Sociology were presented to the Administrative Assistant IOM Plumtree Reception and Support Centre who is currently in charge of the IOM Plumtree sub office. The researcher met with the Social Services Officer based in Plumtree with a consent form to consent as the responsible authority in charge of the children before they are reunited with their parents or guardians. After signing the consent form, the Officer introduced the researcher to the children who were available on the day. The children who were interviewed volunteered to be interviewed on their own.

4.6 Sampling and Sampling Technique

The sample of the study were the irregular repeat migrant children. The target for the research was to interview 10 children. This is mainly because of the unpredictability of the number of deportations where in some cases one can go for a days without receiving any returned child then on another day there can be as many as 15 to 20. The number was informed also by the research

method which can be time consuming. Although the sampling method had been exclusionary, i.e. focusing only on repeat child migrants, the researcher also interviewed two first time migrant children (those who had crossed the border for the first time) to get an understating of their experiences and a perspective on whose decision was it for them to leave their homes. In terms of sampling the children the researcher employed purposeful sampling in which case the focus was on specifically those children who are return migrants.

4.7 Ethical Considerations

The participants in this research were minors, and like any other research, all the finer steps of getting permission to speak to the children had to be taken beforehand. The research focused on unaccompanied children and according to Hopkins (2008:37) unaccompanied children (also referred to as ‘unaccompanied minors’) are children under 18 years of age who cross the border without either of their parents or a legal guardian. The authority to interview was granted through the Department of Social Services, the permission to entire the premises was granted from IOM and the consent was also granted from the Department of Social Services represented by the Social Services Officer.

The researcher committed to minimize as much as possible the risks (psychological, social, or physical) associated with the research. The children were reaffirmed that information discussed during the interviews will be kept as confidential as possible and at no point in time will this information be discussed with their parents, guardians, friends or anyone without their consent. . The children were also given contact numbers of the researcher plus that of the department of Sociology so that if there was anything they wanted to ask or add they could call, and if they wanted to verify the researcher’s credentials or report any abuse arising from my interview, they could call the department. According to Hill et al (1996) just like the adults, and in any research situation, the researcher must inform (orally or written) fully the informants on:

- expectation from the researcher
- purpose of the research
- approximate time to be spent on interviews

- expected risks or benefits
- that participation is voluntary, and the children can pull out without any risks
- how confidentiality will be protected
- name and contact information of the researcher
- Name and contact information of an appropriate person to contact with questions about one's rights as a participant.

The researcher used pseudonyms instead of real names in order to protect the identity of the children (Hopkins 2008). The researcher also emphasized to the children that they were not under any obligation to be interviewed and respond to all the questions if they were not comfortable. After going through all the ethical issues with the children, the researcher interviewed the children in an office that was allocated by the staff at the Centre.

4.8 Delimitation

This study only focused on the children who cross the border or are returned via Plumtree border post. The study did not include all the designated crossing points in Zimbabwe such as Beitbridge, Nyamapanda, and Chirundu among others.

4.9 Limitations

According to Christensen and Prout (2002), Harwood (2008) and Clarke (2005), even with the growing trends towards child participatory research, children's voice and the value placed on the child as a reliable informant in research literature is still very low. There are still power dynamics on the issues of consent where adults sometimes stand in the way of children's participation in research. According to Harwood (ibid), further comments that researchers who *"observe or interview children wrestle with questions about the capacity of children to consent to being studied, and about adult power as a barrier to access and understanding"* It is these adults' perceptions towards child active participation and the competence of children that still needs to be filled and it is the intention of this researcher to expose the children's capacity to engage in research meaningfully. Not only that, nature of the research could have benefitted from

participants observation because it allows the researcher to experience what these children go through but due to the volatile nature of the study, this tool could not be used.

5.0 Data Presentation

Case I

Sipho was a boy aged 17 who came from Kezi, to the South East of Plumtree. Sipho's father lived in South Africa with a second wife, Sipho lived with his grandmother. He was born in South Africa and only came back to Zimbabwe when his mother passed away when he was doing grade 5. Sipho did not have a birth certificate and hence could not apply for a passport. He had this to say:

“UbabaubengangiciningacinangitshiyaisikolongikuForm 2 ngobaugogoubengelamaliyokungibhadhalela. Angilahluphoukuthingihlalalogogo, okungihluphayoyikuthiubabakangiciningakhokeikusasalamialikhanyinxangingadingang aumsebenzi.

YikhongaphumangayaeBotswanaukuthingiyedingaumsebenzingeneliseukuziphilisalokugci naugogo.

Kuyangijabulisaukuthisengiholanjalosengikwanisaukuzibhadhalelainduengihlalakuyo”.

(My father is not very supportive to the extent that I dropped out of school when I reached Form 2 because my grandmother had no money to pay my fees. Although living with my grandmother is not a problem, the challenge is that my father is not supportive and my future is bleak if I do not look for employment. My major reason for crossing the border to Botswana is driven by the need to look for employment, and begin to earn a living for myself while at the same time supporting my ageing grandmother. It feels so good to earn a wage and pay rent on his own).

The first time he crossed the border to go to Botswana was in August 2013. On both occasions, Sipho crossed the border via the forest, through Kafusi River in the company of his uncle called Duma. On the second occasion, Sipho crossed the border again using the same route, and again accompanied by an uncle albeit a different one that one. The first time Sipho went to Botswana,

he got a job in Palapye where he was herding cattle earning 500 Pula (USD58) per week. Siphon said it made him happy to earn a weekly wage, which he used to buy clothes, food and jewellery.

Siphon had managed to survive the Police raids by choosing to stay in an area that was away from Police raids and he had this to say: *“ngangihlalaPalapyeokuyindawoengayandisanga ukubalamapholisa”* (I stay in Palapye because there are few Police raids). In addition, Siphon said he quickly learnt to speak Setswana in addition to his Kalanga which is also spoken in Botswana. He also said he quickly made friends with Tswana boys of his age so that he is seen as ‘one of them’ so that he remains obscure from the eyes of the Police. He did not recount a time when he was ever abused by his employer, and when he came back to Zimbabwe it was at the request of his grandmother who was having a big challenge looking after cattle on her own particularly at a time when cattle are left on their own to look for pasture. To reduce transport costs, Siphon got himself arrested by the police so that he could be deported back to Zimbabwe and in the process got free transport going back home. On the second time of going to Botswana, in an attempt to cross the border without a passport Siphon and company were raided and searched by the police. Those without passports were arrested and deported back to Zimbabwe. Before they got deported they were locked up in Police cells together with adults who were also deported and were in those cells for three days. The prison conditions were pathetic, they were not given enough food, blankets and access to bath. Siphon had this to say: *“sasitshonailangalonke sidle ilambazikuphela. Izambuzizazingcolilezinukasonkeisikhathingaphasinikwainguboezinlutshwanezokwendlalaphansi .”* (we spent the whole day on porridge alone. The toilets were dirty, stuffy and smelly all the time and we were not given enough blankets while at the same time we were sleeping on the floor). When the researcher asked him about his future ambitions, Siphon said that he dreams of becoming a professional builder in the near future and he takes every opportunity on being a ‘*daggaboy*’ (building assistant) so that he learns through experience.

Case 2

Nkosi was a 15 year old boy who came from Makubo, about 90 kilometres from Plumtree. He was born in South Africa but lived with his sister and a younger brother aged 11 with whom he was migrating with before they were caught in Botswana (the young brother was not interviewed because he was refused to be interviewed). Both of his parents worked and lived in South Africa. Nkosi was going to school, doing Form 2, and his parents paid for his school fees. He had a South African passport but the passport was in South Africa with his father. His father had taken it with him on his way back to South Africa for stamping at the border (in Nkosi's absence) to avoid overstaying penalties. Nkosi was caught while he was on his way to South Africa. He had this to say:

“ngisendleleniyokuyaeGolingidlulaeBotswanangobakusedhuzenjaloakuhluphikangakonjengaseBeitbridge. Mina lomnawamisiyaeGolingekhefusizaphendukanxaizikolosezivulwa.” (I was actually on my way to South Africa via Botswana because it is actually shorter and less risky than going via Beitbridge. Me and my younger brother were going to South Africa for school holidays and to return (to Zimbabwe) before schools open). His father had planned their journey. The father had arranged with an *omalayitsha* to take the children to Botswana using his truck. The *omalayitsha* had successfully assisted the children to jump the border via the undesignated entry points, but they were caught at a police road block where they were found not to be with passports.

After the arrest, Nkosi and his young brother (together with all those they were irregularly migrating with), were thrown into police cells which had adults from Zimbabwe who had been arrested for related crimes. They both stayed in the cells for two days, and the jail conditions were dreadful. Nkosi said: *“sasini kwailambaziletiyekanyengelanga, itiyeyakhonasasiyinathelaemganwinikulokuthibesinikeinkomitsho,”* (we were given porridge and tea once until the next day, and we would drink tea from plates instead of cups). The experience made him feel very powerless and lonely: *“phindengifuneukubuyelangaleyandlelangobaakumnandiukubayisibotshwangobauyabeungelama ndlanjalousizwaulesizungu. Phezukwalokhoamajele abo ayengayenziengcolile,”* (it was an experience which I do not want to repeat especially because the feeling of being a prisoner was horrible for me and I felt powerless and lonely. Not only that, the conditions in the prisons were

pathetic). Since they got deported, Nkosi has been in touch with his father who has promised to send the passports as soon as possible so that they do not repeat the initial experience and risk getting caught again.

Case 3

Mpumi was an 11 year old boy who came from an area called Crossroads, about 135 kilometres from Plumtree town. Mpumi lived with his maternal grandparents and was in Grade 6. His parents worked and lived in South Africa. He did not have a passport because his parents have not availed the money for him to get one. Mpumi wanted to go to South Africa because he missed his parents whom he last saw when he was Grade 2 when he last went to South Africa for holidays, still without a passport. During the time of this study, Mpumi's parents had asked him to come for holidays and had paid *omalayitsha* for him to bring Mpumi to Cape Town for school holidays.

Before he left, Mpumi waved goodbye to his grandparents looking forward to seeing his parents after such a long time. From home he met up with a distant relative called 'Baba Maria' who was recruited by his parents to assist in smuggling him to Cape Town. From his home area they crossed the border via Mphoengs, through an area called Mabulethe and walked for between 10 to 15 kilometers during the night so that they do not get caught by the border patrol soldiers. Before they got to the point where they were meeting with the *omalayitsha* and his vehicle, they met up with other irregular migrants and their total head count was 14 and five of them were children.

Mpumi has this to say: *"ngasengidiniwengokuhambanjalosengilambilengobaukudlakwamiengangikuthweleesikhwameni kwasokuphelile.*

Sesifikileendawenilaphoesasihlanganalabomalayitshasacathsaegangenisimeleleukuthibafike." (I felt very tired after walking for nearly 15 kilometres, my food from his satchel had run out and I was very hungry. Upon reaching our meeting point with the hired smuggler, we hid in the bush waiting for him to arrive). The *omalayitshadid* arrive after about 30 minutes, drove through the night until they were stopped by the police who were doing road random searches.

Mpumi felt very scared of being arrested by the Botswana police because he had heard stories of child migrants being beaten up by the police. After being found without proper travel documents, they were taken to Ramakwebana police station where they were detained for three days. The researcher asked him how he felt about being in a cell, and he said “*ngangisesaba, sanikwailambazilodwaokwamalangawonkeomathathu,*” (I felt terrified, every day we were given porridge only for those three days). They slept on the floor with only one blanket which was dirty and smelly. When asked about what his next move was since he had been deported, and he said,

“*LokhengifunaukuyaeGoliukuyavakatshelaabazalibamibesengiphendukaekhayaizikolosezivhulwa.*” (I still plan to continue with my journey to South Africa and spend the holiday with my parents and come back to Zimbabwe when schools open). His parents were aware that he had been deported and he had no doubt that plans were underway to get him to South Africa as soon as possible. Mpumi dreamt of one day becoming a professional builder and he said he would strive to finish his education and then study courses that will enable him to become a professional builder.

Case 4

Cleo was a 17 year old girl, born and bred in Chitungwiza. Cleo lived with her step sister, because both of her parents are deceased. Cleo did her education up to Form Four but could not write exams because there was no money to pay for her exam fees. After the death of her parents, she grew up under the care of grandmother who unfortunately passed away on the 15th of May 2012 before she completed her secondary education. After the death of her grandmother, that is when she started staying with her sister. She complained about her environment because her sister ill-treated her. She said: “*sisivanguvaindishungurudza, ndakadzingwachikoronekutivakarambakundibhadharira fees, and dzimwenguvandaisweranenzarakunyanya kana ndasarandegaivovasipo. Ndakaonakutipandiriivovangavatowanazyvavomusikanawavowebasaavochengeteravanandosakav*

akarambakundiendesakuchikoro” (I felt that my step-sister ill-treated me, she refused to pay for my education at a local government school, and also that sometimes she made me spend the whole day without food especially when I was left alone in her absence. I realised that in me my sister had found a house maid and that is the reason why she refused to send me to school)

Sometime in November 2012, months after she started staying with her sister, Cleo was sick and almost died because her sister did not want to take her to the hospital or at least buy her medication and food, because she said she did not have money. The sister failed even to borrow from friends and relatives in order to save her, said Cleo. She survived by the grace of God because she finally got assistance from a distant aunt (*tete*) who had visited and sympathized with her. The aunt took her to the nearest clinic and bought her medication and some basic food stuffs which assisted her to recover. Cleo blamed her father’s polygamous marriage (*barika*) for the soured relations with her sister. Although their mothers were not under the same roof, they were always in conflicts and these conflicts and in-fighting tore the family apart and made them (as sisters) distant. The remnants of this conflict-ridden up bringing were still evident within them as children. In February 2013 she found a job as a house maid in Chitungwiza. She was only employed for a few weeks before her sister caused her to come back home because she felt her own children would have no one to take care of them and Cleo continued to stay at home looking after her sister’s children.

Her environment was the main reason why she ran away from home to go to Namibia in search of employment so that she could start a new life and afford herself all the basics that she was being denied of by her sister. She left Zimbabwe in June and used her passport, which she had gotten when her grandmother was still alive, to cross the border through the designated crossing points in Plumtree and proceeded to Namibia via Botswana. When she got to Namibia, she found a job as a maid in Windhoek and worked as a maid for a small family. She worked from June until November when she decided to come back to Zimbabwe for two main reasons. Firstly her employer defaulted in paying her salary(s) on numerous months so she felt exploited. Her employer took advantage of the fact that she did not have a work permit. If she looked for

another job, it is highly unlikely that she would be able still to stop another employer from defaulting for as long as she did not have a work permit.

The other reason that made Cleo come back home was that she was raped by a taxi driver one day on her way from the Namibian immigration office whilst on her way back home. On the fateful day, because it was getting late, she boarded a taxi as a lonely passenger from the station to go back home after spending the day trying to process a work permit unsuccessfully. The taxi driver took a longer route in order to avoid traffic congestion, however the route also passed through an inhabited arid forest. She and the taxi driver were engaged in some casual conversation although the driver asked her a few personal questions but she took the enquiry casually although she suspected that the taxi driver realised that she was an illegal immigrant. After some distance along the way, the driver suddenly made a sharp turn at high speed into the adjacent arid forest as if he was being chased by someone or something. It was deep into the arid forest that the driver suddenly stopped and then raped her once. She tried to scream but no one could hear her as they were far away from nearby houses and roads.

After the incident she made a report to her employer who did not believe her, and accused her of faking as cover for her lateness in reporting for duty, she said “*sezvondakangandanonokakudzokakumbavakamhanyirakufungakutindirikudakuvharidziranyaya nekupomera taxi driver kutiandibata, izvizvakandishungurudzazvikuruzvekutindakadembachakafiraamaivangu*” (because I was late in coming back home, my employer quickly thought that I wanted to cover up my lateness by framing the taxi driver of raping me, this hurt me seriously and I regretted why my mother died). After the incident, for several times her employer verbally abused her, called her all sorts of names. She lamented that if only her mother was still alive she would not endure all that trauma and things would have been different. It was only after two days of insistence that the employer finally let her visit the police to make a report. Upon arriving at the police station, the police advised her to visit the hospital for a post-partum prophylaxis and counseling. She only managed

to visit the hospital on the fifth day after the incident because the employer did not have money for bus fare to the nearest clinic. The hospital nurse only managed to counsel her because she feared that it was a bit too late for a post-partum prophylaxis because it could only be administered within 72 hours of being raped. Cleo realized she was pregnant after two months. As soon as she got her salary she took the first bus to come back home. It was in Botswana that she got herself arrested in order to get free transport from Botswana to Zimbabwe in order to save some money.

During the interview Cleo also wanted advice on whether she should tell her boyfriend who was in Zimbabwe about what happened. She feared that if she told him, he might end the relationship forthwith. She further explained that her sister wanted nothing to do with her and offered no advice at all. She said: “*sisivanguvakatototi ‘handidi kana nekunzwatunyayatwako, ndakakutigarapanoiweukatiza, wakazviidzmunhuwankangwarasakaitatigoonakwaunosvika*” (my sister said ‘I do not want to hear any of your petty stories, I told you to stay here but you ran, you thought you were clever so go on and we see the end result’). The researcher managed to advise her to inform her boyfriend about what happened so that he makes a decision himself when it’s still early, and the researcher also reassured her that whatever happens, it will not be the end of world. She also could still start another life here in Zimbabwe. She was also advised that she could still get a new job here in Zimbabwe as a house maid, or she could get assistance from charity organisations such as Girl Child Network among others that help victims of abuse in many respects.

Case 5

Precious was a 17 year old girl who came from Gokwe. She left home in order to be united with her Zimbabwean husband who worked in Botswana. Her husband, *Baba Tino*, had been working in Botswana for many years now. Precious left school in 2012 when she was doing Form 4 because she had fallen pregnant. The husband later paid *tsvakiraikunoin* in May 2013, and soon after, he requested that she followed him to Botswana. She did not have a passport because she

could not afford one yet but would apply for one as soon as she raised enough money. For her to get to Botswana she was assisted by the bus driver who hid her in the bus until she reached her destination in Botswana, she said: *“unongopamariyakoyechiokomuhomwekuna bus driver iyeanozivawaanopaiweunozongoonawayambukapasinaambokubvunza”* (you simply bribe the bus driver by giving him money and he knows who to give (at the border) then you just find yourself on the other side of the border). When she got to Botswana, Precious was happily united with her husband, and together they leaved in a town called Mangod.

As a form of employment Precious does ‘piece jobs’, *“kutsvaira, kuwacha, kuchengetavananezvimwewo”* (cleaning, washing, taking care of children among other), in order to complement her husband’s salary. Since both she and her husband were irregular migrants, she basically attributed their stay, that is, not getting arrested in Botswana, to sheer luck because she could easily get arrested during police raids. On the fateful day they were however unlucky to get caught with no legal documents when the Botswana police raided them during a door to door search in their area. They were taken to the nearest police station. The prison cell as was a real torture, she had this to say: *“tainyimwachikafu, mumajere macho mainhuwamuineuchapanetsvina”* (we were not given food, the prisons were smelly, filthy and dirty). She planned to get herself a passport as soon as possible so that they could live in Botswana as legal residents.

Case 6

Thembi was a 16 year old girl from Dombodema, an area located about 30 kilometers from Plumtree town. Thembi lived with her two little brothers, one aged 14 and the other one aged 11 both of whom she took care of after the death of their parents. The three lived at their parents’ house in Dombodema. She left home because she could not continue taking care of her siblings anymore since the money they received after the death of their parents had basically been all spent. The relatives had taken some part of the estate by force. She did not have a passport because their parents died before they could get them passports as they had planned, she said:

“*Sengihlala eBotswanangobakululaukuthola umsebenzi.*

Ngibuya ekhayanxakulamakhefuamadengithengele abantwanaukudla.

Kwezinye izikhathingiphongukuthumezaimaliinyangangenyan gaeyesondloley esikolo”. (I

basically now live in Botswana because it is much easier to get jobs in Botswana and I only came back home on long holidays groceries for the children otherwise she just sends money every month for the siblings upkeep and school fees). On different occasions, when she wanted to return home to see her little brothers she either boarded the bus or got herself deported to get free transport for herself and her groceries coming home. On returning from home she either paid the bus driver or went with her friend using the train. She explained that when she got to Botswana she started off by doing *amapiece jobs*, which are basically casual jobs such as washing, cleaning the house etc. She got a job as house maid later but continued to do ‘piece jobs’ to complement her salary. She earned between 100Pula to 150Pula per day from ‘piece jobs’ (usually weekends) depending on the type of work and the type of employer while she earned 3000 Pula from her salary and she normally pocketed between 3500 Pula to 4000 Pula per month. She would then send half her monthly earnings back home for her siblings’ upkeep.

The first time she left home she arranged with an elderly friend who was also known for living in Botswana for many years without any legal documents. The friend was a member of the JohwanMasowe (Saturday) and by their church doctrine they are not allowed to have national IDs and passports but she had stayed in Botswana for many years. On the day she went to Botswana for the first time, they boarded a bus up to Plumtree border, when they arrived at the border, they boarded a goods train from Plumtree town up to Francistown. Her friend knew an official from the train crew whom they paid to smuggle them into Botswana. When they got to Botswana, she stayed with her friend who also assisted her to get her first ‘piece job’, after that she got a job as a temporary maid. She worked there for a month because she was relieving somebody who had come back to Zimbabwe on maternity leave. Thembi was very happy of living and working in Botswana, she said: “*engikuthakazelelayoyikuthiabanawamibalempahlazokugqoka, balokudlalokuthibayaesikolo*” (I am only happy that my siblings are clothed, fed and going to school). For her to avoid being arrested she got into her friends’ network, this network is always very up to date with the Police

raids in terms of when they happen so these girls are always away from their raids. She also quickly learnt Setswana street language, and the type of dressing peculiar to girls in Botswana so that she is not quickly spotted.

On the day she got arrested, she actually wanted to save her money and so she got herself arrested by the Police so that she gets deported. Although the prison conditions were terrible, for Thembi this was not the first time she was arrested so had gotten used to the conditions and after all her major aim is to save money so conditions were a minor worry. After the deportation, Thembi planned to go back to Botswana without wasting time because that had become her way of living.

Case 7

Mandhlo was a 17 year old girl who lived in Plumtree town with her husband, the two had one child aged two years old. Mandhlo was a cross border trader, who basically went to Botswana every month to buy clothes and household goods such as televisions, radios, stoves and fridges for resale in Plumtree town. Mandhlo did not have a passport and by the time of the filed work, she had crossed the border on three separate occasions. She had also applied for a passport the previous month and was waiting for it to be ready for collection. Mandhlo got married while she was still at school, doing Form three at a local school in Plumtree town (name withheld). What pushed her to start going to Botswana was that she realised that her husband's income was not enough for the whole family, she had this to say: *“kwezinyeizikhathiumkamiubuyaengaselamali. Nxangimbuzaukuthingizwisiseukuthiuyisengaphikazwisiseki.*

Kwezinyeizikhathiucinaengitshayaesithingibuzakahululokuthingikhulumakakhulu.

Ngikhumbulakwezinyeizikhathingisiyacelaukudlangkhayakumamaongizalayongobaumkamikangi gcini.

Umkamiuyathengisaesitolonjalokaholiimalienengi.

Kumelengidingeindleyokuziphilisangobaangikwanisiukumelelaumkakheukuthiazomgcina”(sometimes my husband comes home without any money and when I try to understand what happened with the money the stories just do not add up, and sometimes I get beaten up for asking too much

and talking too much. I remember several times when I had to get food from my mother's house simply because my husband was not supportive). The husband was a shop attendant who did not earn much and so she needed to find means of self-sustenance because she could no longer depend on her husband who was not fully supportive. After getting into the cross border trade, she would no longer fully be dependent on her husband. She could feed her family, and pay rent. She targeted salaried clients because they were not too difficult in terms of debt recovery and for her, delivery was always upon paying a deposit.

Due to the nature of her trade where she crossed the border every month she had already applied for a passport (the previous month) and she was waiting for it to be ready for collection. Mandhloordinalrily crossed to Botswana via the undesignated entry points in the company of a *malayithsa* and also comes back through the same route just close to the border. The very first time she went to Botswana she was in the company of seven other irregular migrants who were also from Plumtree town and most of whom were known to her. They crossed the border under the guidance of a *malayithsa* who escorted them until they were close to the road in Ramakwebana, she was very terrified, she said:

“ngasengisesabasesifikaphakathilaphoesasimelesitshayeidabulapu.

Ngangikengezwangokubanjwaiganyavulukubanjwainkuningabomaguma.

Ngangilokhengithandazaukuthilezozintoaziyezekikimi.

NgangisesabalamapholisaaweBotswanaengangilokhengisizwaukuthibayahambisaabantu abababambayoenkundleniyeNkosilaphoabafikabetshaywakakhulukazi.

NgathisengibonaumgwaqosesingenilekweleBotswanakangkhonangisizwainhliziyoyamiis ihlaliseka”. (I was terrified when we got deep into the undesignated entry points. I had heard stories of people being raped, others robbed and beaten by *omaguma* and was just praying that nothing like that happens to us. I was also afraid of the Botswana Police who were famous for taking irregular migrants to the King's court for thorough beating. By the time we crossed the undesignated entry points, I felt relieved to see the main road).

From the road they boarded a bus that took them to Francistown where she hoarded her first goods for resale. She boarded another bus and came back home after bribing the driver to cross with their goods while she and the other women she had crossed with used undesignated route only to meet with the bus after the boarder. She went further to say that from the first experience, she was more relaxed and with every experience she grew in confidence but she was quick to say that it was never safe crossing via that undesignated entry points because every day was different and they would be unlucky one day where they would easily find themselves in the hands of *omagumama*.

On the day she was deported she remembered that they had crossed the border via the undesignated entry points without any problems but as soon as they got to the main road while waiting for transport, they were trapped by the Botswana Police. She said that she thought they had spotted them from a distance while they were still in the bush since they crossed early morning. The Police then surrounded and pounced on them once they got to the road. She said that all of a sudden some men in Botswana national army uniforms were behind them while others were on horses in front of them and no one could run away because it was too risky and there was nowhere to run. She said she was so frightened to death because she had never seen horses at close range, let alone being arrested. From that point, they were taken to the Police cells and were detained there overnight and got deported the following day. Commenting about the prison conditions and the treatment from the Police she said the conditions in the prison were terrible. They had no food until in the morning when they were given plain porridge only. She also said that she felt the Police were not concerned about their welfare because there was not enough food, and not enough blankets for them to sleep and they also slept on the floor. This was her time being in a prison cell and she felt it was an experience never to be repeated. Mandlo further said that she was basically going home, go to Gwanda and collect her passport then she can continue doing cross border in a better way since by then the passport should have been ready for collection.

Case 8

Jahman, so called because of his dreadlocks, was a 16 year old boy from Bulawayo who claimed to be doing very well as a cross border trader because of what he had achieved in the short space of time that he had been in the business. Jahman said that he started doing cross border trading while he was still in school with his elder brother because the brother wanted to reduce goods declaration costs. Jahman used to have a passport but it got stolen a few months back while he was away, since then he had been crossing the border without one. He said the brother got him a passport and he would accompany him during school holidays and he would list some his brother's goods as his at the border to avoid paying excise duty. He said his father was late while his mother was there in Luveve Township staying with his siblings and some grandchildren. He was inspired by his brother while he was growing up, he had this to say:

“Ngabonaukuphumelelaokwakusenzaumfowethuinhliziyoyamiyathatheka.

NgesikhathingifikakuForm

3

ngasengithetheisinqumosokuthingitshayeidabulapungenzeokukuthengangithengisanjengo bangasengifundekumfowethu.

Njengobangangingakhlihangakangakoesikolongabonakungconoukuthingingadlalisiimal iyabazalibami.

Yikhongathathaisinqumosokuthingitshiyaisikolongifinyeleleamaphupoami”. (I got the inspiration from my brother who seemed to be doing very well. At form three, I had made up my mind that I wanted to be a cross border and had learnt the tricks from my brother. I realised that I was not gifted in academics and I decided not to waste my time and my parents' money, I therefore made the decision to quit school to pursue my dreams).

After he made this decision, his mother was very upset and even attempted to force him back into school, tried counselling him, and even instructed his brother to take him back to school but all was in vain because he had made up his mind and there was nothing anyone could do about that.

Now that he was a few years into the business he said he felt he was doing very well because he had managed to open his own table at the flea market and was now an employer of one person who worked on his table. Jahman said he had managed to achieve that through determination and some assistance from his brother who had assisted him with the capital and expertise to open the shop. He also said not only does he run his table but he also supplies goods per order to three big shops in the town of Bulawayo. He however said he had other commitments that needed money that is why he did not have a passport. Besides that, on the rare occasions that he crossed the border he got assistance from his brother's friend who was a *malayitsha* and that option did not need a passport and it was cheaper because his brother's friend only charged him transport fees. Jahman said that most of the trips he sent his employee to South Africa or Botswana to get supplies since she has a valid passport.

On the day he was arrested he said that he was caught while doing his shopping in the Indian town in Francistown and he suspects it was a tip off because of the manner in which he was arrested. He said he and other irregular migrants were arrested by plain clothes policeman. They just came straight to them, asked for passports and when they could not produce them, they got arrested. They were then taken to the police station where they were detained until they got deported after two days. For Jahman, this was not the first time being in prison, he had been in prison once in Zimbabwe and had also been arrested at least once in Botswana for border jumping. Due to these experiences he had gotten a bit accustomed to being in prison and so this was not a new experience. When he got arrested he made arrangements with his brother's friend to bring him his supplies to Zimbabwe on his way back. He said this experience was not a deterrent because crossing the border was now his way of life and in his business these experiences are to be expected.

Case 9

Tapiwa was a 15 year old boy who came from Lower Gweru and he had lived in Botswana with his uncle ever since his parents separated and he was left to live with his mother who could not raise his fees until he dropped out of school when he was in Form One. Tapiwa said

“amaivaindishungurudzavachindiroveratunyayatudikitusinamusoronedzimwedzekunyepamamwe mazuvandairaranenzara kana vandipomeramhosvandoramba”, (my mother traumatized me, beating me up for petty issues and some other false allegations while in some days I would sleep without eating when she accused me of something I did not do then I deny ever doing it). After separation, his mother later married another man and the two had two children. His father also got married to another woman and they had one child. His mother made it clear she does not want to stay with him because she says he is naughty and will cause problems in her second marriage. Tapiwa said that his father on the other hand did not come out clear but he was always promising to come take him but he never did so. On the offences and the false accusations he said sometimes he would be accused of stealing money, taking food without express permission, or not attending to cattle (*kudzoramombe*) until they stray into neighbours fields. He was however quick to mention that some days would be different and they would get along quiet well with his mother but those days are very few, most times she would be moody and very angry. He said

“nguvayavozhinjivanengevachingopopotavasingafarevachingondijinyurapesepesepasinazvanda mboita” (most of her time she would be angry at me, shouting for no apparent reason).

Having endured this abuse from his mother, he made the decision to migrate when his uncle visited them over Christmas. He had a very long conversation and begged him to take him to Botswana. He said his mother was not agreeable at first because she felt he was still too young and did not have a passport but later on she agreed for him to go after his uncle talked to her some more. Tapiwa said the day he left Lower Gweru was his happiest day of his life. They drove to Plumtree and since he did not have a passport, his uncle smuggled him into Botswana. They reached Mahalapye where he stayed with his uncle. In Botswana, Tapiwa had been learning brick laying from his uncle for over a year at the time of the research he saw himself as a brick layer because he said he had gained enough experience. He further said that whenever his uncle was coming home they would come together because he sometimes missed his mother and would take the opportunity to come home and see her, more so since he does not have a passport, he said, *“ndinotyakufambandegapasinasekuru”*, (I am afraid to travel alone without my uncle). Tapiwa felt that his life had changed for the better, he had this to say:

“hupenyuhwanguhwashandukaikezvinonekutihandichinaanondishungurudza, ndotengahembenechikafupandinodira, endendodyachikafuchandinoda, chose chandaishaiwandavekuchiwana”, (my life has changed a lot for the better because now I am in a more peaceful environment, I can now afford to buy myself clothes and feed myself anytime). He further said he was now getting along with his mother because he talks to her a lot, sends her money and groceries every month and sees her whenever possible. Tapiwa had no intentions of staying in Zimbabwe because he was happy in Botswana where he was more independent and now has a career.

On the day he got arrested, they had just completed their most recent contract, and it had been four months since he last saw his mother, his uncle advised that they get him deported so that he gets free and safe transport straight to his door step while his uncle fixed his vehicle which had broken down. His uncle would then follow him to Zimbabwe after which the two would go back to Botswana together. For him to get deported, he said that his uncle pretended to be a Batswana, phoned the police tipping them of irregular migrants and their location (where Tapiwa was located) and the police came to round him up. Tapiwa remembered the period he was in a cell but said since his uncle had hinted him, he was a bit more prepared but still the conditions are not enjoyable because there was no food and no blankets. After being deported his aim was to continue with his plan, and he said: *“tirikungoendamberinezvatakaronganasekuru, ndirikuendeswakumbaneve Child Centre ndonoonaamaindichimirasekurukutivazonditora kana vauya”*, (everything is still according to how we had planned with my uncle, I will be taken home by Child Centre personnel then I see my mother while I wait for my uncle to come to then we go back together when he comes). He was however planning to apply for a passport as soon as he raised enough money for the application. He said at the moment he wanted to give the money he had to his mother to pay fees for his siblings.

6.0 Discussion and Analysis of the Findings

The cases highlight that each child has their own story to tell, which may be different from the other child. The children might all migrate to Botswana for example in search of employment but

their circumstances in most cases are different. This section will analyse the cases highlighted above in line with the earlier stated research questions. The new sociology of childhood will also be reflected on in line with the data gathered from the children. Further to that, in this section, existing literature will also be revisited in light of the data gathered in order to complement the existing body of knowledge. While they have different stories search for some common threads in addition to differences

6.1 Reasons for Irregular repeat migration among children

6.1.1 Poverty

According to Ellen Wratten (1995) poverty can mean a lack of income to afford basic necessities such as food, shelter, clothing, health among other basics which society deems necessary. Sen (1981), Chambers (1989) looks at vulnerability and entitlements where one is poor if they are vulnerable or defenseless or insecure towards shocks, stress, risk etc. One is also poor when they have no command or ownership of resources to trade off in times of shocks and stress. This paper takes the conventional income determinant definition although the definitions by Sen and Chambers will also be applicable. The cases from the children interviewed reveal that a significant number of children leave their homes to migrate to other countries so as to run away from poverty or deprivation from basic needs such as health, adequate food, clothes and education among other. The cases of Siphon, Cleo and Thembi attest to the fact that lack of food, clothing, school among other factors push children to leave their homes in search of income (through employment) for them to afford these basic necessities. Siphon for example left his home where he was staying with his grandmother because the grandmother could no longer send him to school, afford him clothes among other things he needed. When he left Kezi for Botswana, his major reason for migrating was to look employment so that he could buy food, clothes, and send money to his grandmother. Even when deported, these children continue to go back to Botswana because they still want to work. The search for employment, or the scare of poverty continues to drive irregular repeat migration among children. These children will continue to go back to Botswana for as long as they can still find jobs in that country and they will continue to be irregular migrants for as long as they have not yet raised enough money to afford passports and work permits.

Researches done by Huijsmans (2008) among the Lao children supports the labor migration results obtained in this study. Among the Lao people, the majority of their children would migrate into Thailand in search of employment in order for them to afford basic provisions such as food, shelter among others. In addition, studies done by Camacho (1999) in the Philippines tracked children who migrate into the Philippines to become domestic workers because they had endured many years of poverty in their homes. These studies do so well in showing the agency that these children possess in trying to change their lives through seeking gainful employment. Instead of them waiting to be consumed by poverty, these children take the role that was once reserved for elders, the role of working and fending for the family. Huijsmans in his study also mentions that not all the children in his studies have migration decision made for them, but that some of the children in his study actually make the decisions by themselves and go on to make travel arrangements by themselves without the help of the adults. These studies confirm the assertion by the new sociology of childhood that children are not passive recipients of stimuli, but that they are actually creators of their own social worlds (Qvortrup et al 1994) in the same in which the children in this study took it upon themselves to afford themselves food and clothing by being employed outside the country.

The studies by Huijsmans (2008) and Camacho (1999) were focusing mainly on child labor migration. Whilst many children may repeatedly migrate irregularly for labor purposes, this is not necessarily true for some other children who migrate for family reunion for example, hence this study complements the gaps left by the above mentioned studies among a host of other studies done in this area.

6.1.2 Unconduciveliving environment

Besides poverty or low incomes as alluded to above, sometimes children run away from abusive environments at home. In the cases of Cleo, Mandhlo and Tapiwa, they ran away from abusive guardians, spouse and parent respectively although for Mandhlo she continued to live with her husband but she changed the living conditions in the house by contributing to the household

income. Mandhlo did not run away from her husband, but she changed the living conditions by bringing in income and this also changed the home environment. She could no longer wait for the husband to bring money home, and she also stopped complaining about her husband's money. In the end, the abuse from the husband ended. This is a classic case of a child who changes her social world by using her agency to change the structure. Whilst Tapiwa depended on another adult, Mandhlo depended on herself in changing her life world. In fact for Tapiwa, it was merely a change of guardianship, from his mother to his uncle although it must be pointed out that he took it upon himself to initiate the change in guardianship. For Cleo on the other hand, the story was different. She ran away from an abusive sister to fall into the hands of an abusive employer. It is from this angle that the SAMP (2006) project argues that there are instances where children because of their age will continue to be vulnerable in spite of their agency. SAMP's argument is that children are easier to abuse because of their young age, their small bodies and their short life experiences. Yaqub (2009) also documented young girls who were sexually abused in South Africa while they were seeking asylum from Somalia. However, SAMP fell short of realizing that children do not just sit passively and endure abuse but they sometimes find other adults to rescue them from abuse such as what Tapiwa did.

6.1.3 No support from parents for children to acquire passports.

The cases from the children also reveal that quite a number of parents are not very supportive towards their children accessing passports. The case of Mpumi and Nkosi are such examples where the parents are there but just do not commit to assist their children get passports. What is more intriguing is that some parents actually choose to pay an *omalayitshawho* costs not less than 2000 Rands, and yet a passport only costs a quarter of that amount. It would certainly be much cheaper and a lot safer if these children had passports because they would not walk long distances through the night in the forests but would simply get into the bus, get through the border until they reach their destinations safely. Whilst this trend is not widely supported by literature it is one that is growing in Zimbabwe where 'border-jumping', as some of the children put it, has become widespread such that some parents do not see the dangers they put their children under. Mpumi and Nkosi whilst they are repeat migrants in the sense that they have crossed the border before irregularly or regularly, their migration is not as often as that of the

other children such as Siphon, Thembi or Jahman. It is likely, from the researcher's observation that Nkosi will not migrate irregularly again because they already had passports in South Africa which the parents had taken for border stamping. It was not very clear during the study however if Mpumi would continue to migrate irregularly especially due to the experiences he went through and the negative emotions that he exhibited as a result of his experience in the jungle and in the prison.

The cases of Mpumi and Nkosi shows that the theory of new sociology of childhood cannot be applied universally to all cases. There is need to acknowledge that whilst children are not passive, there are structural constraints that will inhibit the exercise of their agency. When children live with their parents, or have their parents provide for them, they have little exercise of their agency when these parents give an instruction for them to follow. Not all children will be like Jahman who stood up to his mother in order to follow his dream, most children like Mpumi and Nkosi will simply follow the instructions of their parents even though they did not see the logic of them crossing the border using undesignated points when it is cheaper and safer to use a passport. For the case of Nkosi for example, it would have been cheaper, safer and less time consuming for the parents to courier the passport to him so that he boards a bus through to South Africa. It must therefore be mentioned that sometimes children are not given room to exercise their agency by structures that control them.

6.1.4 School holiday migration

During the period of economic decline and political instability in Zimbabwe during the period 2000 to 2009, many families fled the country (Magunha et al 2009). Some of these families left their children at home and crossed the border to South Africa, Botswana, and United Kingdom among other countries. Some sought and were granted asylum status and now they cannot come home easily. It is their children who then have to follow their children in the diaspora when they break for school holidays. Statistics from IOM (2012) also show that during school holidays migration figures go up, and these figures are not caused by adults in migration but also by children in migration. During the period of the field work, the researcher encountered three children who were deported while on their way to South Africa to spend the school holidays with their parents. The cases of Mpumi, Nkosi and Nkosi's young brother (who was not interviewed

because he was afraid of being interviewed) are such cases. These children go to school in Zimbabwe but their parents are in South Africa. In Zimbabwe they live with guardians, mostly grandmothers. While Nkosi and his young brother had South African passports that were in South Africa, Mpumi did not have a passport at all. The respective parents then arranged with *omalayitshato* to smuggle their children to South Africa via Botswana. The strange thing in both cases is that the parents chose to take the more expensive and riskier route (riskier as evidenced by the children's stories and which the children themselves said they would not want to repeat such experiences), while they could have used a portion (\$50) of that money (2000 Rands) to get their children passports. The research done by Hossain (2010) in Dhaka also shows that children sometimes migrate for purposes of reunification with their families. Children would travel from the rural areas to Dhaka to be with their families. Hossain however was focusing on inward migration, where the children are not leaving the country but moving from one city to the other. In Hossain's study therefore the children would not need a passport and tracking their repeat migration would then be difficult because entry and exit points are not controlled nor monitored. This study on the other hand was focusing on international migration.

Other children who are married migrate in order to be reunited with their spouses, especially girls or young mothers. Precious for example migrated to Botswana in order to be reunited with her husband *Baba Tino*. Precious maintained that she would only come back to Zimbabwe permanently when and if *Baba Tino* is also coming back, otherwise for as long as her husband is still working in Botswana, she will also stay in Botswana no matter how many times she gets deported because she felt that she is still young and cannot see herself living on her own without her husband especially in these days with HIV and polygamy being rife. She however mentioned that she would apply for a passport as soon as they raise enough money so that they do not always have to be deported.

6.2 Challenges Faced by Irregular Repeat Children in migration

6.2.1 Travel from Home to Botswana

During the process of irregular migration, one either uses the jungle or bribes immigration officials at the border either personally or through the bus driver. Some children however use the jungle for them to cross into Botswana. The cases cited above show that sometimes children walk long journeys from their homes to the point where they meet the middle-men. Evidence from Mpumi suggests that these children walk for long distances during the night in the bush until they get to their meeting point with the *Impisi*. According to Mpumi, during the walk, he felt very tired and hungry because he had ran out of food and the distance was very long. This has always been a big challenge for most irregular migrants as literature has shown. The researches done by Huijsmans (2008) with the children who migrate from Lao to Thailand, and also that done by Camacho (1999) amongst the Philippine children have also shown that children walk for long distances during irregular migration. The challenges that these children endure are that by the time reach their destination their legs would be swollen among other health challenges (Camacho 1999).

The researcher further interrogated some of the children during the interviews on the issue of ‘uncles’ that these children kept on referring to. The researcher gathered that they are in fact hired smugglers who assist the migrants to get to the *omalaitsha*'s vehicle on the other side of the border. In Ndebele they are called *Impisi*, meaning a hyena because they travel through the night, among other characteristics. The *Impisi* knows the routes through the undesignated entry points, and they have a mastery of the safe routes that are not prone to wild and dangerous animals, they also know the base camps of the feared *amagumuguma*, and also even the patrol routes and timetables of the patrol police. They further know the language and approach when they encounter the border patrol police. The *Impisi* is hired either by the parents or by the *omalaitsha*, and they are mostly people who are known in the community or are known by a relative in the community and so they are not strangers. In the case of Mpumi, Baba Maria, for example is a known distant relative who is in that business and was hired by Mpumi's parents to get Mpumi to across the border through the undesignated entry points to get to the *omalaitsha*'s vehicle.

Sipho on the other hand arranged his own *Impisito* him across the border and also arranged his own *omalaitsha* to get him to Botswana.

In this way, the children reduced the chances of getting arrested, getting attacked by dangerous animals as well falling victim to *omagumaguma*. When the children did succeed to get into Botswana, they sought areas that are not prone to Police raids so that they stay safer, and the children also reported that they learnt Setswana, the Tswana way of walking and dressing very fast in order not be quickly identified as foreigners. This practice supports the assertions put forward by the New Sociology of Childhood theory which state that children are actually human beings in their own right who have the capacity to shape their own destiny, have agency to reshape and dictate their lives. The Lao children (Huijsmans 2008) also used some middle men to assist them to cross into Thailand. This demonstrates that children have indeed the capacity to renegotiate the challenges that stand in their way.

6.2.2 Prison Conditions

All the children that the researcher spoke to bemoaned the conditions of the prisons in Botswana for their inhabitable state. In a study done by Anthea van de Burg (2013) on child asylum seekers in South Africa, prison conditions in South Africa are better than those experienced by the children in this study. The children in South Africa are protected by article 22 (1) of the Convention on Rights of the Child as ratified in 1989 in South Africa, the children when imprisoned are given proper and enough food, bedding and blankets among other things. The children were interviewed in this study on other hand spoke negatively of the food rationing that they experienced in the cells saying that they were given porridge and plain tea in the morning and they would spend the whole with no other meal, further to that the tea was served in plates and not in cups. The prison cells were dirty and smelling, there were no facilities to bath and the toilets were inside the cells making them smell even worse. This made them afraid of contracting diseases like cholera and typhoid which are water borne, and TB which is air borne among others. The children also decried the lack of sleeping beds and blankets. The children recounted that one would be given only one blanket if lucky, especially when the cell is not holding so

many inmates. The same conditions applied to the *magumbakumba*, which are trucks that ferry migrants from Botswana to Zimbabwe, these are huge trucks which can carry up to 80 migrants. The children recounted that these *magumbakumba* would be stuffy, and with no separation between children and adults. Sometimes they would carry migrants from as far as Gaborone, which is about 500km from the border and travel all the way nonstop until they get to the border and sometimes they would be standing as the trucks do not have enough seats for everyone because they are not designed like buses where there are seats for everyone.

6.2.3 Employment in Botswana

The majority of children who migrate to Botswana find themselves doing menial jobs mostly. Siphon, Precious, Thembi, Tapiwa and Cleopatra (Namibia) were doing menial jobs such as herding cattle (Siphon), house maids (Cleopatra and Thembi), and daggaboy (Tapiwa) and piece jobs (Precious). Due to their migrant status, they cannot risk looking for more formal jobs otherwise they will just get caught and be deported. The only jobs that they can get are those in the informal sector although they are mostly exploitative according to Cleopatra because the employer pays lower salaries and sometimes they default in paying. According to SAMP (2006), in Southern Africa, many children who migrate illegally often end up in prostitution or being trafficked for sex slavery purposes. According to the (CRC) Convention on the Rights of the Child (van de Burg 2013) all this is classified as child labor for as long as they are gainfully employed when they are below the age of 16. The CRC has put age restrictions with regards to when a child can begin to work. However, the children in this study, and those studied by other scholars such as Huijsmans (2008), Camacho (1999), Yinger (2000), SAMP (2006) among others have defied the dictates of this law as ratified in most parts of the world and have taken up gainful employment regardless.

Other children interviewed during this field work however were into cross border trading and they expressed satisfaction with what they were doing. Jahman for example felt that he was a successful cross border trader who was now actually now employing someone to work for him, despite his young age. Jahman made a decision to quit school, against the expectation of his

mother, his teachers, and the society that he grew up in. He then ventured into a trade that is ordinarily dominated by adults on a full time basis and has been doing quite well according to him. In addition, instead of waiting for the extended family to assist them as orphans, Thembi realised that such help was not forthcoming and she used her agency to find means to provide food, access to health, clothing and education for her siblings by looking for employment in Botswana. She was also introduced to a network of friends that would inform them of any planned raids by the police to avoid being arrested.

These are some of the challenges that children face in spite of their agency, and also in spite of their competencies as espoused by the new sociology of childhood theory. The theory according to (Qvortrup 2006) does not see children as vulnerable because of their age and this limitation ignores the possible challenges that children will inadvertently face because of their age. The SAMP report of 2006 documents children in Southern Africa who have been exploited through being taken as slaves in manual labor and also as sex slaves. The report further attributes this exploitation to the children age and vulnerability. Further to that, the Save the Children study of Zimbabwean children (2006) found that many young girls - some aged as young as 12 - ended up being involved in the sex trade along the highway linking Zimbabwe to the Mozambican port of Beira in Sofala province among others busy areas. In a previous study, Save the Children found that young Zimbabwean and Zambian sex workers living irregularly in areas along the Zambezi River in central Mozambique were found popular with men due to the perception that they were exploitable (SAMP 2006) because of their young age.

However, other children such as Jahman and Mandhlo used their agency to recreate their social lives. This is really in line with the theory of the new sociology of childhood which states that children are not passive, they are not half adults or half humans but they are actually creators of their life worlds. Jahman had a dream (although it was inspired by his brother), and that dream was not conforming to his socialization and expectations from his parents, but he defied the structures and recreated his own life through his agency in order to follow his dream.

6.3 Survival Strategies that repeat irregular child migrants make during migration.

6.3.1 *Omalayithsasand* bus drivers

The moment unaccompanied children leave their homes without legal travel documents and start the journey to another country (Botswana in this case), there are risks that lie ahead of them. On the way to Botswana for example, the children in this study said they had heard of stories of other children arrested and taken to the Chief's court for whipping, while others mentioned that they heard stories of other children being raped, robbed or even killed by *omagumaguma*. To avert these challenges, the children in this study enlisted the assistance of an *Impisito* take them to Botswana. By using an *Impisi* who is more knowledgeable about the routes, police patrols etc, the children reduce the risks that they will likely face. This is confirmed also by the studies of Huijsmans (2008) where some of the Lao children enlisted the help of middle men to cross the borders to avoid police arrests among other risks.

6.3.2 Deportation System

Deportation system whilst it is meant to be a deterrent to repeat irregular migrants, the children in this study have managed to manipulate it to their benefit when they want to come back home. By deported, the trucks carry these children for free to the Zimbabwean border. The cases show that the children can get themselves arrested by the Botswana Police so that they get deported and in the process, get free transport to Zimbabwe. The children were interviewed said that they can actually phone the police pretending to be a local tipping the police of irregular migrants in the area and provide the details of these migrants' location. When the police come to raid, the children simply cooperate and are arrested, and then later deported. When they get to the Zimbabwean side, they are welcomed by the staff at the IOM centre who provide them with prepared food, and a further 10kgs of maize plus a 1kg of beans to take home. They are further given free transport plus an escort from the government to take them home right to the doorstep. So when a child wants to come back home, they simply manipulate the system to work towards their advantage. Cleopatra, Thembi, Tapiwa and Siphon used this route when they wanted to come back home. Cleopatra was coming from Namibia while Siphon was already in Botswana and both

wanted to come while saving some money for use when they get home. They got themselves arrested by the police, got deported and in the process, got free rides. By the time of my research, Cleopatra was already preparing to be taken home to Harare, while Sipho's documents were still being processed.

7.0 Conclusion

This study to a very large extent managed to answer the research objectives. This study has shown that child repeat migration is multi-dimensional in terms of the reasons why it happens. For some children, the social backgrounds such as break-up of the family due to divorce or death causing many socio-economic challenges which then propel children to look for solutions and many end up migrating without legal travel documents. When parents break up or die, the children are left in the care of guardians who in the majority of times fail to continue sending the children to school and to provide basics such as clothing and food among others. For other children on the other hand, they repeatedly migrate for family reunion purposes. During school holidays, children cross borders to be with their parents who live and work in other countries like Botswana, South Africa among others. For young couples, they also migrate to be with their partners who live and work in foreign countries.

When children are confronted with challenges in their lives, they do not wait to be succumbed by those challenges but they put measures to confront those challenges. However, as this research has shown, children, just like adults, sometimes do not succeed in confronting those challenges. In support of the new sociology of childhood theory, children indeed have the agency to put in place measures to confront the challenges that they face in their lives, and also measures to protect them from possible dangers along the way and during their stay in foreign countries. While some parents organize human smugglers for their children, other children contract human smugglers on their own as a way of averting possible risks that may befall them. The human smugglers know which routes to take to avoid conmen, dangerous animals and border police, they also know what time of the day to travel, usually midnight, and also what to do or say when

caught by border police. The children also quickly learn the language of the host country, the type of dressing and the areas that are 'safe' from police in order to avoid being arrested. I felt that indeed children are not passive recipients of stimuli, but every day they engage in activities that shape and reshape their lives. Children have the capacity to analyse their destiny and put measures to take charge of their own lives and change this destiny. According to Siphon, he felt that if he did not 'do something' about his life, he would remain poor or end up much worse than he was, so he took it upon himself to change that destiny. For Siphon, Botswana meant a new home and a refuge, while for Precious it meant a temporary home until they decide to go back home. According to Jahman, he realised that if he continued going to school he would be wasting his time and his life would not be satisfactory to him. He then made the decision to be a cross because that is what he wanted to do, and not what his parents wanted him to do.

This research has shown that there is no doubt that children have agency in the sense of the capacity to experience, interact, and make meaning out of their lives but the agency should not be overdrawn because it has certain limitations due to their age. In addition when Marx (1962) wrote that people make their own history, he used agency in a stronger sense, referring to collective efforts to change existing power arrangements—for example, by challenging patterns of exploitation. More so, even in the sense of agency as used by Giddens explained above, the agency in the case of children is rather limited in terms of challenging or reshaping the structure, some children in this research experienced some abuse, for example Cleopatra said she was emotionally abused by her employer, while she was also sexually abused by a taxi driver, Tapiwa and Mandhlo were emotionally and physically abused at home. The question on whether children can exercise political agency partly depends on one's definition of children. In the 1970s and 1980s children as young as twelve were put behind bars after they got involved in struggle against apartheid in South Africa, infants and three-year-olds for example are however clearly not capable to take up this sort of action. The quest to liberate children from a conceptual dual standard whilst including them in frameworks such as theories of agency that emphasize autonomous and independent social action may very well have been overdrawn. Other factors such as dependence and vulnerability, need, and growth among other factors should also be in

focus. The conclusion of this researcher is therefore that indeed children have agency to reshape their lives, but this agency has limitations due to the children's body sizes and age.

Furthermore, this study has gone on to show that migration for some children living in difficult environments can be a survival strategy, a route out of difficult circumstances, however notwithstanding the extent to which they succeed in doing so. In the cases presented, some children did not really succeed in doing so although others like Jahman, Siphon, Mandlo and Thembi felt that their lives were now better than what it was before they started going to Botswana. For others, they faced bigger challenges than they had anticipated, Cleopatra for example, faced serious challenges in coping with life after the death of her grandmother who had become her guardian after the death of her parents. Her sister started ill-treating her, denying her food and clothes, turning her into her own maid etc. Migrating to Namibia was a survival strategy which she thought would end her miseries, provide her with a better life among other things but she fell into other challenges which she failed to cope with.

This study has also displayed the ability of children in participating as research respondents without the need for an adult to verify their data. The children interviewed, regardless of age proved to be very competent in responding to various, in articulating their world view, their experiences and their emotions. This goes on to further demonstrate that children have adequate agency in them, and they are not becomings, but are actually creators of their own social worlds. When they get into situations, they can adapt and devise mechanisms for survival.

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APPENDIX

Questionnaire for Children

My name is TonderaiCharehwa I am a student at University of Zimbabwe doing a Master of Science in Sociology and Anthropology. I am carrying out a research on repeat child migration at IOM Reception and Support Centre. Please respond and participate in this interview as honest as you can. I will not write nor use your name anywhere, but will use a pseudo name which you will choose. All information will be treated in complete confidentiality. The interview is not timed but may take between 30 to 60 minutes. Participation in this research is voluntary and you can choose not to answer any or all of the questions, and you can also choose take a break or to end the interview at any time without vindication from the interviewer. However I hope that you will participate in this research since your views are very important.

Do you want to ask me anything about the research?

Signature of Interviewer.....

SECTION A: Personal Background of the Respondents

1. Before you crossed the border, where did you live in Zimbabwe?

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2. Please tell me about yourself?

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3. Who do you live with?

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4. Do your guardians/ parents know that you were in Botswana?

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5. Do you go to school, and up to which level? If not, why are you not going to school?

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6. Do you have a passport, would you want one?

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7. If not (question 7) why?

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SECTION B: Reasons for migration

8. Tell me about your home environment?

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9. What made you leave home to go to Botswana / Why did you leave home?

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10. Did you personally make the decision to migrate, if not, who made that decision for you, and why?

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11. Please tell me how you got to Botswana?

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12. Are there any dangers you faced on your way to Botswana?

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13. If you faced dangers, how did you navigate these?

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14. When was the first time you went to Botswana and how old were you?

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15. What were you doing in Botswana?

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16. How was your stay in Botswana?

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17. Since you do not have a passport, how do you live in Botswana?

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18. Where do you live in Botswana, and how do you avoid being caught?

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19. Please explain how you got caught and what happened afterwards until you got here.

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20. With everything you have said (the dangers, imprisonment etc) Why did you go back to Botswana, why not go back home?

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21. Is there any other information you want to add?

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22. What are your dreams in life?

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CONCLUSION

This brings to and an end our interview. Once again thank you very much for taking part in this interview. I also take this opportunity to reiterate that the information discussed here will remain as highly confidential as possible.