

Overseas Destinations for Elite Southern and Northern Rhodesians and Zimbabweans

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Abstract

Emigration from Zimbabwe has been quite well documented by the Southern African Migration Project and by other writers, most recently the Edgar & Lucas article, ‘Zimbabwe’s Emigrants: Growth and Change in Australia’, in the December 2016 issue of the *Australian Review of African Studies*. This paper extends the 2016 article with a particular focus on diasporas and stepwise migration, adding to material on other former British territories in southern and eastern Africa. This paper uses three databases and other sources to consider the following questions: (1) is the movement of Europeans from these former British territories a diaspora or return migration; (2) what proportions go where, or do not emigrate; and (3) how prevalent is stepwise migration for example, from Zimbabwe to Australia via South Africa?

Introduction

Prosopography includes the study of the careers, migration histories and other biographical data of a historical group. Here the three databases – of the Overseas Service Pensioners Association (OSPA), the British South Africa Police Regimental Association (BSAP), a paramilitary force which operated in Rhodesia, and Peterhouse alumni (Petreans) – form the core of the study. These are supplemented by examples from the literature, particularly from Shurmer-Smith, the long title of her 2015 book being *Remnants of Empire. Memory and Northern Rhodesia’s White Diaspora*. Shurmer-Smith (2015, p. 250) had in fact constructed a “running database” containing information similar to that which could be derived from the BSAP membership list although her book does not include any statistical analysis. She initially built her database by contacting people from *The Great North Road* site ‘that existed to reunite old North Rhodesians.’ Her target population excluded ‘those aged under 10 at Independence and those who arrived after Independence’ (Shurmer-Smith 2015, p. 249). All these databases suffer from a number of limitations particularly of selectivity, since they rely on respondents belonging to an association, and keeping in touch with that association.

Overseas Service Pensioners Association (OSPA)

The first database comprises lists of members of the Overseas Service Pensioners Association (OSPA) in 2005 and shows the “service area” or country where they had lived, including the former territories of Southern Rhodesia, Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland. These members are generally former Colonial Service (subsequently Her Majesty’s Overseas Civil Service or HMOCS) professionals recruited in the UK, or their widows, who have mostly, but not entirely, returned to the UK to retire or to follow another career. Even in the 1960s, staff were still being recruited in London for overseas territories, mainly in Africa and South-East Asia, where qualified local candidates were not available, in spheres such as Administration, Engineering, Law and Health (Colonial

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Office 1963, p. 237). Table 1 shows that, as might be expected, most OSPA members relocated to the United Kingdom, with South Africa in second place. The South African High Commission (HCT) figures are included because the first author knew that several of the OSPA members were South Africans who retired to South Africa. This explains the relatively high percentage living in South Africa in 2005.

| Table 1. OSPA Member by Territory of Service and Place of Residence in 2005 (%) | | | | |
|---|----------------------|-------------------|-----------|------|
| Residence 2005 | Territory of Service | | | |
| | Southern Rhodesia | Northern Rhodesia | Nyasaland | HCT* |
| Zimbabwe | 10.3 | 2.9 | 3.2 | 0 |
| South Africa | 13.9 | 17.6 | 9.0 | 24.7 |
| Other Africa | 0 | 1.2 | 1.2 | 3.0 |
| UK | 67.5 | 70.9 | 79.9 | 60.8 |
| Australia | 4.1 | 2.8 | 1.7 | 3.6 |
| New Zealand | 0.5 | 1.1 | 1.7 | 3.0 |
| USA | 0 | 0.3 | 0.3 | 1.0 |
| Canada | 0.5 | 0.6 | 0 | 0.6 |
| Europe & Other | 3.1 | 2.6 | 0.6 | 0.4 |
| N = | 194 | 640 | 344 | 147 |

Source: Overseas Service Pensioners Association Member Listing.

Note: HCT refers to South African High Commission Territories (Basutoland, Bechuanaland, and Swaziland).

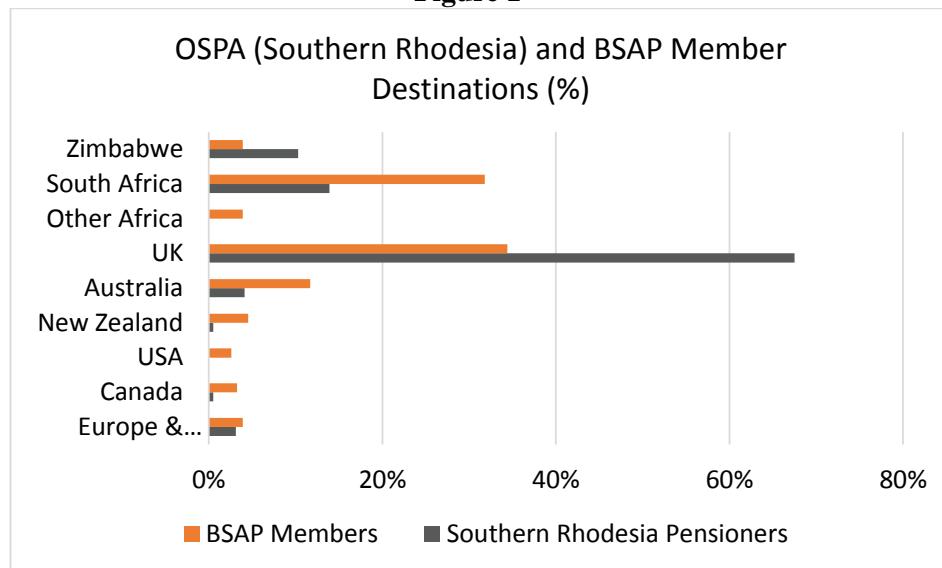
On Independence, a distinction was made between HMOCS officers and “non-designated” locally recruited officers whose retirement benefits were less generous. In particular, the latter did not receive relocation costs (Shurmer-Smith (2015, p. 181) and in this sense they were similar to railway and mine workers. An example of someone who worked and lived under different administrations in Zimbabwe for almost 50 years is David Hoskins. He initially went to Zimbabwe, which was then part of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, in 1959 as a government auditor, presumably as a member of the Colonial Audit Service. When the Federation was disbanded in December 1963, ‘a number of colleagues either joined the private sector or emigrated’, but he stayed on. In 1978, the first black auditors were appointed at Independence and a number of colleagues took early retirement. In 1987, Hoskins joined the private sector and in 2007 he left Zimbabwe, probably for the UK (Hoskins 2016).

Kirk-Greene (2001) has referred to ‘the diaspora of the expatriate career civil servants who were still employed by HM government when independence was granted.’ He estimated that

25,000 of these “prematurely retired” civil servants from around the world returned to

Britain where many commenced a second career. Diaspora assumes a scattering which certainly occurred as former colonies gained Independence. However, his definition flies in the face of traditional definitions of diaspora which assume the existence of a homeland as well as settlement outside of the homeland for more than one generation. The British colonial experience was basically that officers (generally male with the few females concentrated in nursing and teaching) were recruited in the UK and sent to a colony. As shown in Figure 1, the majority of OSPA members who served in Southern Rhodesia eventually relocated to the UK, and must largely be considered as return migrants.

Figure 1



Source: Southern Rhodesian Overseas Service Pensioners Association Member Listing, 2005 data. British South Africa Police Regimental Association <http://www.bsap.org>, 2016 data.

In Shurmer-Smith's Northern Rhodesian study ($n=632$), 45% of respondents were living in the UK and Ireland, 23% in South Africa, and 15% in Australia and New Zealand (Shurmer-Smith 2015, p. 156). Several of her respondents were South African citizens with no right to reside in other countries. One key reason for the timing of return migration was that the movers wanted to go back while they were young enough to get another job (Shurmer-Smith 2015, p. 202). One couple moved to the UK so that their disabled son could have more secure care (Shurmer-Smith 2015, p. 159). One BSAP member (see next section) migrated after being falsely accused of a criminal offence in Rhodesia.

What about the children of migrants? Were those in the UK and elsewhere who use expressions such as 'Africa continues to beat within' and having a 'sense of exile' (Shurmer-Smith's 2015, p. 271) thinking of Northern Rhodesia or Africa as their homeland? Butler (2001, p. 1197) adds other criteria to his definition of a diaspora, one being that it should exist over two generations, in which case they might qualify as members of an African diaspora. Unfortunately, the second generation might be difficult to identify. Given the unusual spelling of his surname it seems as if Ron Madocks (Shurmer-Smith 2015, p. 220) is the son of J.E. Madocks, who was educated in the

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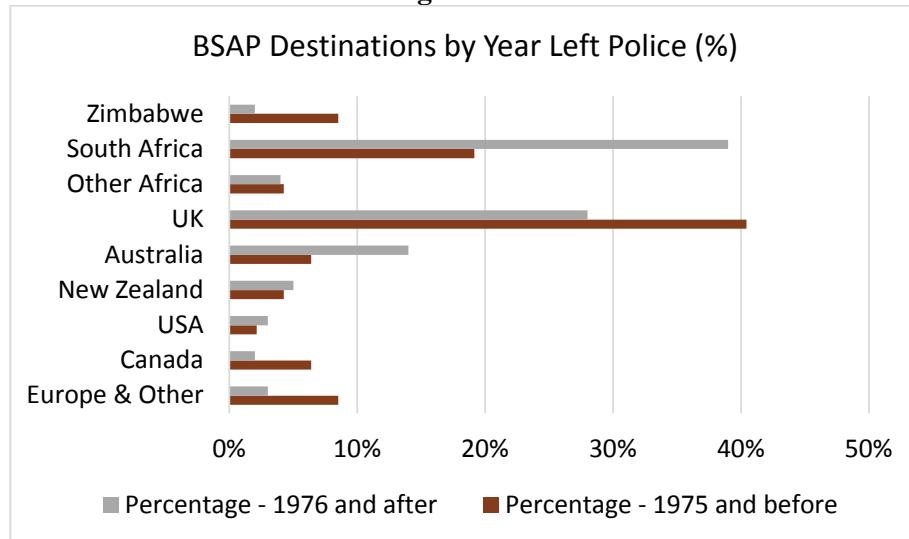
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English Midlands, became a cadet in Northern Rhodesia in 1941 and was an under-secretary in 1963 (Colonial Office 1963, p. 367). Ron Madocks finished up in the Midlands apparently near to where J.E. Madocks came from. After leaving Africa he was restless and lived in the USA for a while. The late T.L. Bennett (Colonial Office 1963:255) served in several African countries and has relatives in two of the databases used here but only personal knowledge of his family would reveal that his children are living in South Africa, Australia and Canada.

British South Africa Police Association (BSAP)

The British South Africa Police Association (BSAP) was a paramilitary force founded in 1889 in Rhodesia by Cecil Rhodes' British South Africa Company and served as Rhodesia's regular police force until Zimbabwe gained Independence. The second database is a sample drawn from the BSAP website. Because of a lack of time and resources only the Members List A-B is covered. With former members being spread across several countries, social media has become an ever popular platform to stay in touch (see <http://www.bsap.org/>). This white paramilitary force was disbanded in August 1980, and as shown in Figure 1, few members stayed on in Zimbabwe. Those who had left the BSAP in 1976 or later were less likely to stay on (Figure 2). Many of these would have been young conscripts 'doing their three' years of national service during the Bush War. South Africa was the preferred destination for this group, some of whom were subsequently employed in security-related occupations.

Figure 2



Source: British South Africa Police Regimental Association <http://www.bsap.org>, 2016 data.

Petreans

The third database provides insights into international moves over several decades using a database of around 2,500 leavers (or former students) of a top independent boarding school in Zimbabwe. The school was founded in 1955, originally for boys, with girls following in 1987. The school considered itself a pioneer of multi-racial education and African boys were first enrolled in 1964. Different cohorts of school leavers have experienced pressures to emigrate related to the Unilateral Declaration of Independence by Rhodesia in 1965, Independence of Zimbabwe in 1980, and the adverse economic and political conditions in Zimbabwe in the 21st century. The date of finishing school is known for each leaver; year of birth is not known. This research will focus on migration pathways.

Tables 2 and 3 build upon Edgar and Lucas (2016:42-3) by looking at the important European/non-European dichotomy. The latter category is predominately African. The authors identified a little over one in five Petreans as being of African or Asian background on the basis of surname, and almost four in five as of European origin. Table 2 shows the destination countries of African and Asian Petreans by school leaver cohort, from pre-1981 to post-2000. The proportion remaining in Zimbabwe has fallen dramatically in recent years, from a majority (55%) of the pre-1981 cohort to just 8.5% of the post-2000 cohort. South Africa, the United Kingdom and especially Australia have become much more popular destinations over time, accounting for 24%, 20% and 19% of post-2000 leavers, respectively. The USA has remained a popular destination, chosen by 18-23% of each cohort from pre-1981 to post-2000.

Prior to Independence in 1980, European Petreans were much more likely to leave Zimbabwe after school than were African and Asian Petreans – only 15% of pre-1981 European Petreans lived in Zimbabwe (see Table 3). While this percentage increased among 1980s and 1990s cohorts of European Petreans, it has declined to 14% of post-2000 leavers. The United Kingdom has been consistently the most popular destination for European Petreans, chosen by 26-38% of each cohort from pre-1981 to post-2000. South Africa has been regularly in the top three destination countries, and Australia has recently become very popular (22% of post-2000 European Petreans). Only 8% chose to move to North America, compared with 25% of African and Asian Petreans.

Stepwise migration

Stepwise migration usually refers to internal migration, but ‘sometimes it refers to a family making successive moves over one lifetime’ (Petersen and Petersen 1986, p. 586). Here it refers to individuals who emigrated and reached their current residence after living in a third country. For example, they could have gone from Zimbabwe to Australia after a sojourn in the UK or South Africa. The OSPA list does not record stepwise migration. In contrast, Shurmer-Smith’s respondents often gave details of their moves. For those leaving Northern Rhodesia/Zambia from 1962 onwards, many of those having the ‘hardest time’ made ‘the obvious move’ to Southern Rhodesia and ‘most of these relocated south again.’ The term used for such wanderers from Zambia is ‘Soweto’, meaning ‘so where are you now?’ (Shurmer-Smith 2015, p. 160.). A ‘when-we’ is defined in the *Dictionary of South African English* as ‘A type of white immigrant, esp. from Zimbabwe’ (Branford 1991, p. 375).

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Table 2. African and Asian Petreans 1965-2011 by Year Left School and Destination (%)

| Destination | Pre-1981 | 1981-1990 | 1991-2000 | 2001 & later | Total | N |
|----------------|----------|-----------|-----------|--------------|-------|-----|
| Zimbabwe | 55.0 | 31.0 | 15.3 | 8.5 | 16.8 | 78 |
| South Africa | 10.0 | 16.7 | 15.6 | 23.6 | 17.3 | 80 |
| Other Africa | 10.0 | 2.4 | 5.1 | 0.9 | 4.1 | 19 |
| UK | 5.0 | 21.4 | 27.5 | 19.8 | 24.2 | 112 |
| Australia | | 2.4 | 5.1 | 18.9 | 7.8 | 36 |
| New Zealand | | | 1.0 | 0.9 | 0.9 | 4 |
| USA | 20.0 | 21.4 | 23.1 | 17.9 | 21.6 | 100 |
| Canada | | 2.4 | 2.0 | 6.6 | 3.0 | 14 |
| Europe & Other | | 2.4 | 5.4 | 2.8 | 4.3 | 20 |
| N = | 20 | 42 | 295 | 106 | | 463 |

Source: Peterhouse Petrean Society and *Petrean Bush Telegraph*. Note: excludes 27 persons with Destination not known.

Table 3. European Petreans 1965-2011 by Year Left School and Destination (%)

| Destination | Pre-1981 | 1981-1990 | 1991-2000 | 2001 & later | Total | N |
|----------------|----------|-----------|-----------|--------------|-------|------|
| Zimbabwe | 14.9 | 24.7 | 21.9 | 14.2 | 18.8 | 328 |
| South Africa | 23.1 | 16.9 | 12.1 | 24.4 | 18.8 | 329 |
| Other Africa | 7.8 | 7.2 | 3.9 | 2.4 | 6.2 | 108 |
| UK | 26.5 | 28.3 | 38.1 | 26.8 | 30.2 | 529 |
| Australia | 10.5 | 9.0 | 10.5 | 22.0 | 11.1 | 194 |
| New Zealand | 1.7 | 3.0 | 2.9 | 1.6 | 2.3 | 40 |
| USA | 8.4 | 6.0 | 4.1 | 5.5 | 6.5 | 113 |
| Canada | 3.0 | 0.9 | 1.0 | 0.8 | 1.8 | 32 |
| Europe & Other | 4.1 | 3.9 | 5.5 | 2.4 | 4.3 | 76 |
| N = | 778 | 332 | 512 | 127 | | 1749 |

Source: Peterhouse Petrean Society and *Petrean Bush Telegraph*.

Note: excludes 72 persons with Destination not known.

One of Shurmer-Smith's (2015, p. 160) respondents, Tony Frowd, left Zambia (formerly Northern Rhodesia) in 1965 after his government grant at a teacher training college was withdrawn. He went to Bulawayo (Southern Rhodesia) and trained as a rubber technician. Upon going to the UK after that, he started a tyre re-treader business, switching to work for a software house. In 2003, he and his wife Linda moved to Costa del Sol in Spain. From the BSAP data we have estimated that around 5% of members engaged in stepwise migration, of which half went via South Africa to another destination. Possibly this is an underestimate, if they omit some moves. A few moves might better be described as circular migration since at some stage the migrant finishes back in Zimbabwe. In contrast, around one in five Petreans have moved to two or more countries since school, reflecting a much higher engagement in stepwise migration. Many Petreans were engaged in education in other countries and may eventually return to Zimbabwe.

Education can lead to a permanent stay in the destination country but can also lead to stepwise migration. Arnold (2011) has described the emigration of South African doctors. One example in Arnold's study is Michael Denborough who was born and schooled in Southern Rhodesia, and gained his medical degree at Cape Town before going to the University of Oxford as Rhodes scholar. There, he met his Australian wife and migrated to Brisbane (Arnold 2011, p. 232). It can be assumed that marriage to a citizen of a third country can influence stepwise migration by adding to the knowledge of a potential destination and providing easier access to that destination. A BSAP example is a patrol officer who, after leaving the police in 1979, spent 12 years in Swaziland, Eastern Transvaal and Mozambique working in the agricultural machinery business. He married a New Zealander in Swaziland. After seven years in the UK they moved to New Zealand in 1998. Unusually for contributions to the factual BSAP database, he adds the comment "yuck!!" after referring to his UK sojourn. Shurmer-Smith (2015, p. 201-2) has a description of why John and Lizzie Gormall moved from Northern Rhodesia to England and then to New Zealand. While John was following a degree course in Kent, Lizzie found the locals "strange" and the weather depressing, while John found teaching in comprehensive schools dispiriting.

Conclusion

As Shurmer-Smith (2011, p. 1) has observed, 'Northern Rhodesia isn't a place that post colonialism forgot, it is a place that post colonialism chose not to remember.' However, she continues by referring to the 'growing literature of memory in diasporic identity.' For the former constituent countries of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland (now Zimbabwe, Zambia and Malawi), there is perhaps much more interest in recent African emigration than in the history of white emigration. Anecdotal evidence suggests that return migration to Zimbabwe could occur if the political and economic situation were to improve. Return and stepwise migration, and the reasons for such moves, are generally difficult to measure. Prosopography, as used above, has provided insights into migration choices and the prevalence and direction of stepwise migration. Such work is labour intensive, searching for biographical details and creating databases.

Research opportunities exist using databases that have not been used for statistical analysis (Shurmer-Smith 2015, p. 250) or could perhaps be created in the case of the Northern Rhodesia Police Association, or railway workers, for example. *Outpost*

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newsletters from various branches of the BSAP are still going strong, and include published memoirs. Vignettes from *Overseas Pensioner*, the magazine of the Overseas Pensioners' Association, could be explored. Unfortunately, OPSA will cease to exist in 2017; like similar associations, its membership has been ageing. On the other hand, the 'Object of Colonial Memory' research project continues to conduct interviews in the UK about 'the end of empire' (Jeppesen and Longair 2016, p. 41-2).

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