The Migration of Zimbabweans to South Africa and their Working and Living Conditions, 2000-2010

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

History

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and
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Abstract

In this dissertation, I focus on the migration of Zimbabweans to South Africa and on their living conditions after they settled there. I cover the years from 2000 to 2010. This migration is important to study for several reasons. The departure of Zimbabweans during those years was extraordinary. More than one million people left Zimbabwe for South Africa, although the number is likely to have been higher, because of undocumented migration. Another reason for studying the migration of Zimbabweans to South Africa is to have a better understanding of the causes of their departure. I use the testimonies of migrants to argue that people left due to the deep economic, political, and social turmoil that gripped Zimbabwe in the 2000s. I use interviews to compliment and extend the arguments in the academic literature and in public discourses, both in Zimbabwe and in South Africa. I also explore the working and living conditions of Zimbabweans after their arrival in South Africa, arguing that Zimbabweans grappled with numerous challenges of living as foreigners. Despite facing challenges, they tried to adapt to life in South Africa through endurance, hard work, and perseverance. I also highlight what they perceived as key improvements in their lives. My emphasis on the contradictions of adjustment extends the arguments in current studies on migration and displacement in southern Africa. The literature has shown the economic and social marginalization of migrants, and their grim living conditions. In particular, it has decried the exclusionary treatment of foreigners by the government of South Africa and by ordinary South Africans. I go beyond these arguments and argue for the need to document key positive changes in the lives of migrants, beyond the challenges they encountered. These positive changes included people's attempts to master new physical and social spaces and their contribution to the South African economy as workers and consumers. Other important

positive changes I capture include the redrawing of gender roles and values between men and women, which stemmed from the cross-border migration of more Zimbabwean women than in previous years, and from their employment in both the formal and informal sectors of the South African economy. As more women became family breadwinners, important changes in their everyday relationships with men arose. While migrant men from Zimbabwe welcomed the participation of women in the economy as a survival strategy, they disapproved of women's power and social behavioral changes. By focusing on the experiences and perspectives of both men and women, I reveal how they grappled with and understood the changes.

Preface

This thesis is an original work by Maxwell Zhira. The research project, of which this thesis is a part, received research ethics approval from the University of Alberta Research Ethics Board, Project Name: "Continuity and Change in Zimbabwe: Governance, Economic Development, and Ways of Life", No. 1942, 21/09/2009.

Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to the people of Zimbabwe, especially to those who left Zimbabwe to live in the diaspora because of the political, economic, and social upheaval of the 2000s.

Acknowledgements

I wish to thank Dr. Guy Thompson; who lectures in the Department of History and Classics; and Dr. Malinda Smith, who lectures in the Department of Political Science, for jointly supervising my research and dissertation writing. My gratitude also goes to Dr. David Johnson, in the Department of History and Classics, for serving on my supervisory committee and for encouraging me throughout my graduate studies.

I'm deeply grateful to my fellow graduate students in History and Classics and in Political Science for their contributions to my intellectual growth through academic seminars and presentations.

I also thank Zimbabwean friends in Edmonton and elsewhere in Canada for their support. Zimbabweans in South Africa deserve a special mention for hosting me and for their participation in my field research. I would not have been able to write my dissertation without drawing from their experiences and voices.

To my wife; Jesca, and my sons; Tino and Genius, I want to say, "You guys are true champions." You were patient. My parents, brothers, and sister were very supportive.

This work was carried out with the aid of a grant from the International Development Research Centre, Ottawa, Canada. Information on the Centre is available on the web at www.idrc.ca.

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Acronyms

AIPPA: Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act

ANC: African National Council

BBC: British Broadcasting Corporation

CIO: Central Intelligence Organization

CNN: Cable News Network

CFUZ: Commercial Farmers Union of Zimbabwe

CoRMSA: Consortium for Refugees and Migrants in South Africa

DRC: Democratic Republic of the Congo

ECA: Economic Commission for Africa

FMSP: Forced Migration Studies Program (University of the Witwatersrand)

GNU: Government of National Unity

GPA: Global Political Agreement

IMF: International Monetary Fund

MDC: Movement for Democratic Change

NGO: Nongovernmental organization

POSA: Public Order and Security Act

RBZ: Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe

SADC: Southern African Development Community

SAMP: Southern African Migration Program

UNECA United Nations Economic Commission for Africa

WB: World Bank

ZANU PF: Zimbabwe African National Union (Patriotic Front)

Chapter 1

Main introduction

"It was better for me to die crossing the border to South Africa than to stay in Zimbabwe and die of hunger." *–John, a Zimbabwean living in South Africa, 2008.*

Millions of Zimbabweans abandoned their country, and their hope for it, because of a severe economic crisis in Zimbabwe in the 2000s. People left in desperation in their thousands every year for almost ten years. Their unprecedented departure has led to a lot of public attention and academic research. Most of those who left arrived in the countries they chose to go to by legal means, while others were considered to be illegal immigrants when they arrived. They put their lives at great risk to get into Zimbabwe's neighbouring countries. The quotation above by John encapsulates the context of their departure. John was unemployed and lived in poverty and desperation in South Africa. But he said it was better to risk his life to go there than to stay in Zimbabwe and starve to death. His words underline the fact that many people were quite determined to leave Zimbabwe at that time, when more than five million people left in a period of less than ten years.

People who left went to different destinations around the world at a rate of departure that was unprecedented in the modern history of Zimbabwe. The rate of people's departure out of Zimbabwe and entry into South Africa, for example, helps to put this exodus into the right perspective because, around three million of those who left Zimbabwe went to the neighbouring country of South Africa. In the year 2000 alone, about five hundred thousand

Zimbabweans entered South Africa by legal means.[1] This number rose sharply throughout the 2000s until it reached one-and-a-half million recorded entries in 2008. The fact that millions of people left in a hurry despite daunting migration challenges reinforces the uniqueness of this exodus. It suggests that people were determined to leave, and were ready to do almost anything to go.

The departure of Zimbabweans to live and work in other countries during the 2000s differed from previous instances of migration in several key ways. The sheer volume of people who left was unmatched in recent memory. Most of those who left went to Zimbabwe's neighbouring states in southern Africa because of close physical proximity, but others went to distant nations. This made the exodus from Zimbabwe a truly global phenomenon. Those who left also stayed in their destination countries for long periods if they could. The duration of stay altered their personal identities and senses of belonging; they became more integrated into their host countries, while maintaining strong economic, political, and social ties with the country of origin. The composition of migrants was also different in the 2000s compared to earlier migration events; in particular, there was a sharp spike in the number of women and children who joined the ranks of those leaving. This revealed the greater movement of whole families rather than individuals, as had been the case in earlier waves of migration from Zimbabwe, in which there was a predominance of male migrants. Although the exodus of educated and skilled people was a visible feature of earlier migration from Zimbabwe, the 2000s saw a jump in the numbers of such people leaving the country.[2]

[1] Jonathan Crush and Daniel Tevera, eds., *Zimbabwe's Exodus: Migration, Crisis and Survival* (Kingston: Southern African Migration Program, 2010), 5.
[2] Daniel S. Tevera and Lovemore Zinyama, *Zimbabweans Who Move: Perspectives on International Migration in Zimbabwe*, Migration Policy Series 25 (Cape Town; Ottawa: The Southern African Migration Project, 2002);

I watched the migration of people out of Zimbabwe with a keen interest, initially from within Zimbabwe and then from Canada after I myself had left. The departure of people attracted my scholarly attention and made me wonder about two things: how to understand why so many people were leaving in such a short space of time, and how to understand their living conditions in different contexts for extended periods of time. This led me to the study of cross-border migration. I decided to conduct field research and analyze the stories of migrants gathered through interviews. I gradually framed more focused research questions to guide my inquiry after thinking about the implications of this migration.

I then decided to examine how people made the adjustment from one country to another – in particular, how they dealt with the experience of leaving their home country and settling in another. Like migrants elsewhere in the world, Zimbabweans who left and settled in other countries had to regularize their stay, find jobs, and find somewhere to live. They also had to cultivate new social networks and maintain old ones. The majority of people I studied continued to face multiple problems. They lived in poverty and with discrimination, and they faced various other social ills. Despite these setbacks, however, they felt that their lives had improved compared to what they had experienced in Zimbabwe. My research among the community of Zimbabweans who lived in Crown Mines in Johannesburg revealed these paradoxes. Like John, quoted above, they expressed a strong sense of agency. They argued that living in Crown Mines was a lot better than staying in Zimbabwe and watching the country collapse, yet my research produced abundant evidence that some people lived under difficult circumstances and in horrendous conditions in South Africa. These contradictions are

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Daniel S. Tevera and Jonathan Crush, *The New Brain Drain from Zimbabwe*, Migration Policy Series 29 (Cape Town; Ottawa, The Southern African Migration Project, 2003).

captured in most of the stories I present throughout this dissertation. Some of the stories show people who were once steadily employed and living comfortably in Zimbabwe now unemployed and destitute. Some of them depended heavily on spouses, friends, and well-wishers for material support, but they still felt that they had achieved something and were better off than they would have been had they stayed at home.

My analysis is rooted in the contradictions arising from these migrants' exercise of human agency and decision-making, and in the social context that led them to continue living in poverty and marginalization in exile. I want to capture the fact that their sense of agency and decision-making processes were real. Their choice to leave the disaster in Zimbabwe for South Africa was just that, a *choice,* despite the fact that most of them went on to live in desperate poverty and difficult circumstances. To them, it felt like leaving was the best thing to do. Their stories revealed why they left. I am not debating whether their decisions were good or bad. In some instances, their decisions were accompanied by evidence of material improvement and by the restoration of hope, while in others, people were led to lives of even worse poverty than they had known before. Both these co-existing scenarios are real and important. This is the underlying contradiction in the outcome of the migration of Zimbabweans I explore and emphasize in my dissertation.

It is important to mention the fact that migration in southern Africa is an old story.[3] A huge body of scholarship exists on migration in the region before and after it was colonized in the late 19th century. People moved over short and long distances and their movement assumed

[3] Gerald Chikozho Mazarire, "Reflections on Pre-colonial Zimbabwe, c.850-1880," in *Becoming Zimbabwe: A History from the Pre-Colonial Period to 2008,* edited by Brian Raftopoulos and Alois Mlambo (Harare: Weaver Press, 2008), 8–38

many patterns, including short- and long-term and circular migration; which means that they returned to their place or country of origin and left again.[4] One of the best-researched topics in the history of southern Africa is the migration of people to the labour-intensive diamond and gold mines of South Africa from the last quarter of the 19th century onward. The labour-intensive nature of the mining industry drew workers from the hinterland of southern Africa and beyond. It involved the greatest number of people over a sustained period of time compared to earlier periods. This migration played an important role in shaping the economic, political, and social history of southern African and the whole continent. These earlier patterns of migration have continued to shape more recent trends, with much continuity but also some key changes. I am aware of these earlier trends, and will review some of the literature that explores them, but will not dig deeply into them. Rather, I restrict my focus to six themes that work together to weave a complete picture about displacement and cross-border migration in Zimbabwe after the year 2000. These themes are:

1. Understanding the exodus from Zimbabwe

The exodus from Zimbabwe in the 2000s was the result of a unique combination of political, economic, and social factors in Zimbabwe. Some of the reasons behind people's migration during the 2000s were similar to those that had caused people to migrate in the past. However, a new economic and political context provides an opportunity to gain new insights. I begin my analysis of the exodus with a review of the extant scholarship. I then focus on how people talked about the "push factors" behind their departure. How did people recreate their personal stories from the context of the turmoil that started in the 1990s and escalated in the 2000s?

[4] Alois Mlambo, "A History of Zimbabwean Migration to 1990," in Crush and Tevera, *Zimbabwe's Exodus,* 52–3.

What were some of their coping strategies in the face of political and economic hardships before they made the decision to leave? My analysis also centres on how people talked about the effects of a vicious power struggle that took place between Zimbabwe's main political parties, the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU PF) and the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). I argue that people's reasons for exiting produce conflicting narratives about the Zimbabwean crisis and about why they left. This reflects both the multifaceted nature of the crisis and how people recreate the past.

I also focus on the "pull factors" that drew people to South Africa. I locate these within the context of the physical proximity of the two countries, their historical ties, and, most importantly, the size of South Africa's economy. In their narratives, people often spoke about better job opportunities and wages. While this is the main reason behind migration in many places, my interest here was to probe what people really meant when they spoke about jobs and money. People I spoke to often invoked other important themes, such as their personal identities and their ingrained notions of material achievement; in particular, men invoked their desire to recover their sense of masculinity and virility and to fulfill societal expectations as providers and breadwinners. Women offered a wider range of reasons for going to South Africa that went far beyond the conventional desire to supplement incomes. They spoke strongly of their choices to pursue education and professional careers, to be self-sustaining, and to support extended family. When they spoke about their desires to get more education and professional skills and to be able to provide for their families, they conjured up complex and important dimensions of their struggles against male domination.

2. Journeys to South Africa

People talked in great detail about how they travelled to South Africa. My focus on their journeys of passage is important because it reveals how people planned to leave Zimbabwe. This includes how they applied for the necessary travel documents and raised money for transport. The stories also reveal people's use of interpersonal skills along the way. My focus on these skills reveals at least two things: the interview subjects' resolve to leave, and the ways in which they were able to overcome obstacles. My interest in people's journeys uncovers the fact that their stories often culminated in carefully constructed tales of joy and triumph bordering on exaggeration. They did this by presenting the obstacles they faced and how they overcame them. People usually romanticized how they travelled. They built a narrative of moving from the valley to the peak. This occurred because they gave their narratives in retrospect – several years after the journeys were made.

3. Searching for jobs and work experiences

People's experiences searching for jobs after their arrival in South Africa constituted by far the most important area of their overall migration experience. People talked about going to South Africa full of expectations. This was particularly evident among the educated and skilled. Most of them had been employed while in Zimbabwe; however, they met with disappointment upon their arrival in South Africa, as it was hard for them to apply for and get work permits. These difficulties forced them to take any type of job that could bring in income; the common result was deskilling and further disillusionment. Those who were fortunate enough to find any jobs, or jobs in their fields usually complained about poor working conditions and low wages. These were not limited to migrants, but also affected local South Africans. I have raveled the ups and downs in people's narratives as they reflect upon their working conditions. In doing so, I ask

a few guiding questions: Why did they think they were making progress? What were their ideas of progress? Were they really making any progress?

4. The paradoxes of adjustment

How did other needs affect people's lives, such as finding food, looking for a place to live, trying to reconnect with contacts, and obtaining valid residence status? The strategies people used to meet these demands reveal their agency and ability to overcome obstacles. I then proceed with an analysis of people's lifestyles, showing the ways in which these were tied to their working conditions. My emphasis is on their efforts to master life in new and unfamiliar social spaces. Their difficulties in finding proper housing and in living in squalor are emphasized in order to illustrate some of the things that hindered their efforts to adapt. My discussion about living in poverty makes the link between people's living standards and their health and wellness. I use the stories of Zimbabwean prostitutes in Johannesburg to argue that a strong connection exists among migration, survival strategy, and certain kinds of disease. My exploration of this theme strengthens my argument that the contradiction between betterment and the continuation of strife defined the lives of Zimbabwean migrants living in South Africa.

5. Emerging conceptions of gender

People's exit from Zimbabwe *en masse* affected men's and women's conceptualization of gender. Both men and women told me that their everyday interactions underwent rapid change after migration. They also claimed that the consequences of these changes in their lives were far-reaching. People admitted that the migration of women was on the rise. Most of those who moved were entering the workforce as employees, often informal sector workers, in order to accompany their spouses. I perceived that simultaneous with the entry of more women into

waged employment was a steady process of men's emasculation. At first, this arose from the political and economic crisis in Zimbabwe. It was made worse by continued unemployment, foreign residence, and employment competition from women. My analysis reveals that some of the changes men and women talked about and attributed to migration were already underway in Zimbabwe. Their movement to another country only made these more ominous. My focus on men's and women's debates regarding the social tensions emerging from these changes contributes to a better knowledge of how people grapple with social change and adaptation.

6. People's ideas about the future

The Zimbabweans living in South Africa to whom I spoke were usually preoccupied with thoughts about the future. At least three main options emerged here. One of them was returning to Zimbabwe "when things get back to normal." The second option was for people to stay in South Africa and become naturalized citizens. The third and last option was for people to live as transnational migrants; these people envisioned going to Zimbabwe for visits and important family occasions while continuing to live and work in South Africa. All three options came with some advantages and downsides. My research showed that people were at a crossroads; they were not sure about the best course of action to follow because they did not have sufficient control over their choices. A lot of them said they were anticipating a political transition in Zimbabwe.

Other scholars working on migration from Zimbabwe have focused on the themes of displacement, movement, and the responses of governments in recipient countries. My analysis draws from their works; and especially on the more recent literature published in the

2000s. I am aware that these newer studies themselves draw from previous work. In order to put my arguments in the proper academic context, I review some of the main themes and debates in the older scholarship in the following section. The main debates, theories, and methods employed by some of the key authors on the topic are highlighted. My identification of some of the strengths and weaknesses in the different schools of thought enables me to isolate the gaps my dissertation seeks to fill.

Migration scholarship in southern Africa

The study of migration in southern Africa has passed through three distinct phases: development economics, Marxist, and post-structural. The development economics phase arose in the post-World War II period. One of the pioneering authors here was W. Arthur Lewis. Lewis argued that human migration was mainly the movement of labour from the less-productive agricultural sector to the more-productive urban economy.[5] Another key author was Walt Rostow, who developed the theory of the stages of growth. Rostow argued that all societies moved along a similar path of development, starting with traditional and backward practices and progressing to modern and advanced forms of economic order.[6] These theories culminated in the Harris-Todaro model of migration. This model upheld Lewis's premise that migration was mainly the movement of labour. John Harris and Michael Todaro argued that people moved due to rational expectations of higher wages in the urban versus the rural sector.[7] Scholars then applied modernization theories to explain rural-urban migration in non-

[5] W. Arthur Lewis, "Economic Development with Unlimited Supplies of Labor," in *The Manchester School* (University of Manchester, 1954).
[6] Walt. W. Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960).
[7] John R. Harris and Michael P. Todaro, "Migration, Unemployment and Development: A Two-Sector Analysis," *American Economic Review* 60(1)(1970): 126–42.

Western parts of the world, including colonial Africa.[8] Modernization theorists used quantitative methods to measure the volume, direction of flow, and composition of migrants in different places and times. Much of their work was rich in statistical data, but they relied too heavily on economic assumptions and neglected non-economic factors.

Marxist scholars counteracted the main assumptions of development economists in the 1970s and 1980s. They emphasized the negative impact of European capital on African economies.[9] Scholars working on the history of southern Africa focused on mineral and industrial revolutions in South Africa. They documented how the capitalist economy led to the integration of southern Africa into a common labour market by the 1920s.[10] This narrative was particularly evident in the works of scholars like Frederick A. Johnstone, Marian Lacey, David Yudelman, Shula Marks, and Richard Rathbone.[11] At the local and national levels, Marxists noted the processes by which the colonial state manipulated labour markets using instruments like taxation and land alienation to benefit colonial capital and stagnate African rural economies.[12] The materialist narrative was also well-pronounced in the scholarship on colonial

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[8] Gary S. Fields, "Rural-Urban Migration, Urban Unemployment and Underemployment, and Job Search Activity in LDCs," *Journal of Development Economics*, 2(2)(1975): 165–87.

[9] Samir Amin, *Modern Migrations in West Africa* (London: Oxford University Press, 1974).

[10] William H. Worger, *South Africa's City of Diamonds: Mine Workers and Monopoly Capitalism in Kimberley, 1867–1895* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987); Patrick Harries, *Work, Culture and Identity: Migrant Laborers in Mozambique and South Africa, c1860–1910* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1994).

[11] F.A. Johnstone, *Class, Race and Gold: A Study of Class Relations and Racial Discrimination in South Africa* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1976); Marian Lacey, *Working for Boroko: The Origins of the Coercive Labor System in South Africa* (Johannesburg: Raven Press, 1981); Jonathan Crush, Alan Jeeves and David Yudelman, *South Africa's Labor Empire: A History of Black Migrancy to the Gold Mines* (Boulder Westview Press, 1992); V. Allen, *The History of Black Mineworkers in South Africa* (Keighly: Moor Press, 1992); W. James, *Our Precious Metal: African Labor In South Africa's Gold Industry, 1970–1990* (Cape Town: David Philip Publishers, 1992); Fion De Vletter, "Sons of Mozambique: Mozambican Miners and Post-apartheid South Africa," SAMP Migration Policy Series No. 8 (Cape Town and Kingston: SAMP, 1998); Shula Marks and Richard Rathbone*, Industrialization and Social Change in South Africa* (London, Longman, 1982).

[12] Charles van Onselen, *New Babylon, New Niniveh: Studies in the Social and Economic History of the Witwatersrand, 1996–1914* (Cape Town: David Philip Publishers, 1982); F. Wilson, *Labor in the South African Gold Mines, 1911–1969* (Cambridge: CUP, 1972); Allan Jeeves, *Migrant Labour in South Africa's Mining Economy: The Struggle for Gold Mines' Labor Supply, 1890–1920* (Montreal, Quebec and Kingston, Ontario: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1985).

Zimbabwe. Authors who applied the materialist approach to colonial Zimbabwe include Giovanni Arrighi, Charles van Onselen, and Robin Palmer.[13]

Much of the materialist scholarship in southern Africa was powerful and influential, particularly studies on labour migration. It set the terms of debate for subsequent studies. However, the excessive focus on structures removed any meaningful agency from local actors. This weakness arose from the underlying assumptions and reliance of materialist scholars on archival sources. These written sources expressed the views of colonial officials, who had little understanding of how Africans grappled with the intrusion of the colonial state and capital into their lives. The absence of African understandings and voices in much of this scholarship is glaring. When the perspectives of Africans came out, they were filtered through the views and language of colonial officials. Another limitation of much of the Marxist scholarship was its concentration on circulatory labour migration, to the neglect of other important forms of migration not related to the demands of the capitalist labour market, a fact observed in much of the post-Marxist migration literature, such as the new research of Maxim Bolt.[14] Other important dimensions which set the newer social studies from the previous scholarship include the migration of women, children, and the elderly, and also the movement of youths for education and leisure.[15]

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[13] Giovanni Arrighi, "Labour Supplies in Historical Perspective: A Study of the Proletarianization of the African Peasantry," *Journal of Development Studies* 6(3)(1970): 197–234; Charles van Onselen, *Chibaro: African Mine Labor in Southern Rhodesia, 1900–1933*, (Pluto Press, 1976); Robin Palmer, *Land and Racial Domination in Southern Rhodesia* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1977); Samir Amin, *Modern Migrations in West Africa* (London: Oxford University Press, 1974); "Migrations in Contemporary Africa: A Retrospective View," in *The Migration Experience in Africa,* edited by Jonathan Baker and Tade Akin Aina (Uppsala: Nordic Africa Institute, 1995); Claude Meillassoux, *Maidens, Meal and Money: Capitalism and Domestic Community* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981); Colin Bundy, *The Rise and Fall of the South African Peasantry* (London: Heinemann, 1979).

[14] Maxim Bolt, *Zimbabwe's Migrants and South Africa's Border Farms: The Roots of Impermanence*. Cambridge: CUP, 2016, 13-14.

[15] Thérèse J. F. A Gerold-Scheepers and Wim M. J. van Binsbergen, "Marxist and Non-Marxist Approaches to Migration in Tropical Africa." *African Perspectives*, 1, (1978) 30.

The advance of post-structuralism ushered in a new phase of scholarship in the late 1970s and early 1980s, and these effects were felt in the research on migration in southern Africa. This phase heralded the disintegration of the structural analytical frameworks of the past and the emergence of multiple theories and methodology. With specific reference to migration studies in southern Africa, scholars decried the limitations of earlier works. A key development was the incorporation of gender as a central element of migration studies. This led to complex understandings of how gendered institutions and relationships are formed and transformed by the interplay of micro- and macro-level processes.[16]

My dissertation is inspired by work done from the 1990s onward. Scholars paid greater attention to internal, cross-border, female, and labour migration, within the wider context of a renewed focus on social history. Inquiries into why women did not migrate at the same pace as men led to a blurring of lines between women and the broader field of gender studies. It became more apparent that men's actions often shaped women's experiences. Against this backdrop, migration studies explained the structural and individual circumstances that enabled people to migrate or constrained them from migrating. These included patriarchal controls that allowed men the freedom to migrate and kept women as suppliers of labour in the absence of men.[17] Of particular interest was the social impact on families and rural economies of men's long absences from their homes, aspects not sufficiently dealt with in the political economy

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[16] Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo, "Gender and Immigration: A Retrospective and Introduction," in *Gender and U.S. Immigration: Contemporary Trends,* edited by Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press 2003), 3–19.

[17] M. Miles, "'Missing Women': A Study of Female Swazi to the Witwatersrand, 1920-1970" (MA thesis, Queen's University, 1991); Camilla Cockerton, "'Running Away' from 'The Land of the Desert': Women's Migration from Colonial Botswana to South Africa, c.1895–1966 (PhD Thesis, Queen's University, 1995); Belinda Bozzoli, *Women of Phokeng: Consciousness, Life Strategy and Migrancy in south Africa, 1900–1983* (Portsmouth, New Hampshire: Heinemann, 1991); Cheryl Walker, ed., *Women and Gender in Southern Africa to 1995* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1991).

literature.[18] In this context, there was a surge of interest in cross-border migration. However, the emphasis was no longer on the dynamics of the migrant labour system *per se*, but on the lived experiences of migrants, including women.[19]

The scholarship of the 1990s explored a wider range of topics. These encompassed the rise of new migration patterns in different parts of Africa. In the 1990s, the main push factors were political instability and economic contraction.[20] Old questions of migration, such as labour mobility, causation, and direction of flow, age, sex, and volume continued to be investigated; however, much of the emphasis shifted to issues of immigrant societies, and to return, circular, cross-border, and women's migration. Although quantitative methods were still used, there was an increase in the use of qualitative methods, particularly the use of interviews. The impact of mobility on other social variables like gender and health became a key research focus, as was the link among gender, migration, and development.[21] Although it was noted that the mobility of women in developing nations was on the rise, they were still less mobile than men. When they moved, their experiences were also different from those of men.[22] This comparison

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[18] Ruth First, *Black Gold: The Mozambican Miner, Proletarian and Peasant* (Brighton: St. Martin's Press, 1983); Colin Murray, *Families Divided: The Impact of Migrant Labor on Lesotho* (Cambridge: CUP, 1981); R. Packard, *White Plague, Black Labor: Tuberculosis and the Political Economy of Health and Disease in South Africa* (Berkeley: University of California Press 1989); W. Chirwa, *Theba is Power: Rural Labor, Migrancy and Fishing in Malawi, 1890s–1985* (PhD Thesis, Queen's University, 1992).

[19] T. Dunbar Moodie, *Going for Gold: Men, Mines and Migration* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994); David B. Coplan, *In the Time of Cannibals: The Word Music of South Africa's Basotho Migrants* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1994).

[20] Aderanti Adepoju, *The Impact of Structural Adjustment on the Population of Africa: The Implications for Education, Health and Employment* (London: James Currey, 1993).

[21] Sylvia Chant and Sarah A. Radcliffe, "Migration and Development: The Importance of Gender," in *Gender and Migration in Developing Countries,* edited by Sylvia Chant (Chichester: Wiley, 1992); Sylvia Chant, "Households, Gender and Rural-Urban Migration: Reflections on Linkages and Considerations for Policy" *Environment and Urbanization* 10(1) (1998): 5-21, T. Dunbar Moodie and Vivienne Ndatshe, "Town Women and Country Wives: Keeping Preferences at Vaal Reefs Mine," in *Crossing Boundaries: Mine Migrancy in a Democratic South Africa,* edited by Jonathan Crush and W. James (Cape Town/Ottawa: IDASA, International Development Research Centre, 1995); Giovanna Campani, "Women Migrants: From Marginal Subjects to Social Actors," in *The Cambridge Survey of World Migration*, edited by R. Cohen (Cambridge: CUP, 1996); Jennifer Hyndman, "Border Crossings," *Antipode* 29(2)(1997): 149–76.

[22] Chant and Radcliffe, "Migration and Development," 192–8.

of male and female migration, which is evident in much of the scholarship of the 1990s, is shown in the work of Belinda Dodson, Joseph Gugler, and Gudran Ludwar-Ene.[23] I derive some of my insights from these studies, and from the growing amount of research on the Zimbabwean exodus.

The exodus from Zimbabwe in the 2000s generated extensive scholarly interest. This led to an ever-expanding body of literature with many insights into key themes. The themes scholars have grappled with include the main causes of migration, the volume of people involved, and where those people come from and where they go. Other key topics include the economic and humanitarian hardships migrants face, and how governments in different recipient countries have responded to migration. In the last few years, scholars have also focused on how women and children have joined the ranks of those leaving their native countries. This is found in the research of scholars focusing on migrants in urban areas, which is what I am contributing to. It is also evident in the literature focusing on Zimbabwean farmworkers employed on South Africa's commercial farms.[24] This new focus has raised questions about the complex and contested links among migration, gender, survival, and development.

Research on migration from Zimbabwe in the 2000s overlap with studies on the origins and development of the complex political, economic, and social hardships experienced in Zimbabwe at that time, which are known as the Zimbabwean crisis in much of the recent

[23] Belinda Dodson, "Women on the Move: Gender and Cross-Border Migration to South Africa and from Lesotho, Mozambique and Zimbabwe," in *On Borders, Perspectives on Cross-Border Migration in Southern Africa*, edited by David A. McDonald (Cape Town; New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000): 119–50; Joseph Gugler and Gudran Ludwar-Ene, "Gender and Migration in Africa South of the Sahara," in Baker and Aina, *The Migration Experience in Africa*.
[24] Bolt, *Zimbabwe's Migrants and South Africa's Border Farms.*

academic scholarship on Zimbabwe. This is because the crisis was the main cause of the exodus. Studies on migration from Zimbabwe are an extension of debates on the origins and evolution of the crisis and on people's responses to it. Some scholars writing on the crisis have also written on its impact, including that of cross-border migration. The migration literature from Zimbabwe can be clustered into works written by scholars who stress different political causes of the crisis. These include Brian Raftopoulos, Amanda Hammar, and Stig Jensen.[25] Their work has emphasized the deeply multifaceted nature of the crisis and the links among economic, political, and social dimensions. A key area of research has been on the role played by the state, the leadership of ZANU PF, and Robert Mugabe.[26] Eminent scholars have located Zimbabwe's economic and social collapse in the decay of the state.[27]

Another dimension of the scholarship on the crisis also draws from the political economy approach, but takes a long-term view of events and processes. Scholars in this camp trace Zimbabwe's lack of economic growth to legacies of colonial rule and to the effects of neoliberal globalization.[28] This scholarship uses the lack of economic growth in the country to explain the rise of state repression. It argues that it was the state's struggle for survival in the

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[25] Amanda Hammar, Brian Raftopoulos, and Stig Jensen., eds., *Zimbabwe's Unfinished Business: Rethinking Land, State and Nation in the Context of Crisis* (Harare: Weaver Press, 2003).

[26] Brian Raftopoulos, "The Crisis in Zimbabwe, 1998–2008," in *Becoming Zimbabwe: A History from the Pre-colonial Period to 2008,* edited by Brian Raftopoulos and Alois Mlambo (Harare: Weaver Press, 2009), 201–50; Vincent Khapoya, *The African Experience* (Boston: Pearson, 2013), especially the section entitled "Mugabe: Zimbabwe Belongs to Me," 213.

[27] See Brian Raftopoulos, "The State in Crisis: Authoritarian Nationalism, Selective Citizenship and Distortions of Democracy in Zimbabwe," in *Zimbabwe's Unfinished Business,* edited by Amanda Hammar et al., 230–34; Brian Raftopoulos, "The Zimbabwean Crisis and the Challenges for the Left," *The Journal of Southern African Studies* 32(2)(2006): 203–19; Timothy Scarnecchia, "The 'Fascist Cycle' in Zimbabwe, 2000–2005," *JSAS* 32(2)(2006): 221–37; Muchaparara Musemwa, "Disciplining a 'Dissident' City: Hydropolitics in the City of Bulawayo, Matabeleland, Zimbabwe, 1980–1994," *JSAS* 32(2)(2006): 239–54; Amin Y. Kamete, "The Return of the Jettisoned: ZANU PF's Crack at 'Re-Urbunising in Harare," *JSAS* 32(2)(2006): 255–70; Deborah Potts, "Restoring Order'? Operation Murambatsvina and the Urban Crisis in Zimbabwe," *JSAS* 32(2)(2006): 273–91.

[28] Patrick Bond, *Uneven Zimbabwe: A Study of Finance, Development, and Underdevelopment* (Trenton, New Jersey: Africa World Press, 1998).

face of mounting demands by workers and organized opposition that saw the state resort to repressive tactics of governing at the end of the 1990s.[29] I borrow from both explanations of the crisis to give an overview of the context of migration and to interpret the reasons people cited for departure.

The linkage between studies on the crisis and those on migration is reinforced in Jonathan Crush and Daniel Tevera's book *Zimbabwe's Exodus*.[30] The linkage is also clear in the main introduction to the 2010 edition of the *Journal of Southern African Studies* and in several articles in that edition.[31] Using an interdisciplinary approach, scholars explored some of the key dimensions of the crisis, such as the massive displacement of people both in Zimbabwe and also across borders.[32] This literature investigates several interrelated aspects, such as people's motives for moving and their demographic profiles.[33] Scholars who have focused on the volume and direction of flow have relied on official statistics and surveys. Most of them are working under the Southern African Migration Project (SAMP) at the University of Witwatersrand. Among other things, their work shows that the volume of movement from

[29] See Brian Raftopoulos and Daniel Compagnon, "Indigenization, the State Bourgeoisie, and Neo-authoritarian Politics," in *Twenty Years of Independence in Zimbabwe: From Liberation to Authoritarianism,* edited by Staffan Darnolf and Liisa Laakso (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 15–33; Godfrey Kanyanze, "The Performance of the Zimbabwean Economy, 1980–2000," in Darnolf and Laakso, *Twenty Years of Independence*, 34-77. See also Suzanne Dansereau and Mario Zamponi, "Zimbabwe: The Political Economy of Decline," Discussion Paper 27 (Uppsala: Nordic African Institute, 2005); Suzanne Dansereau, "Liberation and Opposition in Zimbabwe," *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 21(2)(2003): 173–89.
[30] Crush and Tevera, *Zimbabwe's Exodus*.
[31] Amanda Hammar, JoAnn McGregor and Loren Landau, "Introduction. Displacing Zimbabwe: Crisis and Construction in Southern Africa," *JSAS* 36(2)(2010): 263–83.
[32] Bill H. Kinsey, "Who Went Where . . . and Why: Patterns and Consequences of Displacement in Rural Zimbabwe after February 2000," *JSAS* 36(2)(2010): 339–60; Amanda Hammar, "Ambivalent Mobilities: Zimbabwean Commercial Farmers in Mozambique," *JSAS* 36(2)(2010): 395–416; Eric Worby, "Address Unknown: The Temporality of Displacement and the Ethics of Disconnection among Zimbabwean Migrants in Johannesburg," *JSAS* 36(2)(2010): 417–31.
[33] Tevera and Zinyama, *Zimbabweans Who Move*; Crush and Tevera, *Zimbabwe's Exodus*; Hammar, McGregor and Landau, "Introduction: Displacing Zimbabwe"; Loren Landau, "Drowning in Numbers: Interrogating New Patterns of Zimbabwean Migration to South Africa," in *Migration from Zimbabwe: Numbers, Needs and Policy Options*, edited by R. Leslie (Johannesburg: Centre for Development and Enterprise, 2008).

Zimbabwe to destination countries rose rapidly throughout the 2000s. The exodus from Zimbabwe to South Africa rose from a few thousand people yearly to a million in 2008, which was the peak year for outmigration from Zimbabwe.[34]

Some studies on migration from Zimbabwe offer a comparative perspective on earlier and more recent patterns of migration. While it is vital to draw the continuities and changes, my focus in the dissertation is not on earlier patterns of migration, because they are detailed in other studies, including studies on labor migration in southern Africa. However, it is necessary to restate some of the key differences, such as the departure of many people over a short period of time, and the multiple destinations they have gone to. Although Zimbabweans migrated to different countries in the past, the recent migration has seen Zimbabweans going everywhere in the world. Also, the exodus of the 2000s has seen a major shift away from the circular, temporary migration of individual working-age adults towards greater permanence and more family and child migration to South Africa. Because of this major shift, an increasing number of Zimbabwean migrants no longer see South Africa as a place of temporary economic opportunity for survival but they are finding the idea of South Africa as a place to stay and build a future for themselves and their families increasingly appealing.[35] This is particularly so, in view of the fact that the economic and political challenges in Zimbabwe are still continuing.

[34] Crush and Tevera, *Zimbabwe's Exodus*, 3–14; Jonathan Crush, Abel Chikanda and Belinda Maswikwa, *Heading North: The Zimbabwean Diaspora in Canada*, Migration Policy Series No. 62 (Kingston: SAMP, 2012); JoAnn McGregor and Ranka Primorac, *Zimbabwe's New Diaspora: Displacement and the Cultural Politics of Survival* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2010).
[35] Jonathan Crush, Abel Chikanda, Godfrey Tawodzera, "The Third Wave: Mixed Migration from Zimbabwe to South Africa," *Journal of Canadian African Studies*, 29 (2), (2012): 363-382.

Beyond Zimbabwe, I have also been influenced by recent migration studies on other parts of Africa.[36] Studies elsewhere in Africa have also revealed an increase in the incidence of mobility. The difficulties of measuring the volume of movement are also apparent. For example, it has been difficult to measure the movement of African migrants from North Africa to Europe on boats across the Mediterranean Sea.[37] This absence of reliable data is not unique to Africa. Accurate numbers are also a challenge in other parts of the world with significant movement of people across borders, such as from Mexico to the United States.[38] It is not surprising, then, that the literature on migration in southern Africa, as in other parts of the world, has often relied on estimates, which has given rise to academic interest in and debates on methods.

In this thesis, I react to some of the extant studies on migration in southern Africa. Scholars like Loren Landau and Tara Polzer have decried South Africa's current migration policies, which are derived from apartheid.[39] These scholars have made key policy suggestions to governments regarding the harnessing of migration for positive development. This pro-migration scholarship borrows some of its research agenda from studies on international migration. Some of this broader literature has explored the link between migration and development for both sending and host nations. A part of these studies affirms a positive link between migration and development. It emphasizes how migrants contribute to the survival of people in their countries of origin through various forms of remittances.[40] This literature

[36] Anthony Barclay, "Regional Economic Commissions and Intra-Regional Migration Potential in Africa: Taking Stock," in *International Migration: Within, To, and From Africa in a Globalized World,* edited by Aderanti Adepoju (Legon-Accra: Sub-Saharan African Publishers, Network of Migration Research on Africa, 2010), 51.
[37] *World Migration 2008: Managing Labour Mobility in the Evolving Global Economy*, Vol. 4 of IOM World Migration Report Series, International Organization for Migration (London: Hammersmith Press, 2008), 38, 407.
[38] Douglas S. Massey, Jorge Durand and Nolan J. Malone, *Beyond Smoke and Mirrors: Mexican Immigration in an Era of Economic Integration* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2002), 105–24.
[39] Polzer, *South African Government and Civil Society Responses*; *JSAS* 36(2)(2010) and 32(2)(2006).
[40] Alice Bloch, *The Development Potential of Zimbabweans in the Diaspora,* IOM Migration Research Series, No. 17 (Geneva: International Organization for Migration, 2005).

reveals that migrants contribute to development in their countries of origin because their absences reduce unemployment, diffusing the potential for social unrest.[41] Migrants have been seen to bring new skills and information both to their countries of reception and also to their countries of origin. The extensive work of Aderanti Adepoju in West and East Africa and a recent study by Crush, Tevera, and Belinda Maswikwa have explored these dynamics in great detail.[42] The other side of this debate brings out the negative impact of migration on the countries of origin, such as the loss of educated and skilled labour. This literature shows that the exodus of experts from critical sectors like healthcare and education can cause the collapse of service delivery.[43] Studies regarding "brain drain" have shown its negative effects both within Africa and when migrants leave Africa for the developed world.[44]

While I am familiar with these studies and arguments, I push them in different directions with a focus on the adjustment skills and survival strategies of migrants and an emphasis on the discrepancies between what people say and their actual everyday lived experiences. Much of the existing research, such as the work focused on state policies, suffers from an inadequate attention to the daily experiences and voices of migrants. This has created a narrative in which migrants are portrayed as victims in dire need of humanitarian aid. While this representation is often relevant, powerful, and seeks to bring change, it does not sufficiently acknowledge people's agency, resilience, innovation, and coping strategies. My focus on the everyday

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[41] JoAnn McGregor and Ranka Primorac, *Zimbabwe's New Diaspora: Displacement and the Cultural Politics of Survival* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2010); Crush and Tevera, *Zimbabwe's Exodus*.
[42] Crush, Chikanda, and Belinda Maswikwa, *Heading North*; Aderanti Adepoju, ed., *International Migration: Within, To, and From Africa in a Globalized World* (Legon-Accra: Sub-Saharan African Publishers, Network of Migration Research on Africa, 2010), 3.
[43] Abel Chikanda, "The Migration of Health Professionals from Zimbabwe," in *The International Migration of Health Workers,* edited by I. Connell (London: Routledge, 2008), 110–28; Rudo Gaidzanwa, *Voting with their Feet: Migrant Zimbabwean Nurses and Doctors in the Era of Structural Adjustment* (Uppsala: Nordic African Institute, 1999).
[44] Adepoju, *International Migration*.

experiences of migrants aims to highlight their agency. This is where my research both complements and expands the existing literature. As well, my work expands upon the research of scholars like France Maphosa, Shannon Morreira, and Alice Bloch.[45] They have placed emphasis on people's voices and experiences in their work. My interest in people's working and living conditions also borrows from the insights of migration scholars like Blair Rutherford. His research on the lives of Zimbabweans in the commercial farming sector of South Africa has revealed their coping strategies.[46] My analysis also borrows from the work of Francis Nyamnjoh and Michael Neocosmos. They have explored some of the employment conditions of domestic workers and the causes of xenophobic attacks on foreign nationals.[47] I draw from this research to show the precarious nature of migrant lives and to shed light on their struggles against exploitation, poverty, and social marginalization.

The themes I explore in this dissertation are tied to an emerging research agenda among historians and social science scholars, which is seen in the growth of academic interest in the diaspora, migration, immigration, and transnationalism. In her Presidential Address to the American Historical Association (AHA) in 2009, for example, historian Gabrielle M. Spiegel noted and emphasized a shift in historical consciousness and revision in current historiography.[48] She observed a new focus on "minority cultures" and deployment of a global

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[45] France Maphosa, "Transnationalism and Undocumented Migration Between Rural Zimbabwe and South Africa," in Crush and Tavera, *Zimbabwe's Exodus*, 346-360; Shannon Morreira, "Seeking Solidarity: Zimbabwean Undocumented Migrants in Cape Town, 2007," *JSAS* 36(2)(2010), 433-48; Alice Bloch, "Emigration from Zimbabwe: Migrant Perspectives," *Social Policy and Administration* 40(1)(2006): 67–87.
[46] Blair Rutherford, "Zimbabweans on the Farms in Northern South Africa," in Crush and Tevera, *Zimbabwe's Exodus*; and Rutherford, "An Unsettled Belonging: Zimbabwean Farm Workers in Northern South Africa," *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 26(4)(2008): 401–15,
[47] Francis B. Nyamnjoh, *Insiders and Outsiders: Citizenship and Xenophobia in Contemporary South Africa* (Dakar: Codesria, 2006); Michael Neocosmos, *From "Foreign Natives" to "Native Foreigners": Explaining Xenophobia in Post-Apartheid South Africa. Citizenship and Nationalism, Identity and Politics* (Dakar: Codesria, 2010).
[48] Gabrielle M. Spiegel, "The Task of the Historian," in *American Historical Review*, vol. 114, No. 1, (Feb., 2009), xiv, 1-15.

perspective to stress the hybridity of global cultures in the postcolonial and postmodern world. The fields of migration and transnational studies exhibit this new interest in historical research, marked by a new level of theoretical dynamism. Much of the emerging literature in the fields of migration and transnational studies focuses on population dispersal and discontinuities; it celebrates outcomes of fluidity and hybridity, multiplicity, and mobility.[49] While these themes are vital to explore, there is need to examine the sense of cultural loss and the emergence of new ways of recreating personal and group identities in periods of flux and resettlement. My research resonates with the broad shift in historical consciousness Spiegel observed. However, rather than pursuing the theme of cultural hybridization evident in much of the scholarship on global migration, I put greater emphasis on the recreation of personal and group identities in times of high levels of mobility and economic and social uncertainty. My research sits in the intersection of migration and transnational studies because of my concern with questions of how people who left Zimbabwe and are living in South Africa grapple with the realities of not being in Zimbabwe any more, while they are also finding feelings of belonging difficult to negotiate in South Africa. In the section that follows, my focus turns to the theory of migrant transnationalism, which I relied upon to guide my analysis.

Migrant Transnationalism and the Zimbabwean Exodus

My dissertation uses the theory of migrant transnationalism to examine the exodus from Zimbabwe; and to explore the daily living conditions of migrants. Transnationalism means "existing between," or "across" many nations. The field of transnationalism emerged within

[49] Ibid., 11. Richard P. Appelbaum and William I. Robinson, *Critical Globalization Studies* (New York: Routledge, 2005); Nicholas Van Hear, *New Diasporas: The Mass Exodus, Dispersal and Regroupings of Migrant Communities* (London: University College London, 1999); Robin Cohen, *Global Diasporas* (London: University College London, 1997).

the disciplines of anthropology and sociology in the early 1990s. The term "transnational" was not new in the 1990s, having been used before, but the pioneering book by Linda Basch, Nina Glick-Schiller and Christina Szanton-Blanc, *Nations Unbound*, made the term more popular and widely used in migration studies. Basch, Glick Schiller and Szanton-Blanc defined transnationalism as "the processes by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement."[50] Transnational migration is a pattern of migration in which persons, although they move across international borders, settle and establish ongoing social relations in a new state and maintain ongoing linkages with the polity of origin.[51] Steven Vertovec, a leading transnationalism scholar, identified at least six facets. These include the study of dispersed people who claim a common ethnic identity.[52] Transnationalism also refers to a situation in which migrants develop an altered notion of "home." By "home," migrants mean a place or dwelling in their country of origin, and also another place in the residence country. Transnationalism is also a mode of cultural reproduction marked by syncretism and hybridity, which is found in the work of scholars like Stuart Hall and Paul Gilroy.[53] The movement of global capital through multinational companies and the participation of migrants in homeland politics are dimensions of transnationalism Vertovec identified.

The exodus from Zimbabwe was extraordinary in terms of the volume of people involved, the multidirectional nature of movement, the composition of migrants, and the personal

[50] Linda Basch, Nina Glick-Schiller, Christina Szanton Blanc, *Nations Unbound: Transnational Projects, Postcolonial Predicaments, and Deterritorialized Nation-States* (Taylor and Francis, 1994), p.7
[51] Glick Schiller, N., and G. Fouron. 1999. "Terrains of Blood and Nation: Haitian Transnational Social Fields". *Ethnic and Racial Studies,* vol. 22, no. 2, 344.
[52] Steven Vertovec, *Transnationalism* (London; New York: Routledge, 2009), 4-12.
[53] Stuart Hall, "Old and New Identities; old and new ethnicities," in A. D. King (ed), Culture, Globalization, and the World-System, Houndmills, London: Mamillan)1991, Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (London: Verso, 1993)

experiences and perspectives of migrants. Due to its complex nature, this migration raised questions about how to characterize it. Migration scholars have used different research methods to understand this migration, which include comparisons with previous patterns.[54] Scholars and social analysts have also used a variety of terms to describe it. However, my approach in this dissertation involved a focus on migrant experiences and perspectives; because it allowed me to have a more nuanced understanding of this migration. My focus on migrant experiences and voices complements the current academic literature; such as the work of Alice Bloch and Sonia McKay, *Living on the Margins*.[55] The book illustrates that scholars are becoming more interested in tapping from the voices of the subaltern, such as the ways in which undocumented migrants from Bangladesh, China and Turkey, who are living in the UK, articulate the economic and social challenges of living on the margins. The use of transnational theory and interview method used in the book and some of the key conclusions arrived at are similar to my own, such as the dependence of migrants on social networks for survival, and how they live between their countries of origin and residence. A key feature of these theoretical approaches is their intersection with and criticism of the shortcomings of the modernist and Marxist models. Modernist approaches were too economically oriented, while structural theories of migration minimized the agency of migrants. By drawing from the theory of migrant transnationalism, my dissertation shows an awareness of the structural and institutional constraints embedded in people's lives, but a rejection of their portrayal as victims. I upheld their abilities and strategies to effect positive changes even when they operated amid structural constraints.

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[54] Jonathan Crush, Abel Chikanda and Godfrey Tawodzera, "The Third Wave: Mixed Migration From Zimbabwe to South Africa (SAMP, 2012), 1-3.

[55] Alice Bloch and Sonia McKay, *Living on the Margins: Undocumented Migrants in a Global City* (Policy Press. 2016).

My interest in migrant experiences and drawing from the theory of migrant transnationalism dovetails with my extensive use of oral interviews. The reliance on interviews helped me to foreground subjects' perspectives more effectively. I push some of the existing arguments further, reinterpreting them in light of my interviews and paying particular attention to how low-income migrants coped with the disruption of social ties and the formation of new ones, and how they sought to master new social environs. I drew some insights from Eric Worby in this regard, but instead of focusing on personal and social disruptions, I applaud people's resilience, their efforts to adapt, and the contradictions induced by their migration and settlement in another country.[56]

Methodology and research methods

Methodology refers to the conception and systematic study of research problems. Research methods are the techniques of information gathering and analysis.[57] The exodus from Zimbabwe in the 2000s and the strategies people used to settle in new environments presented a research problem, which needed an explanation. I decided to undertake two fieldwork trips to South Africa to ravel the problem. My first trip was in 2008, when I lived among Zimbabweans. I formulated a number of core research questions and picked the communities in which to work, as well as identify potential informants. This initial trip helped me to build trust among the Zimbabweans with whom I spoke. This was an important step, because most people I was going to interview had left Zimbabwe during years of political, economic, and social volatility; they were likely to fear and distrust me, because some of them feared that the state maintained a watchful eye over them. The circumstances of their departure from

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[56] Eric Worby, "Unknown Address: The Temporality of Displacement and the Ethics of Disconnection among Zimbabwean Migrants in Johannesburg," *JSAS* 36(2)(2010): 417–31.
[57] C. R Kothari, *Research Methodology: Methods and Techniques, 2nd Edition* (New Delhi: Wiley Eastern Limited, 1992).

Zimbabwe could have induced them to think that I was a government intelligence agent. I undertook a second and more extended fieldtrip in 2010. During the second trip, I revisited the areas and my contacts from the previous trip. I carried out detailed and recorded interviews. I re-interviewed some of the people I met on the first trip. These follow-up interviews gave me a chance to gain new insights, to verify certain facts, and to establish what had changed since my first interviews with them.

I carried out fieldwork for three main reasons. Fieldwork enabled me to test my previous knowledge about migration in general and about the recent exodus from Zimbabwe in particular. Fieldwork allowed me to interview people about their experiences and to draw meanings from their perspectives. I was also able to observe the lives of people I was studying and to participate in some of their migratory experiences to some degree, which enhanced my understanding. My choice to use an ethnographic approach to my work derived from a genuine interest in people's lives; I also took cue from the studies of scholars like James Spradley, who advised researchers to learn by living among their interviewees for a reasonable amount of time. Living among migrants enabled me to deepen my knowledge of their lives and to prioritize their worldview rather than my own as a researcher.[58] In spite of these advantages, however, I discovered that my presence in the field and interviews did not always guide me in the direction of pure knowledge. I recognized the complicated nature of interviews.

Interviewing was an effective technique for getting people's stories through their first-hand recollections. I took people's words and voices as important and legitimate sources of new knowledge because they brought a high degree of authenticity and reliability. I took a particular

[58] James Spradley, *Participant Observation* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston 1980), 26–9.

interest in the stories of migrants after the recommendations of Robert Coles.[59] He argued that interviews are useful to confirm theory, but more vitally, to give researchers a glimpse into the unfolding of lived lives. Coles also argued that the stories collected from interviews themselves should be our main discovery. This was precisely the case in my fieldwork. I came to terms with the fact that people made meaning out of their experiences through stories; however, I was conscious of the need to go beyond the stories to retrieve underlying meanings. The stories were more meaningful when put in the larger social, cultural, and institutional context.[60]

Interviews among Zimbabweans in South Africa

I conducted face-to-face interviews with Zimbabweans in three areas of South Africa. My first interviews were among people living in Crown Mines, Johannesburg. I also interviewed people living in Pretoria/Tshwane and in the smaller town of Lebowakgomo, located in South Africa's Limpopo province. In Johannesburg, I interviewed fourteen men and six women. Six of my interviews were with people who lived at the Central Methodist Church. In Brixton, Johannesburg, I interviewed eight men and three women. In Pretoria, I interviewed nine men and seven women. I had interviews with eleven men and four women in Lebowakgomo. I also held focused group discussions with some of these interviewees, in addition to one-on-one interviews. These groups comprised between three and ten people, and each person responded to interview questions. Besides my fieldwork in South Africa, I also interviewed seven people in Zimbabwe who had lived in South Africa previously. This brought the total number of people with whom I did formal face-to-face interviews to sixty-two. The additional interviews

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[59] Robert Coles, *Women of Crisis: Lives of Struggle and Hope* (Boston: Addison-Wesley, 1989), 22.
[60] Jean Clandinin and Jerry Rosiek, "Mapping a Landscape of Narrative Inquiry: Borderland Spaces and Tensions," in *Handbook of Narrative Inquiry: Mapping a Methodology,* edited by D.J. Clandinin (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2007), 42.

in Zimbabwe gave me the perspectives of people who had returned. Some of their views differed from those of migrants who still lived in South Africa. Given the increasingly cyclic and transnational nature of Zimbabwean migration to South Africa, it was necessary for me to capture this dimension through people's stories of going back and forth between Zimbabwe and South Africa.[61] I used my social media networks and contacts to gain some additional knowledge and to verify facts. I drew from my Facebook messages with three informants, bringing my informants to 72.

My informants were between the ages of eighteen and fifty. Most of them left Zimbabwe for South Africa in the 2000s, although I met a few others who had left earlier. Those who left earlier offered a slightly different angle on their motives for migrating, and on their living conditions. While I knew some of the people I interviewed, I also used random and snowball sampling to meet more informants. All my informants had finished Ordinary Level education in Zimbabwe before they had gone to South Africa. One of them had a bachelor's degree from the University of Zimbabwe, and another was studying for a PhD. They represented the growing number of Zimbabwean students and academics in South Africa. Most of my informants from Johannesburg had an urban background. Those in Lebowakgomo were mainly from Zimbabwe's rural areas, but they too, had been to some urban areas in Zimbabwe for work.

My interview questions were designed to explore why people left Zimbabwe. I also asked them to explain why they chose South Africa as a destination. I asked about how they travelled. I probed for information about their first journeys, although some people also talked about

[61] Daniel Makina, "Zimbabwe in Johannesburg," in Crush and Tevera, *Zimbabwe's Exodus*, 239.

return trips. Apart from the push and pull factors, I asked questions about what people were doing in South Africa in terms of their careers, families, and social lives. My engagements resulted in lively discussions on a wide range of topics because my interview questions were open-ended. The use of open-ended questions allowed people to have more meaningful conversations with me that yielded deeper and more textured revelations. I began with a set of questions and allowed people to describe at length what was of interest to them. In doing so, they brought up material that enhanced my understanding. I did not expect to get some of the details they gave me from my initial questions. For example, some of the people I spoke with during my fieldwork told me their incomes; I felt this was private and confidential information, but they thought I needed to know it. It was precisely this kind of information that gave me a more complete picture of their lives. Scholars like J.A. Maxwell and Spradley have also favoured this technique for the same reasons, as did Guy Thompson.[62] His interviews with peasant farmers in the Madziwa district of Zimbabwe brought up detailed information and debates that gave him more insight into the nature of agricultural changes in a rural economy.[63]

I also did seven formal group interviews in addition to my one-on-one interviews. I got more information for comparative purposes through group interviews. People debated issues with each other and produced varied perspectives when they were speaking to me as a group. They helped each other recall relevant information and experiences. Group sessions were a lot livelier than one-on-one interviews. This made me realize how people were keen to share their

[62] Joseph Alex Maxwell, *Qualitative Research Design: An Interactive Approach* (CA Sage: Thousand Oaks, 1996); James Spradley, *The Ethnographic Interview* (Connecticut: Wadsworth Group/Thomas Learning, 1979), 93–5.
[63] Guy Thompson, "'Pumpkins Just Got in There': Gender and Generational Conflict and 'Improved' Agriculture in Colonial Zimbabwe," *International Review of Social History* 55(2010): 177, 194–99.

experiences with me and with each other. These advantages are nonexistent in other methods of data gathering such as surveys. This is not to say group interviews are free from flaws. Some of the "flaws" arose from the fact that people argued during group interviews. When this happened, it became possible to lose track of the discussion thread. Some people withheld vital information deliberately for fear of being victimized. Sometimes they did not want their peers to hear about some of their experiences. I asked people to contact me privately later if they needed to add, clarify, or dispute a fact from group interviews. This was useful because some people came forth with additional information later on. Overall, I was convinced that the negatives of group interviews were offset by the positives. I always approached my material with a critical mind.

Scholars have used a variety of methods to study migration from Zimbabwe. Some of my research techniques were similar to those of other scholars, but I did certain things differently. Leading scholars in the field, particularly those linked to the Southern African Migration Project, have mostly used official statistics from government departments. This data enables both academics and policymakers to get the bigger picture of migration. It shows vital information and trends in the volume and direction of flow over many years. Scholars have also used large-scale quantitative surveys for a much broader scope and depth of coverage. Information on people's reasons for moving, patterns of movement, age profiles, incomes, and remittances has also been collected using surveys.[64] Some of the scholars working under the SAMP have used qualitative research methods. This has enabled them to access data that is difficult to capture using quantitative methods. The choice to use mixed methods depending on the subject of study is helping them get a more complete picture.

[64] Crush, Chikanda, and Masvikwa, *Heading North*.

Quantitative methods provide information relevant for us to get the bigger picture. The downside is that we often miss micro-level dynamics. To get the lived experiences of migrants, scholars usually fuse qualitative and quantitative methods.[65] Because of the nature of my topic, I followed scholars who use snowball sampling, face-to-face interviews, and social media. These methods can be seen in the work of scholars like Blair Rutherford and Loren Landau. They typically rely on interviews and personal observation in addition to official data.[66] Many non-Zimbabwean scholars researching among Zimbabweans hardly speak local languages. This gives them enough distance to perform a critical analysis. They also employ the services of local research assistants when conducting interviews.[67] Some of them have confronted the challenges of doing research among Zimbabweans by co-authoring papers with black Zimbabweans. This has resulted in more balanced research with both insider and outsider perspectives.

A focus on migrant experiences and voices using interviews underpinned this research. Through the interview method, I was able to engage with one of the central questions of postcolonial research - how to tell the subaltern's story. This is a methodological issue which subaltern scholars like Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak grappled with in the late 2000s.[68] Like them, I was also forced me to think about my role as a scholar, and about the people I was getting information from. What I did was to show that the construction of meaning in the lives of

[65] Eugene Campbell and Jonathan Crush, *Unfriendly Neighbours: Contemporary Migration from Zimbabwe to Botswana* (Cape Town: SAMP, 2012), 9–10.
[66] Blair Rutherford, "An Unsettling Belonging: Zimbabwean Farm Workers in Limpopo Province, South Africa," *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 36(4)(2008).
[67] Amanda Hammar, "Criminalising Farmers and Fields: Contesting Land Claims and Displacement in Zimbabwe's Margins," in *From Inequality to Insecurity: Studies of the Security-Development Nexus in Southern Africa*, edited by Lars Buur, Steffen Jensen and Finn Stepputat (Uppsala: Nordic Africa Institute, 2006).
[68] Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. "Can the Subaltern Speak?": Revised Edition, from the "History" Chapter of Critique of Postcolonial Reason." In *Can the Subaltern Speak?: Reflections on the History of an Idea*, edited by Morris C. Rosalind. Columbia University Press, 2010, 21-78. http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7312/morr14384.5.

social actors is a joint venture between the scholar and the interviewee; whose experiences and stories the scholar represents. Although the compilation of findings rested with me as the scholar, by listening to people's voices and presenting their arguments, I went a step towards the restoration of power back to them. In a way, although my dissertation speaks about the state, political actors, and state policies, it is also about the ordinary person whose life is affected by the state and whose initiatives and actions in turn affect what the state is able to do, which is one of the main achievements of social history.

I grappled with the paradox of doing research among fellow Zimbabweans. I saw that my personal identity influenced my approach to research and interviews. The outcome of my interviews derived from my social position as a researcher. This arose from several factors such as my age, gender, and the social profiles of my informants. As a black Zimbabwean researching among "my people," I had some advantages. I was able to use the Shona language to approach contacts and build some rapport. Having been away from "home" gave me some critical distance and helped with my evaluation. My analysis was different from that of someone viewing the situation without a research focus. I chose the subject of enquiry, asked many of the questions, and initiated the interviews. My education level and studies in Canada gave me a social profile that was empowering, but it also left me vulnerable. It raised a set of expectations, some of them unfulfillable, that placed additional pressures on me. Some of my informants expected gifts for their participation in the project that I was unable to provide. In some cases, I could not afford to help with gifts and I had to explain that ethical considerations forbade the exchange of gifts in academic research. These wide-ranging and contradictory assessments of my role reminded me that I did not always have control of the situation. My role and identity resulted from my self-presentation and the perceptions of those around me.

My gender also played a part in how I conceived the research agenda and interacted with informants. Being male, I usually had easy access to male informants, although some men met me with hostility and aloofness. Young and unmarried women were usually open with their career experiences, but not their family and personal lives. Some married women were reluctant to grant me interviews, fearing their husbands or boyfriends. In such cases, I had to ask for permission from their spouses and boyfriends. This showed me that gender inequality in the communities I worked in could impede access to informants. Some women's voices were only heard with the permission of men, but men did not need the approval of their wives in order to speak to me. To get around these barriers, I had to ask other women to facilitate my access. Scholars like Abdullahi Ibrahim and Tamara Giles-Vernick have argued that these interpersonal dynamics impose limitations on the reliability of oral testimonies.[69] I was aware of these limitations in my research, but I approached the perspectives and voices of my informants critically. I took into account several factors, such as their status as migrants, their former social status in Zimbabwe, and their future hopes. Their trust of me, their interest in the subject, and their depth of knowledge all influenced the outcome.

I approached interviews critically to counteract the effects of my social identity. This was a reflection of my awareness of the ongoing debate about the usefulness of oral evidence in African studies. The pioneering Africanist historian Jan Vansina ignited this debate in the 1960s. He demonstrated that non-written sources such as oral traditions, oral histories, and testimonies were valuable and legitimate sources for writing the past. He attacked the

[69] Abdullahi, A. Ibraham, "The Birth of the Interview: The Thin and the Fat of It," in *African Words, African Voices: Critical Practices in Oral History*, edited by David Cohen, Stephan Miescher, and Louise White, 123–5; Tamara Giles-Vernick, "Lives, Histories, and Sites of Recollection," in Cohen, Miescher, and White, *African Words, African Voices* (Indiana, Bloomington: IUP, 2001), 194–205.

ethnocentric view that preliterate African societies did not have a history because they did not have written records.[70] Vansina's arguments and methods continue to animate debates in African studies. This is evident in critical studies of oral sources, such as Luise White's book. White grappled with the problem of writing African history that relies on rumours as a source of evidence.[71] Newer debates have superseded efforts to prove that Africa had a history despite its paucity of written documents. An anthology by a group of Africanist scholars offers key perspectives on these debates.[72] The authors reject the positivist views of early Africanist oral historians such as Vansina and Henige.[73] Rather than treating oral information as a pure source of evidence, scholars stress its constructed nature and how a wide range of factors complicates its use. Following anthropologists like Clifford Geertz, I had a greater level of awareness that all knowledge is constructed.[74] This includes knowledge derived from ethnography. I was alert to the merits and limitations of interviews, rather than treating them as sources of objective knowledge. To counteract the downside, I was also innovative in the sense that I decided to tap informal conversations for data.

Tapping informal conversations

I complemented formal interviews with informal conversations. I had casual discussions with well over one hundred people, including local South Africans. I took field notes from some of these conversations at the time of the conversations, having first asked permission to do so. I recorded notes from other informal conversations afterwards. Some of the notes were quite

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[70] Jan Vansina, *Oral Tradition as History* (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985); *Living with Africa* (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1994).
[71] Luise White, *Speaking with Vampires: Rumour and History in Colonial Africa* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).
[72] Cohen, Miescher, and White, *African Words, African Voices.*
[73] Also David Henige, *Oral Historiography* (London: Longman, 1982).
[74] Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (NY: Basic Books, 1973), 10–23, 29.

detailed, while others were brief. These informal conversations and notes proved to be a vital source of information. They yielded immense material, which I used to fill some of the gaps in interviews. The contrast between people's narratives of their experiences in formal and informal settings was often sharp. I developed new questions from some of these impromptu conversations. I also identified potential interviewees through them. People were also less guarded about what they said during random discussions. This impressed upon me the need to approach their stories critically, because some of the stories they told me changed when they retold them a second time. Some people were surprised when I asked for their consent to use the information they shared with me informally. I had to explain research methods and ethics requirements in Western institutions, stressing why it was important to ask for permission and to use pseudonyms instead of identifying them by name in my written work.

As a Shona speaker, my interviews and interaction with Zimbabweans was easier. All my informants understood and spoke Shona. This enabled my conversations to flow in both Shona and English, depending on the nature of information people wanted to convey. Many informants who spoke Ndebele also understood Shona. They used both Shona and English when they knew that my understanding of Ndebele was limited. Two South African participants spoke in Zulu during one of my group interviews, and Zimbabwean interviewees interpreted for me. Interviewing in Shona was helpful because people also used idioms and metaphors in their stories that brought additional complexity and depth to their narratives. Some of the figures of expression people used carried deeper meanings, which would have been difficult for a non-Shona speaker to decipher. Being a black Zimbabwean and Shona speaker helped me to get closer to the social backgrounds of some of my informants, although this too, introduced new layers of complexity to the interviewer-interviewee relationship. I saw

this when one of my informants, named Colin, was reluctant to join others in a recorded interview. At first, we thought that he was worried about the political implications of participation, but he was in fact afraid that the interview was going to be in English. When he was told that he could use his native Shona, Colin joined the debate and soon became one of the main informants. The example of Colin shows that he was doubtful of his English language abilities. It was also evident that being recorded unsettled him. My use of informal talks as key sources of information helped me to overcome the drawbacks of formal interviews.

An interdisciplinary background

My interdisciplinary approach enabled me to pull from many different types of scholarship in both History and Political Science. This expanded my breadth of knowledge and improved my interpretation of the social changes in Zimbabwe. The comparative development literature in Political Science, which includes modernization, dependency, and the world systems scholarship enabled me to perceive both the Zimbabwean crisis and the exodus within the broader regional and global contexts. In particular, literature on the state and state behavior, such as Jeffrey Herbst's book, *States and Power in Africa*, enabled me to gain a better understanding of the founding and evolution of the modern state in Africa. This scholarship gave me an understanding of why some states in Africa are fragile and vulnerable to failure and collapse.[75] With sufficient knowledge of the various theories of the state in Africa, I analyzed how the government of President Mugabe consolidated power in the 1980s, and how it reacted with repression to the rise of organized opposition in Zimbabwe; in the late 1990s

[75] Jeffrey Herbst, *States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control.* 2nd Edition. Princeton; NJ: PUP, 2014.

and early 2000s. My assessment of the significance of state repression in people's decisions to leave Zimbabwe drew from some of the insights from these literatures. Although the literature on state collapse in Africa emphasizes the weakness of the central government and its struggle to maintain control, my knowledge of various theories of the state enabled me to argue that the Zimbabwean case does not fit the mainstream narrative of state collapse. In Zimbabwe, the central government did not weaken and lose power to regional warlords or authorities. Rather, the state strengthened, albeit at a colossal expense to the economy and the welfare of citizens, which is a type of state failure. With a background in critical theories of development, my interpretation of the turmoil that took place in Zimbabwe in the 2000s and the exodus pointed to the failure of the "developmental path" in Zimbabwe.[76]

My background in History equipped me skills to perform deep textual analysis; and to factor in the long-term events and processes that led to the deepening of the economic and political challenges in Zimbabwe. My interest in the social dynamics of migration, while speaking about the interaction between the state and civil society, illustrates my roots in the discipline of History, which has shifted focus from major events, political actors, and parties; to the everyday experiences of social groups; including the experiences and voices of youths, women, migrants, and informal workers. I drew from the disciplines of History and Political Science because the migration of Zimbabweans to South Africa is both historical and contemporary. Conventional history methods emphasize the use of archival documents to rewrite the past. This was where my background of Political Science made my analysis more nuanced, because I did not have

[76] Studies which are critical to the "development paradigm" include Lord Mawuko-Yevugah, *Reinventing Development: Aid Reform and Technologies of Governance in Ghana* (Routledge, 2014); Uma Kothari and Martin Minogue, (eds) *Development Theory and Practice: Critical Perspectives* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2001); Uma Kothari, *A Radical History of Development: Individuals, Institutions and Ideologies* (Zed Books, 2005); Vandana Desai and Robert Porter (eds); *The Companion to Development Studies* (Hodder Arnold, 2001); David Munch and Denis O'Hearn (eds); *Critical Development Theory: contributions to a New Paradigm*(New York: Zed Books, 1999).

to use archival sources, but interviews, and critical approach to sources, which included the media and the research of non-governmental organizations (NGOs). This approach further underlined the fact that by its very nature, the study of migration is interdisciplinary.

I developed a more critical approach in my fieldwork because of my interdisciplinary background in history and political science. Being a History student, I was aware that recent political, economic, and social changes in Zimbabwe, including the exodus, were an outcome of historical precedent, including the liberation struggle and the role of ZANU PF in this struggle. This was critical when people exaggerated or glossed over their ongoing troubles in South Africa. As a student of political science, I focused on wider forces behind people's migration, such as the behaviour of the state and how civil society interacted with it. My interest and know-how in such processes enhanced my understanding of how people spoke of their exit from Zimbabwe. Drawing from history and political science gave me a broader knowledge base and additional tools to approach my sources and to select and analyze them.

Chapter 2

Using People's Experiences and Stories to Understand the Exodus

Vignette

> Our lives in Zimbabwe had become very dire. We did not know what to do. Basic commodities were not available in the grocery stores. Shelves were empty. Whatever was available in terms of food and other supplies was diverted to the black market. Black market traders were subdividing what they sold into very small packets affordable to consumers. Things like sugar, cooking oil, salt, milk, eggs, and maize meal were now sold on the black market. They were repackaged into tiny plastic packets that could fit into people's pocket. We did not need shopping carts and grocery bags anymore, because everything we bought could fit into our pockets, that is, if you were fortunate enough to get anything. These small packets were called *katsaona,* meaning an emergency, or stopgap measure. As a nation, our survival depended on *tsaonas*. *– Zivai, a Zimbabwean in Johannesburg, South Africa*

Introduction

The abrupt departure of millions of Zimbabweans from Zimbabwe in the 2000s raised an important question about the causes of the exodus. Different reasons have been given for it, mainly by the media and academics. The media's main mantra has been that people left to escape from the government's crackdown on political dissent. This limited explanation draws from and feeds into a larger narrative, that of the lack of media freedom in; and human rights violations by the Zimbabwean state. Academics, however, put more weight on the nature and impact of Zimbabwe's economic meltdown. They also focused on the behaviour of the state and its institutions. They chronicled how the rise of organized political opposition to President Mugabe's regime was met with a corresponding rise in repression. This created an intolerable environment and spurred people to leave in their thousands every year. The academic literature has also shed light on some of the key political, economic, and social changes in Zimbabwe in

the 2000s. These key events include the implementation and impact of the land reform program and the struggle for political power between ZANU PF and the MDC. Both the media and academic approaches have provided important and valid frameworks for discovering why people left.

In this chapter, I also contribute to an understanding of why people left Zimbabwe on such a dramatic and unprecedented scale. I draw heavily from the words and views of migrants themselves, such as Zivai, whose story is quoted above. I use their words to explore how they understood, responded to, and spoke about the social changes around them. This emphasis on people's testimonies as to what triggered their departure goes beyond some of the simplistic and formulaic causes that are usually offered up to explain migration. My reliance on people's stories enabled me to weave a bottom-up and more textured understanding of the conditions that prevailed in Zimbabwe, and how people grappled with them. Not only does this people-driven approach complement the existing literature, it also makes an original contribution towards understanding the exodus.

I draw from formal interviews with seven men and five women, all of them now living in South Africa. The people I interviewed are Andrew, Danai, Deezert, Sophia, Zivai, Mai Bee, Modest, Norbert, Munya, Rebecca, Dan, Rudo, Stella, and Joseph. I also draw from my personal Facebook and email exchanges with three people, bringing the total number of my informants in a formal setting to seventeen. As well, I built my overall understanding of why people left from informal discussions with scores of migrants. I met some of them by chance during the course of my stay in South Africa. Even though I did not intend to get information from them, I usually found myself in the middle of lively and insightful discussions about why

and how they had left Zimbabwe. After these discussions, I would reflect upon the arguments and compile field notes. People's interest in talking about why they left, even when I had not asked them, was an indication of how strongly they felt they had made a right choice. It was also a way of affirming their conviction that they had done *something* in response to the crisis.

In the first section of this chapter, I examine people's motives and personal accounts of what it was like to live in a collapsed economy. In the second section, my focus is on some of the survival strategies people used to cope with economic difficulties, such as participation in the parallel (i.e. black market) economy. This section is important because it reveals people's resilience and sense of hope that things would get better. I argue that getting out of the country was something people did only after trying other things to alleviate their suffering inside Zimbabwe. The third section of the chapter offers a brief review of the political conditions that existed in the 2000s, before presenting people's accounts of departure due to political strife. I then explore the crisis and exodus in the context of Pan-African thought and practice. In the final section I synthesize people's reasons for leaving.

Grappling with economic hardships in Zimbabwe

Zimbabweans considered themselves unfortunate to have experienced the collapse of what was once a prosperous and promising economy. The excerpt above from my interview with Zivai sets the tone for an understanding of some of the main features of Zimbabwe's economic collapse, which was most severe between 2000 and 2008. Some of the main features of this collapse were the acute shortage of basic consumer goods, and accompanying hunger. The economy also experienced major distortions arising from lack of production. As was to be expected under those conditions, people had to deal with the emergence of the black market. Diverting goods to the black market and selling them for a profit was itself a survival

strategy to complement other strategies, including crime. People's stories in this section allude to one or more of the conditions Zivai mentioned. Collectively, they are about how people recalled the crisis and described its severity. Talking about the severity of the economic crisis was a way of saying, "Look, we survived that." It also set the stage to justify why they left.

People's descriptions of how they endured Zimbabwe's economic crisis were vivid. In some of these descriptions, they used formal language, but at other times, they used metaphors. It was easy for me to know what they meant when they spoke in plain language, but their use of slang required further probing and interpretation. Let us take a look at the words of Joseph, another man from Zimbabwe whom I met in Johannesburg. His words are also about how he experienced the fall of Zimbabwe's economy. His narrative was common among well-educated, professionally qualified male migrants of middle age. I also found it among married people with young families. Their main concern was how they had been rendered unable to maintain their status as family breadwinners.

> I am an adult man with a family of two young kids. In 2006, after a severe economic meltdown in Zimbabwe, survival was difficult. Inflation was going beyond millions [of percent]. The prices of basic goods were doubling in twelve hours or less. Everything was diverted into the illegal market. Formal trade shops were empty, some completely closed. At that moment, my first-born was going into grade 1. My salary was far short of the charged school fees. We paid extra money to keep teachers at work. The government had failed to meet the salary demands of teachers. My rental payments were doubling every month, which chewed up my salary and my wife's income. This situation forced me to migrate. It was not my wish, but the situation was unbearable. [1]

[1] Joseph, email message to author, October 13, 2012.

Let us look at an example of another middle-aged man named Deezert, before drawing out what is common between them.[2] In Zimbabwe, Deezert was a teacher at a secondary school in a semi-rural part of the country. He had graduated from a teacher-training college in 1999. Like other recent graduates, he hoped that his education and training would open opportunities for advancement in life. Deezert lived with his wife and daughter at the school where he taught. Besides his own young family, he also looked after his elderly parents and two young brothers. His brothers were going to school and they depended on him to supply their academic and personal needs. He had some important personal goals, such as buying a house in town. He was also trying to save some money for his first car. Already, we can see that family obligations were an extra burden on his limited resources. As a recent graduate, he was not well-established yet in life. He said if Zimbabwe's economy had remained stable, he could have been able to meet the financial demands of his family. However, his material conditions deteriorated sharply in the early 2000s, just like those of other civil servants.

Zimbabweans painted a gloomy picture when they described their conditions of service in Zimbabwe in the 2000s. Deezert said that although he was a skilled teacher, his wages had become "peanuts." To work as a teacher in an environment of hyperinflation was "a waste of time." His salary failed to meet his basic daily needs. By the year 2006, he could not afford to buy small things like newspapers, bread, and other items of everyday life. His monthly salary was not enough for a pair of shoes. He was embarrassed to stand in front of his pupils barefoot, and he was falling into debt. After weighing his options over several months, he followed the example of other teachers in his community. They were going to South Africa for part-time jobs during holidays, and returning to their teaching posts in Zimbabwe during

[2] Interview with Deezert, Crown Mines, Johannesburg, December 2, 2010.

the school term. Explaining this strategy, Deezert said, "At first, I thought things would get better in Zimbabwe. But by the end of 2007, I decided not to return to my school but to continue working in South Africa. In South Africa, I was able to meet most of my living expenses. I could remit some money and goods to my parents and siblings in Zimbabwe." Deezert heard that some of his counterparts had followed his example. Even more striking was the fact that his school's principal followed the teachers: he left their school for greener pastures in South Africa.

The experiences and accounts of Joseph and Deezert were similar. They represented the predicament of young, educated, and skilled Zimbabweans in the 2000s. These middle-class aspirants had an excellent understanding of the country's economic plunge, which they invoked to explain their migration. Joseph's account touched on several key facets of this economic fall. He also had a good level of understanding of what was going on around him. His words revealed that people living in urban areas were affected the most because their lives were entirely tied to the market. The benefit of tapping accounts from people like Joseph and Deezert was that they gave a human touch to the severity of various facets of the crisis. This complements the knowledge we obtain from academic studies.

The crisis has been represented statistically in some of the academic literature, with high percentages of unemployment and hyperinflation.[3] This data show that Zimbabwe's economy shrunk by more than forty percent in the 2000s. The unemployment rate rose to more than 80 percent. Statistical data also shows that inflation stood at 79.6 billion percent in November

[3] Steve H. Hank and Alex K.F. Kwok, "On the Measurement of Zimbabwe's Hyperinflation," *The Cato Journal,* 29 (2) (Spring–Summer 2009), 353-364.

2008.[4] These figures help us in our efforts to grasp the nature and extent of the collapse. However, the stories of people like Joseph and Deezert help us understand how people actually lived in such an environment. It is also from people's tales that we notice how different groups of people grappled with the turmoil. In the cases of Joseph and Deezert, they felt the crisis through the erosion of salary and the rapid deterioration of working and living conditions. They also lost social status, dignity, and hope. As educated professionals, they aspired to material progress. They slid into poverty instead.

People explained their exit from Zimbabwe by talking about its economic collapse and how they sought to stem the slide into deeper poverty. More importantly, people also said that the migration route had allowed them to continue the pursuit of their dreams and to resuscitate hope. People hoped to restore that which they had lost and to continue nurturing ideas of progress. Let us look at the words of a young, married migrant woman named Stella. She left Zimbabwe in 2006 in the middle of the economic collapse, just before things hit rock-bottom in 2008. Her decision to migrate was taken jointly with her husband after they realized that Zimbabwe's economic state was getting worse. Stella had an urban background and an advanced level of education. She had been a teacher in Zimbabwe, and her husband was an engineer. The following quotation indicates that her family decided to get out of Zimbabwe to resuscitate their dreams of a better life.

> My journey and plans to leave my motherland and move to South Africa began in 2006. After having braved the ever-decreasing value of the Zimbabwean dollar, my husband and I finally decided to relocate to our neighboring country. We realized *we were not going anywhere as long as we were in Zimbabwe.*

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[4] David Coltart, "A Decade of Suffering in Zimbabwe: Economic Collapse and Political Repression under Robert Mugabe," Cato Institute Analysis Paper No. 5, March 24, 2008, 2–8, accessed Mary 7, 2014, http://object.cato.org/sites/cato.org/files/pubs/pdf/dpa5.pdf.

In this excerpt, Stella touched on both the reasons behind many people's departure, and why they chose to go to South Africa. Both the dire economic context in Zimbabwe and people's expectations, realistic and fantastic, for a better life were vital pull factors. As people with high levels of education and professional training, Stella and her husband wanted to work and improve their lives. However, like other young couples with expectations of middle-class living, they were upset by Zimbabwe's downward spiral. Stella expressed the sentiments of other informants like Joseph and Deezert. They realized how their young families would be trapped in poverty if they remained in Zimbabwe; hence their decision to look elsewhere.

People did not always use formal language to describe their deprivation. Sometimes, they used colloquial expressions. It is necessary to examine some of the expressions people used because these also carried deeper meanings. Probing these terms will enhance how we understand the link between people's experiences of the turmoil and their exit from Zimbabwe. One of the words people used often was *zvakadhakwa*. The exact translation of *zvakadhakwa* is "things are drunken." People used the expression *zvakadhakwa* very frequently, to the point at which the word became a part of the day's greetings. I realized that people used the word quite often during my fieldwork in South Africa and when I was inside Zimbabwe. When a person asked, "How are things?" the answer was always "*zvakadhakwa.*" Middle-aged and young people, irrespective of gender, used the phrase frequently in their daily conversations to describe their living conditions. The popularity of the word was due to its neat encapsulation of the total breakdown of Zimbabwe's economy. In an instant, it captured a situation in which almost nothing worked. Therefore, *zvakadhakwa* was a cliché that meant that everything about people's lives was abnormal. It meant the hospitals and schools were not working, people were jobless, the harvests were bad, the family was broke, and the service station was closed.

Another figurative expression Zimbabweans used to capture their living conditions in Zimbabwe and their subsequent migration to South Africa was z*vinhu zvanga zvapuresa.* People also used variations on this expression, such as *zvakapuresa* or *zvakadzvanya*.[5] I asked a young migrant woman named Sophia to explain what the phrase meant. Sophia lived in Brixton, a working-class suburb on the western fringes of Johannesburg. She was a maid for a middle-class South African family, as well as a part-time clerk for a local retail store. I asked her why she had left her hometown of Masvingo in southern Zimbabwe. Sophia looked surprised by the question because she thought that as a Zimbabwean myself; the reasons for people's departure should have been obvious to me. She said, "*KuZimbabwe zvinhu zvanga zvapuresa, ndosaka ndakarova pasi,"* which means, "Things were very difficult in Zimbabwe, and that is what I left in a hurry." For Sophia, it was the shortage of food and basic consumer goods that pushed her out in late 2007. This was a time when supermarkets and other retail outlets were empty and closed. Even when people had money, there was nothing to buy. Consumers imported much of the food coming into the country on their own. Sophia's words were common among many people. From their usage of slang terms like "*zvinhu zvanga zvapresa,"* and "*kurova pasi,"* I was got a better idea of the level of people's suffering. These nuances are not always captured in the existing scholarship. When people said things were tough, they meant that putting food on the table, paying rent, sending children to school, and paying bills were all difficult.

People also made jokes out of their experiences to lessen the psychological impact of hardships. They used humour to deride the country's political leadership. People feared that

[5] Interview with Sophia, Brixton, Johannesburg, December 8, 2008.

doing so in plain language could invite retribution.[6] Sharing jokes invoked their memories of the years when Zimbabwe was more stable and prosperous. People joked that they no longer went to supermarkets for groceries; they went to street corners and dark alleys to buy on the black market. This was a way to capture the decay of the formal economy and the emergence of shadowy and informal transactions.[7] People said that rather than using trolleys and baskets for shopping, they took small sachets into which they put small amounts of basic foodstuffs, and then tucked these into their pockets and returned home.[8] People rode bicycles rather than going to work by bus. Others walked for long distances, as they could not afford commuter fees. Instead of having two or three meals each day, they ate a decent meal once in a week. People also emphasized that their families could go for several weeks without having a proper and nourishing meal. Tira said he once contemplated eating cockroaches. I knew from the way he said it that it was an exaggeration. He wanted me to appreciate how difficult it had become to get food. Given the difficulties people faced because of the collapsed economy, one wonders how they managed to survive.

Tom Hopkins analyzed some of the things that motivate people to buy goods and services on the market.[9] He argued that salespeople are able to evoke "powerful buying emotions" in their prospective clients in order to make a sale. This expert ability to evoke buying emotions explains why top salespeople succeed in the sales industry. Hopkins identified thirteen emotional factors that motivate people to buy things. He argued that the chief motivators are color and style, pride of ownership, vanity, security, the search for prestige and status, personal

[6] Human Rights Watch, "'You Will Be Thoroughly Beaten': The Brutal Suppression of Dissent in Zimbabwe," Vol. 18, No. 10 (A), November 2006.
[7] Interview with Zivai and Andrew, Crown Mines, Johannesburg, November 16, 2010.
[8] Interview with Zivai and Andrew, Crown Mines, Johannesburg, November 16, 2010.
[9] Tom Hopkins, *How to Master the Art of Selling* (New York, Boston: Grand Central Publishing, 2005), 66.

ambition, and employment change. Other powerful factors are peer pressure, the quest for self-improvement, the need to stay healthy, love of family, and family size. Hopkins's insights are useful in understanding the emotional motivators behind people's abrupt exit from Zimbabwe in the 2000s. The stories of Zimbabweans living in South Africa revealed that the same impulses were the main motivators behind their migration. In addition to these, I was also able to isolate feelings of frustration, the search for peace of mind, social pressure, feelings of adventure, and historical precedence as some of the major emotional impulses behind people's migration. These impulses continued to sustain people's beliefs that they were getting closer to their goals by staying away from their homeland, even though their living conditions in South Africa did not always correlate with these beliefs.

Dreams of higher levels of income were also a great motivator because people knew that having more money would allow them to satisfy their needs and wants, which would in turn make them happy.[10] None of them mentioned the pursuit of happiness directly among their reasons for migrating, but it was evident to me, from the subtext of their stories, that they wanted to be happy. People moved from Zimbabwe because they were no longer happy, as they did not have jobs and money anymore. Those who were still employed and salaried were upset because the value of their salaries was severely diminished, and was no longer commensurate with the service and dedication they provided. They migrated in search of jobs to earn more money. While money by itself would not necessarily have made people happy, they knew it would give them opportunities to explore what would make them happy. People mentioned money because it would allow them to buy a variety of possessions and services that conferred a certain amount of personal security upon them. Money would also enable

[10] Tom Hopkins, *The Art of Selling,* 98.

them to live a dream lifestyle, whether it was the ability to visit exotic places on vacation, dining in the most expensive hotels, driving expensive cars, or doing all the other things money can buy. So money was a tremendous motivator, both as a direct measure of success and as a provider of happiness and a sense of security.

I have established in this section how people described Zimbabwe's economic meltdown. People emphasized their experiences of social hardships to justify their exit from the country. In the following section I show that they came up with a wide range of coping strategies such as becoming informal sector employees.

Coping through informal employment

Despite an emphasis on the severe nature of their problems and the deterioration of their living conditions, my informants also spoke about their efforts to mitigate the effects of the meltdown. One of the things they mentioned was how they worked harder on whatever they did, and how they sought to create multiple income streams. People also said they ended up participating in the informal sector of the economy.[11] In this section I evaluate how people talked about that participation.

Zimbabweans used the Shona phrase *"ini ndava kuzviitira"* to talk about how they tried to survive exile through informal jobs and self-help activities.[12] But the phrase *"ini ndava kuzviitira*" gained widespread usage not just because of how people used to it describe their efforts to generate income from the informal sector, but because of the literal and figurative

[11] Jeremy Jones, "Nothing is Straight in Zimbabwe. The Rise of the Kukiya-kiya Economy, 2000-2008," in *Journal of Southern African Studies,* 36 (2), 2010, 285-299.
[12] Interview with Andrew, Crown Mines, November 15, 2010.

meanings of the phrase. Apart from acting as a metaphor for self-reliance, *"Ini ndava kuzviitira"* was also integrated into daily usage to mean an extreme level of desperation. It referred to a form of a tight corner, which made one terrified and, in colloquial parlance, caused one "to shit in one's clothes." Zimbabweans invoked this expression about how they were afraid they were going to lose control of their bodies and bodily functions to underline how difficult it was for them to survive.

The participation of Zimbabweans in the informal economy was not new. However, the economic meltdown in the 2000s was so severe that the informal sector became the main basis for household survival. People who had worked for the government and for private companies before the contraction of Zimbabwe's economy resorted to selling wares on the street. Some of the consumer goods they sold were vegetables, fish, eggs, undistilled beer, electrical gadgets, detergents, candles, and matches. What my interview subjects said about self-help strategies was largely consistent with some of the findings in the secondary literature. The literature shows that Zimbabwe's severe economic decline worsened unemployment and eroded household living standards.[13] My analysis complements the literature, but I also draw attention to the contradictions inherent in informalization as a coping strategy. While people felt they were doing something, and in some cases they were, overall, it appeared to be a zero-sum game. Their own stories suggested otherwise, simply because they did not have more viable options, given the level of national breakdown.

[13] Malte Luebker, "Employment, Unemployment and Informality in Zimbabwe: Concepts and Data for Coherent Policy-Making," Issues Paper No. 32 and Integration Working Paper No. 90, ILO Sub-Regional Office for Southern Africa (SRO-Harare) Harare, Zimbabwe, July 2008, 52–3.

The contradictions in how people perceived informal employment can be found in the stories of Mai Bee and Norbert. Before the year 2000, Mai Bee worked for a busy hair salon in downtown Harare.[14] She said her wages were reasonable, which meant that they might have been enough for her family to live on. In 2001, the cost of commuting daily to work began to bother her. She had to cut back on some of her expenses. In the same year, she joined other women who were going to other parts of Africa to buy merchandize for resale in Zimbabwe. Mai Bee said her income from these trading activities enabled her to sustain her family and to look after her parents and sisters. In a few years, she bought two residential pieces of land in a high-density suburb in Harare. Unfortunately, she was unable to develop them because of the high cost of building materials in Zimbabwe. This forced her to relocate to Johannesburg. From there, she was able to send building materials and money to build two houses in Zimbabwe. Through these efforts, she developed a strong sense of accomplishment, even though she lived in squalid conditions in a rented single room in South Africa. When she gave an evaluation of her life, she said, "I am better off than people with university degrees. Most of them have nothing to show of their education. They cannot satisfy their financial needs."

More women than men applauded cross-border trading as a viable coping strategy. The story of Mai Bee, which is a story of success from her point of view, closely mirrors that of another woman named Modest.[15] She too had a family to look after in Zimbabwe, but she was finding it difficult to live well on her salary as a teacher. A friend encouraged her to make crocheted materials, popularly known as *madhoiri* in Zimbabwe, for resale in South Africa and Botswana. In both South Africa and Botswana, this material was in high demand among upper- and

[14] Interview with Mai Bee, Crown Mines, Johannesburg, November 2009.
[15] Interview with Modest, Harare, December 6, 2010.

middle-class earners, who used it to cover and decorate furniture in their living rooms. In the following testimony, Modest described how she was able to supplement her income from teaching through the crochet business:

> I spent most of my spare time crocheting materials for resale in South Africa and Botswana, although I am trained as a teacher. After knitting enough pieces to fill several large bags, known as *mabhero,* I take the bus to Johannesburg and live at a friend's house, selling my product from door to door. I use the money to buy groceries and clothes in Johannesburg. I buy consumer goods like jeans, shirts, shoes, belts, and other things for resale in Harare. That is how my husband and I have survived these difficult times. My husband, who is now employed part-time, because of health reasons, supports me in the business. It has been hard over the years, doing this type of business, but we bought most of the furniture in my house with money from this business. We are saving money to buy a pick-up truck.

The examples of Mai Bee and Modest illustrate that Zimbabweans resorted to the parallel economy to survive the effects a collapsed national economy. Before they became cross-border traders, both women were already underemployed. Entering into cross-border trading deprofessionalized them even further. They slid from the middle-class ranks and joined millions of others living on limited income. However, they considered the income from this precarious work to be better than that generated in the formal economy, and even by skilled work. This coping strategy clearly demonstrates their ingenuity, work ethic, and ability to plan ahead. Through the informal economy they could have access to nice consumer goods, furniture for their homes, and savings for a vehicle. But we know that this is not how things should have been for them. They worked harder than before, but they still essentially led subsistence lives. This shows the limitations of informality in economic terms.

The overall viability of the informal economy was questionable because of risk. As such, it was difficult to applaud things like cross-border trading as coping strategies. The story of Norbert, a young Zimbabwean from Masvingo, reveals that things could go wrong, and not everyone

succeeded.[16] Norbert was educated, but he did not have any notable professional skills. He decided to sustain himself through cross-border trading. It took him several months before he raised capital and money for travel. When he arrived in South Africa, he went to Jumbo Cash-and-Carry Wholesalers on Main Reef Road, Johannesburg. He lost all his money to a group of con men in a bid to find the best deals. Three young men and a woman pretended to work for the store. They tricked him into believing he could buy things for a reduced price. They told him to give the manager a bribe of fifty South African rands, his shopping list, and his money. He was told to wait for a white pickup truck at the main entrance, but nothing turned up. It was only several hours later that he realized he had been tricked. Without any money, Norbert was stranded for several days. He ended up living on the streets and looking for a job. His story was one of continued marginalization and life in poverty. More importantly, it was also about how some people's efforts to venture into the informal sector failed.

The stories of Mai Bee, Modest, and Norbert are about how people tried to rescue themselves from their problems in Zimbabwe through self-help projects. They are also about the mixed fortunes people encountered in these efforts, about making some progress, and about facing reversals. In the cases of Mai Bee and Modest, it would seem that they were making progress. But it is also possible that they portrayed positive outcomes because that is what they wanted other people to hear, especially those who remained in Zimbabwe. Norbert's story is really about how many Zimbabwean people's hopes and dreams were stolen in South Africa. It is also about South Africa having its own economic and social problems, such as unemployment and crime. The story shows how the choice to go to South Africa did not always lead to the

[16] Interview with Norbert, Central Methodist Church, Johannesburg, February 2011.

realization of people's dreams of a better life. This underlies the ambivalent nature of migration as a personal and household survival strategy.

In this section, I have focused mainly on Zimbabweans' efforts to alleviate the impact of the economic crisis their country experienced by entering into the informal economy. Their sense of ingenuity was commendable, and their stories offered enough evidence to conclude that they sustained their families in this manner. However, it is also apparent that they were inevitably living below their potential, given the wider economic environment in which household incomes were low and people's living standards poor.

In addition to confronting economic difficulties, Zimbabweans with whom I spoke also mentioned the political strife that took place in the 2000s. Some Zimbabweans left to escape a context of recurring violence, intimidation, and general political instability. This is the subject of my discussion in the following section.

Narratives of departure due to political factors

The escalation of repression and political violence and a climate of chaos and instability were major factors that contributed to the massive outmigration of Zimbabweans in the 2000s. This instability was generated by a vicious struggle for power between Zimbabwe's two main political parties, ZANU PF and the MDC. In this section I do two things, First, I briefly review the nature of this political instability as it is presented in the secondary and human rights NGOs literatures. I show that the academic script has focused on the nature and behaviour of the state. It has placed emphasis on the different ways in which the regime of President Mugabe sought to suppress dissent and maintain its power. I also show that this dimension overlaps with the focus of human rights NGOs. The human rights literature has also placed

emphasis on the strategies of the state to maintain its power. By documenting incidents of political violence across the country, especially before, during, and after elections, the human rights literature has shown that the Mugabe regime survived through the use of draconian legislation and violence.

The next thing I do, apart from reviewing the literature's portrayal of key political developments, is to explore people's recollections and stories of political change. I argue that the stories of people living in South Africa complement the narratives of the human rights literature. This was to be expected, because some of these people were brutalized before they escaped Zimbabwe. People also churned the narrative of having been victimized because they continued to live with trauma and fear even after they secured asylum in South Africa. As I mentioned in the research methods section, people's interest in talking about their victimization could have arisen from a desire to draw sympathy from me. They may have thought I would be most interested in their stories of escape. However, the preeminence of these narratives in the literature has served to suppress alternative readings of political developments at the time. Perhaps the most glaring omission in both the scholarly and human rights literatures is the lack of any systematic analysis of regime survival. This would have taken into consideration the Mugabe regime's non-violent survival strategies, such as the ability to frustrate and divide the opposition. These strategies of manufacturing consent involve the use of the land reform program to lure popular support. They include the revival of pan-African discourses and the use of money from diamonds sales to buy the army's loyalty.[17]

[17] Human Rights Watch documentary, *Zimbabwe's Bloody Diamonds*.

Scholars on Zimbabwe have shown that the constitutional referendum of February 1999 changed Zimbabwean politics. [18] The results of the referendum showed that ZANU PF had been defeated in its bid to persuade Zimbabweans to vote for the draft constitution.[19] This revealed that ZANU PF was losing its former support and the MDC was gaining power, as this was the first time ZANU PF had lost at the polls. The defeat suggested that ZANU PF could lose power to the newly formed MDC.[20] The formation of the MDC and its success in the general elections of 2000 opened a new era of multiparty democracy in Zimbabwe.[21] Other parties of varying strength and duration emerged in the 2000s, some of them the result from the split of the MDC in 2005. Simba Makoni, a former minister of Mugabe's, formed his own party in 2008, known as Mavambo/Dawn/Kusile, meaning "a new start." Dumiso Dabengwa, a former politburo member in ZANU PF, revived ZAPU, the party once led by the veteran nationalist Joshua Nkomo before its merger with ZANU PF in 1987.[22] These developments gave the people of Zimbabwe more political options. Unfortunately, they also ushered in a vicious struggle for political power and control between the MDC and ZANU PF. In that power struggle, ZANU PF used several divide-and-rule strategies to maintain control. The strategies included giving land to the poor, suppressing opposition parties, especially the MDC, and usurping the independence of the judiciary. Other measures involved curbing civil

[18] Patricia Alden and John Mw. Makumbe, "The Zimbabwe Constitution: Race, Land Reform and Social Justice," in *Global Multiculturalism: Comparative Perspectives on Ethnicity, Race, and Nation*, edited by Grant Hermans Cornwell and Eve Walsh Stoddard (Boulder: Rowman and Littlefield, 2001), 232.
[19] Kåre Vollan, *The Constitutional History and the 2013: Referendum of Zimbabwe, A Nordem Special Report* (Oslo: Norwegian Centre for Human Rights, 2013), 17.
[20] Brian Raftopoulos, "The State in Crisis: Authoritarian Nationalism, Selective Citizenship and Distortions of Democracy in Zimbabwe," in *Zimbabwe's Unfinished Business:* 230.
[21] Susanne Dansereau, "Liberation and Opposition in Zimbabwe."
[22] Canaan S. Banana, ed., *Turmoil and Tenacity: Zimbabwe, 1890–1990* (Harare: The College Press, 1989).

freedoms, muzzling the press, and unleashing violence against people suspected of supporting the MDC.[23]

The literature on Zimbabwe has documented the different maneuvers the Mugabe regime used to maintain power, including the use of violence and the manipulation of the voter's roll.[24] The focus on politicians and political parties, especially on the history of ZANU PF and its modes of rule, has also illuminated the deeper origins of political intolerance in Zimbabwe. A growing number of scholars, including Horace Campbell have explained how the violence and chaos that engulfed Zimbabwe in the early 2000s originated.[25] Campbell argued that the resurfacing of political violence and instability arose from an outdated model of national liberation that was based on patriarchy. He further argued that this tired model was in urgent need of radical transformation to reflect a gender-sensitive consensus and the needs of women and other marginalized groups.

The escalation of violence by the state to maintain power in Zimbabwe was ominous in 2008. This was during a run-off election between Robert Mugabe and MDC leader Morgan Tsvangirai. Tsvangirai withdrew a week before the poll and left President Mugabe to win unopposed. However, because he won under dubious circumstances, his legitimacy was questionable. This was because he did not have the full consent of the ruled. Consent is an important ingredient of legitimacy, according to John Locke's and Max Weber's theories of

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[23] Human Rights Watch, "Zimbabwe: Drop Politically Motivated Charges Against Activists," May 9, 2009, accessed May 9, 2009, www.hrw.org/news/2009/05/06/zimbabwe.
[24] Eldred V. Masunungure, "A Militarized Election: The 27 June Presidential Run-Off," in *Defying the Winds of Change – Zimbabwe's 2008 Elections,* edited by Eldred V. Masunungure (Harare: Weaver Press, 2009), 97.
[25] Horace G. Campbell, *Reclaiming Zimbabwe: The Exhaustion of the Patriarchal Model of Liberation* (Trenton, N.J.: Africa World Press/Claremont, South Africa: David Philip, 2003).

legitimacy.[26] Weber argued that if those in power are to survive, "those who are ruled over must always *acquiesce* to the authority that is claimed by the rulers of the day."[27] He said credible elections were the key mechanism by which the consent of the majority was given to the rulers. If we go by both Locke and Weber, we can say President Mugabe's claim to rule after the 2008 run-off election was illegitimate. He did not have popular consent to govern because not all eligible voters cast their ballots. Political tension remained in Zimbabwe after these events. This prompted the SADC and African Union (AU) to work on a mediation strategy between ZANU PF and the MDC.[28]

The struggle for power between ZANU PF and the MDC caused a surge in violence in most parts of Zimbabwe. This violence escalated before, during, and after elections. Political tension was always prevalent in towns and villages even when there were no elections. The violence reached its climax between March and June of 2008, when close to 200 people died in inter-party violence.[29] The context of political instability and recurring violence contributed directly to the exodus of Zimbabweans. People departed to escape from violence and threats of violence. Studies carried out by the Southern African Migration Project (SAMP) have shown that the volume of people crossing the border from Zimbabwe to South Africa rose markedly during elections. In 2008, the number reached an all-time high of 1.2 million recorded crossings.[30] Many of the people who crossed in 2008 did not have valid passports and visas, which shows how desperate they were to leave. The violence also contributed to the exodus

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[26] Ashcraft, Richard, ed., *John Locke: Critical Assessments* (London: Routledge, 1991), 524.
[27] Max Weber, *The Vocation Lectures: "Science as a Vocation," "Politics as a Vocation"* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 2004), 34.
[28] Arrigo Palloti, "Human Rights and Regional Cooperation in Africa: SADC and the Crisis in Zimbabwe," *Strategic Review for Southern Africa* 35(1): 35.
[29] "Morgan Tsvangirai's statement on presidential run-off" http://www.newzimbabwe.com/pages/mdc225.18366.html, accessed on December 11, 2009
[30] Crush and Tevera, *Zimbabwe's Exodus*, 5.

indirectly by disrupting Zimbabwe's economic activities. For instance, foreign direct investment inflows into Zimbabwe fell from US$444 million to US$50 million from 1998 to 2006.[31] These bad developments worsened unemployment and eroded people's sources of income and livelihoods. It was not surprising to me that even people who said they left to seek political refuge elsewhere admitted that they were thinking of leaving for economic reasons regardless.

The scale of violence and its impact were also deeply embedded in the memories of people I met in South Africa. Thirty percent of my informants in South Africa said they left Zimbabwe to escape the violence associated with the struggle for power between ZANU PF and the MDC. However, it was apparent to me that economic motives for leaving Zimbabwe were of greater importance than political motives. It was also difficult to separate economic strife from political turmoil in people's words. Nevertheless, I wanted to complement the academic literature's portrayal of the political context in Zimbabwe by capturing the voices of people who departed due to political factors.

I draw from Munya and Musoja's actual experiences of violence to add weight to the argument that some people left Zimbabwe to escape violence and instability. I draw from the stories of Mai Tere and from another family I know to explore the impact of violence on rural communities in Zimbabwe. These examples reveal the intensity of violence and its contribution to the exodus highlighted in the scholarly literature.[32] They also shed light on

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[31] Gideon Gono, "How Sanctions Are Ruining Zimbabwe," www.newzimbabwe.com/pages/sanctions62.16705.html, accessed December 11, 2009,

[32] Eldred V. Masunungure, "A Militarized Election," 97; Timothy Scarnecchia, "The 'Fascist Cycle' in Zimbabwe, 2000–2005," *The Journal of Southern African Studies* 32(2)(2006): 221; Tevera and Crush, *Zimbabwe's Exodus,* 4–14.

what the literature has omitted: that people did successfully resist and escape from violence. I use these examples to argue that people also used their memories of violence to knit stories of survival and heroism.

Munya was a young Zimbabwean migrant who lived at the Central Methodist Church in Johannesburg.[33] He was among people who openly said they crossed Zimbabwe's border to South Africa in a hurry for refuge. He claimed to have been an active and well-known MDC supporter in his village back in Zimbabwe. In March of 2008, he left Harare and went back to his village to drum up resistance against ZANU PF. He held strong views about political change because of his stint in the big city. He was propagating his message about a new government among his peers. Unfortunately for him, he became a target in a violent campaign of retribution. ZANU PF officials, war veterans, and party supporters were championing a campaign of beating up villagers suspected of having voted for the MDC in the previous election. This orgy of violence swept across the whole country and was code-named Operation Mavhotera Papi? ("Whom did you vote for?"). When the violence intensified, Munya's close friends warned him that his name was on a ZANU PF hit list. They told him that vigilante groups from a nearby village had been instructed to beat him up or kill him. He was also told of how people had been paid to follow him to Harare in case he escaped the initial attempts on his life. Munya took his friends' warnings seriously because he knew of people whose hands had been cut off by these vigilante groups. The quotation below is his own account of his predicament and how he escaped:

> ZANU PF district committees coordinated the beating up of people in my village, in Hurungwe. They drew up "hit lists" of suspected MDC supporters,

[33] Interview with Munya, Central Methodist Church, Johannesburg, November 16, 2010.

> whom they dragged from their homes to secluded bases for interrogation and torture. They called these nighttime meetings *pungwes*. MDC supporters were interrogated, beaten up, and asked to say the names of other MDC supporters. Those who denied their support for the MDC, or failed to give the names of other supporters, had their arms chopped off with machetes. Victims were asked if they wanted "a long or a short sleeve," in which case they got either their wrist or the whole arm severed. These acts took place in full view of other villagers. These acts also took place in other parts of the country. Fortunately for me, I had a passport and some money. On the night they planned to come for me, I left my home and walked in the bush for 15 kilometres to catch a bus to Harare. I arrived in Johannesburg and came to the Methodist Church to seek refuge. I have not gone back to Zimbabwe, even after the formation of the Unity Government. I still fear for my life.

Testimonies similar to Munya's were common among other people who were either victims themselves or had witnessed acts of violence. Other people who spoke about their escape from violence had simply heard about it and left in fear. From Munya, we see how ZANU PF was able to intimidate people by tapping into their memories of the 1970s war of liberation. The threat that Zimbabwe would be thrown into a civil war if the MDC came to power was effective in frightening people into shunning the MDC. Most rural areas in Zimbabwe were demarcated as ZANU PF "strongholds." Other places were no-go areas for the MDC in the 2000s. These were some of the reasons for ZANU PF's continued stay in power.[34] Other people I spoke with corroborated Munya's testimony. One of them was named Musoja. He lived with other destitute Zimbabweans at the Church. Musoja told me about how he was able to organize his own group of MDC supporters to fight back and resist attacks. He still left the country because he feared getting arrested for defending himself and his group of activists. In Zimbabwe he lived in constant fear because the police were openly biased. They arrested MDC supporters for violence, but not ZANU PF activists. Another victim of violence was a young female activist named Rudo, who sobbed when she narrated her escape.[35] Rudo had large scars

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[34] Faith Zaba, "Inside Zanu PF's Mash Central Stronghold," *The Independent*, Zimbabwe, July 19, 2013.
[35] Interview with Rudo, Central Methodist Church, Johannesburg, November 16, 2010.

on her body from the wounds inflicted upon her on a night when she was sexually abused and almost murdered. What was common in the stories of these victims of violence was that they identified ZANU PF supporters, state security agents, and the police as the perpetrators.

The testimonies of violence by Munya, Musoja, and Rudo show that some people left Zimbabwe after failing to be able to exercise their democratic rights. They also show the high levels of fear and trauma in the lives of migrants, which corroborates Abraham Maslow's insight that the desire for safety also forces people to leave certain places. People's tales of their flight from violence in Zimbabwe complement academic studies and human rights literature, which have emphasized how recurring violence and instability contributed to the exodus from the country.[36] From these testimonies and also from the existing literature we gain better knowledge about the nature of violence itself. In particular, we see that the police, the army, and state intelligence agents abandoned professional ethics and openly displayed their loyalty to President Mugabe and ZANU PF.[37] We can also note that much of the violence affected rural areas, as the strategies of state repression stole people's right to freedom of choice. One of the groups of people worst affected was commercial farm workers, who were accused of supporting the MDC.[38] Groups of people like teachers, healthcare personnel, and agricultural extension workers were also affected. Being educated, they were accused of supporting the idea of political change. This underlines the central role of violence, intimidation, and fear in the way in which ZANU PF kept itself in power. However, people's testimonies and presence in South Africa were also witness to their survival. They also revealed

[36] Loren Landau, "Drowning in Numbers," 7–15.
[37] Human Rights Watch, *Perpetual Fear: Impunity and Cycles of Violence in Zimbabwe*, 2011, 26–34, accessed June 5, 2012, http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/zimbabwe0311NoPage8Full.pdf.
[38] Blair Rutherford, "Commercial Farm Workers and the Politics of (Dis)placement in Zimbabwe: Colonialism, Liberation and Democracy," *Journal of Agrarian Change* 1(4)(2001): 625–51.

that people were still dealing with trauma and that they remembered experiences of violence vividly.

Detailed accounts of violence were also evident in some of the rural communities I visited in Zimbabwe in 2010. Some of these tales were quite different from what I had gathered in South Africa. The statements of Munya, Musoja, and Rudo showed that those who escaped mainly highlighted the ways in which they were victimized. In Zimbabwe people did not consider themselves as victims but survivors. They told stories of having fought back when they were attacked. I was struck by the story of Mai Tere, a married woman who lived in the Nyajena area of Masvingo. She became a Zimbabwean superheroine in her village because she fought off a group of ZANU PF vigilantes who wanted to kidnap her in the middle of the night. I was able to talk to her in person and she told me the story of how she fought them off half-naked with a machete, which, to me, was a very arresting image and showed me that people were not always victims but victors in their own ways. Another popular story involved a family I knew that was saved from a potential attack by a pack of vicious dogs. These stories of survival and heroism were more widespread among people who were still in Zimbabwe than among those I met in South Africa.

In this section I have argued that academic studies have knitted a cogent explanation for the exodus from Zimbabwe on political grounds. This explanation does not compete with but complements the economic factors examined in the preceding section. The focus on political factors puts emphasis on certain changes, including the strengthening of the repressive arm of the state and the enactment and enforcement of arbitrary legislation. The role of extralegal militias and President Mugabe's meddling with the judiciary are key factors. The human rights

literature has given empirical evidence for the political explanation. It has publicized cases of violence and human rights violations.

The complex and controversial nature of the Zimbabwean crisis itself, and also of people's departure, is even more evident when looked at from the lens of Pan-Africanism, although the existing scholarship has not tackled the issues along these lines yet. In the next section, I highlight the divisive nature of the crisis and of people's departure by presenting it within the context of Pan-African solidarity.

The Zimbabwean exodus and Pan-Africanism

The crisis which engulfed Zimbabwe in the 2000s; and the exodus which followed it, need to be examined in the context of Pan-Africanism. Both the crisis and the exodus illustrates how the concept of Pan-Africanism ended up dividing both academic and public opinion on the Zimbabwean scenario. In this dissertation, I argue that the marginalized in Zimbabwe and elsewhere in Africa should counter President Mugabe and ZANU PF's distorted rendition of Pan-African in their everyday struggles for social justice.

During the course of the 2000s, President Mugabe and his party; ZANU PF, heightened their articulation of Pan-Africanist ideas. Some of the specific phrases ZANU PF used to propagate Pan-African ideas include, "Zimbabwe will never be a colony again." This was targeted at Britain and other Western countries, which accused President Mugabe of violence and human rights abuses in Zimbabwe. The reason behind the vigorous articulation of Pan-African ideas by the government of Zimbabwe was to silence critics of the government's controversial policies; and to gather the cooperation and sympathy of other African leaders and Pan-Africanists outside Zimbabwe, especially African-Americans in the United States. The use of

Pan-Africanist rhetoric by the state in Zimbabwe, which was narrow and self-serving, received approval from other African governments, who regarded President Mugabe as a hero who stood up to the West. This divided public opinion over issues in Zimbabwe; leading some people to buy into President's argument that his policies were rooted in the Pan-African agenda of restitution and indigenous empowerment.

The use of Pan-African ideas and rhetoric by President Mugabe reduced the ability of the poor and marginalized in Zimbabwe to use the same narrative to demand justice from their own government. This situation also applied to other leftist scholars and activists, who found themselves divided and unable to speak with a single voice, because President Mugabe argued that he was championing an anti-imperialist and anti-colonial agenda with his policies. The "very deep divide" which this position by the state caused for the Left were analysed by Brian Raftoupoulos, in an article entitled, "The Zimbabwean Crisis and the Challenges for the Left."[39] Raftoupoulos's analysis indicates the fractured nature of leftists with regards to the Zimbabwean situation. Despite these divisions, it is important for citizens to continue articulating Pan-Africanist discourses of the marginalized, who include cross-border traders, women, vendors, informal workers, the youths, the unemployed, and exiled Zimbabweans.

Pan-Africanism is a revolutionary intellectual, political, economic, and social agenda; which is concerned with the promotion of African liberation and unity, and with the restoration if the dignity of African peoples. The roots of the movement go back as far as the 19th century; having emerged in response to the dehumanization of Africans through slavery and the slave

[39] Brian Raftoupolos, "The Zimbabwean Crisis and the Challenge for the Left." *JSAS,* 32 (2) (2006), pp. 203-219

trade. Pan-African ideas rose among intellectuals of African descent living in the Americas and Europe, who were fighting against racism, slavery, the slave trade, and other forms of oppression. Through their speeches and writings, early Pan-Africanists like Martin Delany, Edward Blyden, Alexander Crummel and, later, W.E.B. Du Bois stressed the commonalities between Africans and blacks in the Americas. A large body of studies with a detailed analysis of the rise and evolution of Pan-Africanism exists.[40]

African intellectuals tapped into Pan-African ideas to inspire the nationalist liberation of Africa in the second half of the 20th century. African nationalists like Kwame Nkrumah, who was the first Prime Minister of independent Ghana, and Jomo Kenyatta, who became the first Prime Minister of independent Kenya, used the ideas of African liberation and unity to mobilize African nationalists for the anti-colonial struggle. In his book, *Africa Must Unite*, Nkrumah expounded his beliefs on the need for African unity, arguing that the independence of Ghana would be useless if other African countries remained under European colonial rule.[41] Nkrumah's ideas and support for liberation movements in Africa led to the formation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in 1963, which was reorganized and renamed the African Union (AU) in 2001. Since then, the ideas of Pan-Africanism have been articulated and practiced to promote unity and solve economic, political, and social problems in the Africa.

Pan-African ideas have remained strong and central in 21st century African politics. African leaders continue to draw upon them as they seek solutions to some of the political, social, and

[40] Ronald W. Walters, *Pan Africanism in the African Diaspora: An Analysis of Modern Afrocentric Political Movements.* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1993), Marika Sherwood and Hakim Adi, *Pan-African History: Political Figures from Africa and the Diaspora Since 1787* (Routledge, 2003), Marika Sherwood, *Origins of Pan-Africanism: Henry Sylvester Williams and the African Diaspora* (London, Routledge, 2010).
[41] Kwame Nkrumah, *Africa Must Unite.* Panaf, 1963.

economic challenges confronting their countries. This is evident in several instances, but the political and economic developments in Zimbabwe in the 2000s illustrate the centrality of Pan-African thoughts in African state-making. In Zimbabwe, President Mugabe and the ruling party used Pan-African ideas to promote and seek support for controversial policies such as the fast-track-land reform program launched in 2000. The mediation of former South African President, Thabo Mbeki, in Zimbabwe; which led to the Government of National Unity (GNU) in late 2008, also point to the influence of Pan-African philosophy. This is because Mbeki's mediation in Zimbabwe and elsewhere in Africa was based on the philosophy of "African Solutions to African Problems," which is Pan-African.[42] In his mediation in Zimbabwe, President Mbeki sympathized with President Mugabe and ZANU PF.[43] He condemned those who criticised President Mugabe's policies and spoke against the imposition of sanctions on his inner circle by Western countries.[44] The government of Zimbabwe has also drawn upon Pan-African ideas in its efforts to indigenize the economy and it has gone on to force foreign-owned companies to cede majority shares to local Zimbabweans.

Despite the growth of academic interest in political and economic events and processes in Zimbabwe in the 2000s, an analysis of both the crisis and its effects within a Pan-Africanist perspective has not been systematic. Moreover, a plan of action informed by Pan-African thought has also been missing. The early literature on the crisis in Zimbabwe in the 2000s

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[42] Laurie Nathan, "African Solutions for African Problems: South Africa's Foreign Policy," *WeltTrends* 92: 48-55.
http://www.up.ac.za/media/shared/Legacy/sitefiles/file/46/1322/17295/welttrends92themanathansdafrikaafrikanischeunionsicherheitspolitikdiplomatie.pdf, downloaded on June 17, 2016.
[43] Thabo Mbeki, "We will resist the upside down view of Africa," *ANC Today*, (49), 12-18, http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/anctoday/2003/qt49.htm., accessed on December 18, 3003.
[44] Caroline Walker, "A Critical Analysis of the 2008 Mediation in Zimbabwe: An Exploration of the Main Debates and Criticisms," (unpublished M.Phil Diss, University of Cape Town, 2013, https://open.uct.ac.za/bitstream/item/6884/thesis_hum_2013_walker_c.pdf?sequence=1, downloaded July 4, 2016.

mainly explained the origins and evolution of the crisis. Its main focus was on the response of the government of Zimbabwe to the rise of political dissent.[45] The scholarship in the middle of the 2000s was mainly focused on how the state was strengthened and on how the economy was reduced to a shadow of its former self. This period also witnessed a surge in the scholarship on the consequences of the crisis, including the exodus of Zimbabweans to other nations. A key outcome of this scholarship was the *Journal of Southern African Studies*, which probed the exodus from Zimbabwe in the context of "displacement" in southern Africa.[46] Also, the influential book by Jonathan Crush and Daniel Tevera, *Zimbabwe's Exodus*, depicted the exodus in the framework of migrant survival strategies.[47] Although the literature on the exodus in the 2000s is full of descriptive and analytical strengths, placing the exodus in the context of Pan-African discourses could have challenged and exposed the state's narrow and self-serving rendition of Pan-Africanism. Scholars have not made the suggestion that pro-democracy movements can use the same discourse to undermine state repression.

In a keynote address entitled, "Pan-Africanism for a New Generation," which was delivered at Oxford University in 2011, Africanist political scientist Horace Campbell argued that there was a need for every generation to reconceptualize Pan-Africanism, so that the ideas and practices of Pan-Africanism remain relevant to the needs and struggles of that generation.[48] Campbell was speaking in response to the social and political revolutions that swept across North Africa and the Middle East from 2010 to 2012, which were sparked by demonstrations

[45] Amanda Hammar, Brian Raftopoulos, Stig Jensen. eds. *Zimbabwe's Unfinished Business: Rethinking Land, State and Nation in the Context of Crisis* (Harare: Weaver Press, 2003)
[46] Amanda Hammar, JoAnn McGregor and Loren Landau, "Introduction: Displacing Zimbabwe: Crisis and Construction in southern Africa*," JSAS* 36 (2), (2010): 263-283, JoAnn McGregor and Ranka Primorac eds., *Zimbabwe's New Diaspora: Displacement and the Cultural Politics of Survival* (London: Berghahn Books, 2010)
[47] Crush and Tevera, *Zimbabwe's Exodus*.
[48] Horace Campbell, "Pan-Africanism for a New Generation" http://www.horacecampbell.net/2013/04/pan-africanism-for-new-generation.html, downloaded on June 13, 2016.

and protests against unemployment, poverty, and failed political leadership.[49] In this keynote address, and in his other writings, Campbell argued that the Pan-Africanism of the 21st century is different from the pan-Africanism of the past.[50] The Pan-Africanism of past centuries was led by educated elites; who used it for a nationalist, anti-imperialist, and anti-colonial agenda. However, in the 21st century, a new generation of youths in Africa are imagining what Africa could be and their imagination is leading them to organize "new forms of politics." This new brand of politics does not depend on great individuals, great leaders, great political parties, but it is based on the self-mobilization and self-organization of a new generation of Africans.

Campbell argued that the breaking of the barriers of fear was developing and the achievement of a psychological release among youths were key features informing the new Pan-Africanism. Also, the dynamic leadership of women and the sprouting of women's grassroots movements and the non-violent nature of contemporary struggles signaled a departure from the celebration of armed struggle for liberation, but the role of mobilizing new ideas and communications technology. Ideas about a new form of Pan-Africanism are also evident in the academic literature, such as the work of African feminist scholar Micere Mugo, who challenged male-centred views of Pan-Africanism and advocated for ideas and practices that empower hitherto marginalized groups, like women, the jobless, and youths.[51]

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[49] Marc Lynch, *The Arab Uprising: The Unfinished Revolutions of the New Middle East.* New York: Public Affairs. 2012, Dabashi, Hamid. *The Arab Spring: The End of Postcolonialism.*Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.

[50] Horace Campbell and Rodney Worrell, *Pan-Africanism, Pan-Africanists, and African Liberation in the 21st Century: Two Lectures.* New Academia Publishing, 2006.

[51] Micere Mugo, "Re-envisioning Pan-Africanism: What is the Role of Gender Youth and the Masses," in Ibbo Mandaza and Dan Nabudere. eds. *Pan- Africanism and Integration in Africa* (Harare, SAPES Books, 2002), 52-69.

The political and economic challenges which have bedevilled Zimbabwe since the 2000s illustrate the need to reconceptualise Pan-Africanism, if the philosophy is to remain relevant for restoring the dignity of Africans. President Mugabe's top-down articulation of Pan-Africanism has appealed to an older generation of Pan-Africanists, who view contemporary challenges in Africa as a result of external, imperial forces, while the new Pan-Africanism advocated by scholars like Campbell and Mugo examines both the effects of asymmetrical global power relations and the effects of corruption and leadership failure in Africa at local levels. Although Pan-Africanism is primarily a liberation ideology, its articulation by the state in Zimbabwe has served to divide the population and build state power, without genuine efforts to address the challenges of unemployment and poverty. In my view, this state-promoted Pan-Africanism in Zimbabwe has been used by the elites to oppress and diffuse attention from failed leadership and to stifle the aspirations of the marginalized.

The Zimbabwean crisis and the massive exit of people to other countries, where some of them live in acute levels of poverty and degrading conditions contradict the Pan-Africanist ideal of restoring African dignity. Zimbabwe has seen a spike in the outmigration of women and children and some of them live a precarious existence contrary to the Pan-African ideals. The crackdown on dissent and the incarceration of opponents in Zimbabwe contradicts Pan-African ideas, showing what happens when an otherwise good idea gets in the wrong hands and is used to pursue narrow partisan interests. The ever-growing ranks of poor and marginalized groups of people in Zimbabwe have a responsibility to reclaim the Pan-Africanism from the elites and use it to inspire pro-democracy struggles. This strategy would diffuse the argument that pro-democracy struggles are sponsored by Western nations. It will

also unite the various groups of the oppressed for genuine social democratic revolutions in Africa. The next section is a synthesis of the main themes and arguments raised in the chapter.

Understanding the exodus: A synthesis

A complete understanding of the exodus from Zimbabwe is possible by using several sources of information together. These sources include academic studies, press reports, and compilations by NGOs. In addition to these sources, it is necessary to value people's stories of migration. These stories show the intersection of context and personal choice, further enriching how the migration phenomenon is understood. My emphasis is on how people crafted their stories of migration. I have shown that these stories underline their escape from a collapsed economy and an aggravating political environment. The academic literature provides a wider context in which to understand the exodus. People's stories were mainly an indirect but powerful critique of how the state eroded their hopes for progress and social stability. They expected a successful state to maintain a stable and calm political environment, one in which they could improve their lives. Their vivid descriptions of hardships in Zimbabwe and of the need to escape alluded to how their personal identities, human dignity, and dreams of material progress were stifled. Their abrupt departure for other countries revealed their attempts to recover what was lost.

Those attempts can be seen in what migrants pursued upon arrival in foreign countries. The search for better incomes, social status, and personal dignity were key features in their lives. These transcended their initial goals of escaping poverty and chaos. This pursuit of better standards of living is consistent with the insights of the wider literature on global migration. That literature shows that in addition to push factors in the place of origin, other motives,

including consumer tastes and competition for social status, are central to our comprehension of the lives of migrants.[52] In the case of Zimbabweans, we can see the primacy of consumer tastes in how people spoke about their desires to live in beautiful homes, to run businesses, and to drive the latest models of automobiles. From these mundane expectations we also see that even in the midst of hardships, migrants nurtured long-term plans that went beyond survival. This dimension of how people imagined their lives after surviving poverty has not been sufficiently explored in the extant literature on the exodus from Zimbabwe. I was able to see this in the ways in which people underlined the availability of consumer goods at affordable prices when they justified their choice of South Africa as a destination. Sophia, one of my informants, expressed this view quite well; she said, "In South Africa, you can still buy a lot, even with a small amount of money. In Zimbabwe, there is nothing to buy, even when you have a lot of money."[53] This statement was about both the unavailability of goods in Zimbabwe and how people valued the availability of goods in South Africa at affordable prices.

When people like Deezert, Tira, and Mutatiwa said they migrated to look for jobs and money, they also meant they were pursuing several other cherished values. Because they had families to look after, their initial thoughts were of finding jobs to earn income. They were passionate about waged employment because they wanted to retain the professional, stable outlook nurtured in them by the environment in Zimbabwe. They also expected things like social respectability. Young single women like Rebecca migrated for waged employment,[54] but the

[52] Vivek Wadhwa, Sonali Jain, Anna Lee Saxenian, Gary Gereffi and Huiyao Wang, "The Grass is Indeed Greener in India and China for Returnee Entrepreneurs: America's New Immigrant Entrepreneurs," Part VI (Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, 2011), 12-12, http://ssrn.com/abstract=1824670, accessed on June 14, 2014.
[53] Interview with Sophia, Brixton, Johannesburg, 8 December, 2008.
[54] Interview with Rebecca, Lebowakgomo, November 20, 2008.

meanings of that were not always the same for them as for people like Tira and Mutatiwa. As a young and unmarried female, Rebecca knew that having a job meant a source of income, but it also meant independence and empowerment. Rebecca did not have a family of her own and was at liberty to make her own decisions, but she still made efforts to provide for her parents and siblings in Zimbabwe. Married men I spoke to explained their migration by making reference to job opportunities and incomes, because they were keen to maintain their social status as breadwinners. Married women too, were becoming conscious of their role as breadwinners, because their husbands were unable to meet household income needs. Young and unmarried men were eager to find jobs, incomes, and to start families.

People's expectations of "greener pastures" awaiting them in South Africa did not always materialize, but it was usually difficult for them to admit that expectations were harder to satisfy than they had initially thought they would be. This was particularly true for people who believed that job prospects were better in South Africa than in Zimbabwe, having heard this from others who were already there. The things people heard from those who were already in South Africa were themselves a strong pull factor, but some of those things were misleading. This was the case for Dan and two of his younger brothers. They all went to South Africa in 2008 at the invitation of their older brother, who had been there for two years. Despite finding temporary jobs in the construction and security sectors, their living standards did not improve in any notable way, prompting them to return to Zimbabwe and look for alternative career paths. Dan and his brothers admitted that life was not improving because they were young and did not have any notable skills. Other people chose to believe that something positive was happening when that may not have been the case.

What those who left told me suggests that most of them developed a burning desire to leave due to an intolerable political and economic environment. However, the same stories also revealed that some of them were reluctant to leave. In fact, this reluctance was sometimes so powerful that it blocked some people's plans to leave. The stories of those who ended up going somewhere are also characterized by internal struggles between the push of the wants and needs that spurred them on and the fears and anxieties that initially dissuaded them. This internal conflict is more evident in the stories of professionals like Deezert and Miriam. They grappled with the feeling that they had something to lose by leaving their jobs and country for another place. The ways people struggled with these internal conflicts, which were a huge part of their migration stories, was usually suppressed in their discourses. The reason for this is simply that most of what they said was to justify the steps they had taken.

The abrupt departure of educated and skilled groups of people from Zimbabwe also stemmed from a high level of ambition and the quest for personal achievement. These impulses are relevant in explaining the departure of teachers, nurses, doctors, university professors, and engineers. Being educated and skilled, they expected more out of life. Given the fact that achievement is driven by desire and external factors such as national context, they found it increasingly difficult to achieve goals and chose to change their environment. People also migrated to get recognition from others around them. The desire to be recognized worked alongside peer pressure, vanity, and a desire to show off social status. Spouses were in search of recognition from each other and from their neighbors. Parents sought to receive recognition from their offspring and vice versa. The cars people sought to buy, the houses they wanted to live in, the clothes they wanted to wear, even their tastes in food and the education and careers they wanted to have were not simply necessities; they were markers of

class, and powerful harbingers of social recognition. These markers also led people to be accepted by others, and supported the message that whoever had them had arrived. This is what Mutatiwa meant when he said Zimbabweans longed to acquire certain goods in South Africa and take them to Zimbabwe, so they could display a public image acceptable to themselves and others. I explore Mutatiwa's contribution in detail in Chapter 7, which focuses on the future plans of Zimbabweans living in South Africa.

The people who left share a certain set of traits, including higher levels of education and ambition. Looking at the lives of some of my informants, it is evident that they are people who chose to leave the country because they had nothing to lose by leaving. They included professionals and working-class people, some of them laid off from their jobs, school-leavers and recent graduates with limited chances of finding gainful employment, and people without property and land. Considering that the population of Zimbabwe is mainly rural and largely dependent on the land, the fact that those who left were a small fraction of the total population indicates that these who stayed were grounded and tied to a source of livelihood.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I underlined how the volume of migration out of Zimbabwe rose quite dramatically throughout the 2000s. We get an idea of this exodus from the fact that more than one million people crossed into South Africa legally in 2008 alone.[55] I have shown how academic studies have explained this unprecedented migration. Scholars described the origins and development of the turmoil that took place in Zimbabwe in the 2000s. However, my emphasis was on how people understood and spoke about this crisis. I put new emphasis on

[55] Crush and Tevera, *Zimbabwe's Exodus*, 5.

how they used their stories of enduring hardships to justify their departure from Zimbabwe. People tapped their memories to describe how they grappled with the closure of companies and joblessness. They also expressed anguish at enduring the acute shortage of basic goods and services and at the inconveniences caused by hyperinflation. Their words were a commentary on the nature of Zimbabwe's economic collapse. They showed how the origins and manifestations of this collapse are understood in different ways. People also spoke emotionally about the need to escape recurrent cycles of violence and political instability, which were both cause and effect of the economy's collapse. Testimonies of enduring hardships and departure shed light on Zimbabwe's economic and political failure. Migrants associated this failure with the policies of the government of Zimbabwe under President Mugabe.

In the next chapter, my focus is on how those who left made the actual journey out of Zimbabwe. Their tales of travel reveal that they were determined to leave, employing strategies to plan their trips, to cross the border, and to seek a foothold in new physical and social spaces in South Africa.

Chapter 3

Preservation Through Flight: Accounts of Travelling to South Africa

Introduction

The experience of leaving Zimbabwe and travelling to South Africa was among the most important experiences in people's accounts of migration. People's grasp of what it meant to migrate consisted of several other important elements, such as making the decision to migrate, planning, getting to the final destination, and settling down. However, what people remembered and talked about the most was the actual journey from a point of origin in Zimbabwe to a destination point in South Africa. In particular, what people recalled the most was "the moment of triumph," which was signaled when they crossed the border successfully and realized that they were in another country. Many people moved further into the interior of South Africa after staying in the northern parts of the country for varying periods of time. These subsequent trips were important in their accounts too, but they were not as vital as the initial journeys. The fact that migrants spoke about their journeys from Zimbabwe to South Africa with a lot of emotional intensity and at considerable length revealed that they regarded these trips as an essential part of their migrant experiences.

In this chapter, I analyze people's narratives of travelling from Zimbabwe to South Africa. I examine how people talked about making the decision to leave, and their plans to depart. My emphasis is on how they talked about the different ways they used to cross the border. I show that most of them concentrated on descriptive accounts of the dangers they encountered along the way. I analyze how they made efforts to find contacts, and how they interacted with new

people and situations. These travel narratives reveal how people dealt with such feelings as fear, anxiety, and joy when they came into new settings. They also show that people were more prepared to take risks as a result of these journeys, as they used new languages and a new currency, and sought to protect themselves from danger. My analysis is even more vivid when I consider that people used a variety of survival and interpersonal skills to negotiate with gatekeepers. The people with whom they interacted included immigration officials, the police, army, and bus crews. Although newcomers faced major setbacks, including such things as hunger and being intercepted and deported back to Zimbabwe, their narratives of migration portrayed a strong sense of triumph overall. I critique this narrative of going down into the valley and climbing back up to the top of the mountain. However, I also uphold it, because it serves to challenge the main analytical framework in the current academic and human rights literature, which portrays migrants as victims with extremely limited choices. In a nutshell, the chapter contributes to my dissertation's central theme by showing the different strategies migrants used to adjust to changing situations and environments when they left Zimbabwe.

Before delving into people's narratives of travelling to South Africa, I must frame what I am doing in this chapter. I seek to situate people's stories of moving from one point to another within some of the established literature. This is vital because my analysis here is at the micro level, while some of the literature I draw from operates at the macro level. Academic and public debates on how Zimbabweans have crisscrossed regional borders in southern Africa have dealt with several overlapping issues. The identity of migrants, the volume and direction of flow, and whether people are crossing borders legally or illegally have all come under scrutiny.[1] One of the key debates centered on quantifying the number of people who were

[1] Crush and Tevera, *Zimbabwe's Exodus*.

moving. Initially, the media kindled this debate, and then academics joined in. The media, especially in South Africa, reported that the numbers of people leaving Zimbabwe and crossing into South Africa were quite high. This made it look like the situation in Zimbabwe was extremely dire, of which it was at certain times, but the effect of this reporting was to suggest that everyone was leaving Zimbabwe for South Africa, and that South Africa was being overrun by foreigners. The effect of this sensational coverage was that it spurred the South African government to impose tighter border controls and immigration regulations. When academics jumped onto the topic, they disagreed with media reports on the numbers and correctly noted that the media sought to portray an image of chaos.[2] Academics also argued that the focus on numbers was futile, as illegal immigration made it difficult to know the exact number of people involved regardless.

Scholars researching the migration of Zimbabweans to South Africa, including Loren Landau, argued that it was more important to focus on meeting the needs of immigrants than on numbers. While disputing the numbers themselves, academics were in agreement that the number of people involved was rising continuously. The research of Jonathan Crush and Daniel Tevera showed that there was an average of 200,000 documented visits to South Africa from Zimbabwe between 1983 and 1989.[3] This figure rose steadily to 700,000 in 1995, and then fell to about 500,000 between 1999 and 2000. The numbers rose sharply thereafter, with the exception of the years from 2002 to 2004 and 2005 to 2006. The overall trend, however, was one of rising numbers, with over 1.2 million documented Zimbabwean arrivals in South Africa in 2008 alone.[4]

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[2] Landau, "Drowning in Numbers," 7–15.
[3] Crush and Tevera, *Zimbabwe's Exodus,* 5.
[4] Crush and Tevera, *Zimbabwe's Exodus*, 5.

The bigger picture of migration from Zimbabwe also showed that those who left went to different destinations. Apart from going to South Africa, Zimbabweans also went to several other countries in southern Africa. These included Mozambique, Zambia, Malawi, Botswana, and Namibia. People also went to far-off destinations like the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, and Europe.[5] The nature of dispersal led to an interest in whether those who were leaving were entering other countries legally or illegally, particularly those who went to Zimbabwe's neighbouring countries; however, the paucity of data arising from the challenges of quantifying illegal immigration stalled this debate. Instead, the terms shifted to a focus on how governments responded to immigration. In this area, scholars like Tara Polzer led the way. They have criticized Zimbabwe's neighbours for treating the bulk of immigrants as criminals and for tough immigration policies.[6] But the intensity of dispersal, the multiple destinations involved, and the lively scholarly debates all underline the global nature of the exodus from Zimbabwe.

Recent migration studies from Zimbabwe have also stressed an increase in the migration of women in the 2000s. The 2001 South African Census found that fifty-seven percent of Zimbabweans in South Africa were male and forty-three percent were female.[7] A SAMP survey in 2005 found a very similar ratio of fifty-six percent men and forty-four percent women. These studies also revealed that migrants were opting to move with their spouses and children. As a result of these changes, scholars have unearthed a wider range of push and pull factors. Women gave a wider range of reasons for migrating, such as visiting family and friends,

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[5] Crush, Chikanda and Maswikwa, *Heading North*, 4.

[6] Polzer, *South African Government and Civil Society Responses*; "Regularising Zimbabwean Migration to South Africa," Migration Issue Brief 1, Johannesburg, Forced Migration Studies Program, 2009; Loren Landau and Karen Jacobsen, "Refugees in the New Johannesburg," *Forced Migration Review* 19(2004): 44–6.

[7] Crush and Tevera, *Zimbabwe's Exodus*, 11.

shopping, and cross-border trade, as well as medical, academic, and career reasons. The complex changes in their lives after migration have called for more academic research on their post-migration experiences.

The impact of greater mobility on the spread and impact of the HIV/AIDS epidemic has also been scrutinized. The migration of educated and skilled professionals is also a growing area of research in cross-border mobility from Zimbabwe and southern Africa, as is the centrality of cross-border activities to people's survival and the increase of social tension and xenophobia in South Africa. In the NGO literature, the emphasis has been on people's humanitarian needs, including poor access to food, housing, and medical care. My research complements macro-level studies by focusing on a smaller sample of people in order to understand their experiences in greater depth. This focus on the micro is also vital because it brings out people's voices to uncover the richness of human experiences. For example, it is difficult to capture how people navigated new social spaces by working with macro-level analysis. It is by asking how people managed to travel from one location to the next that we unmask important dynamics, such as the narrative of triumph presented in this chapter. This narrative is not represented sufficiently in much of the available scholarly script. However, at the broader theoretical level, this chapter illustrates how human beings, like other living organisms, seek to preserve life by choosing between fighting or fleeing. In the preceding chapter, I drew from people's experiences of political, economic, and social hardships to argue that they perceived Zimbabwe as a highly a dangerous environment in the 2000s, one that threatened their very survival. According to American physiologist Walter Bradford Cannon, people typically react to threats to their survival by fighting or fleeing.[8] Rather than stay put and confront economic hardships, political

[8] Walter Cannon, *Wisdom of the Body* (United States: W.W. Norton & Company, 1932).

tyranny, and social misery, Zimbabweans who left had chosen to flee. While flight may be construed as a sign of cowardice, the stories of moving from Zimbabwe and seeking refuge in countries like South Africa are essentially about celebrating a strategy of self-preservation.

This chapter is based on formal interviews with fourteen Zimbabweans in South Africa. Nine of them were men and five were women. The male interviewees were Joseph, John, Nyade, Bernard, Deezert, Philemon, Tira, Munya, and Yellow. The female interviewees were Lillian, Sarah, Rebecca, Modest, and Auntie Patience. I also draw from my Facebook messages with Stella, Miriam, and Enias, which brings the total number of informants to seventeen. Some of my insights are also from participant observation. I visited Park Station in Johannesburg and Marabastaad Retail Market in Pretoria/Tshwane on many occasions to interact with Zimbabweans from all walks of life. Some of them were coming from or going back to Zimbabwe. They included ordinary people, long-distance bus crews, and motorists. My road trip from Johannesburg to Harare in December of 2010 and back three months later was another valuable source of insight. I experienced first-hand some of the things people were sharing with me during interviews.

The rest of the chapter proceeds as follows: In the first section, I use the stories of Joseph and Miriam to focus on how people prepared for departure. Their stories show that it was a major challenge to get ready to leave Zimbabwe because of the strict regulations that sought to restrict people from entering neighbouring countries like South Africa. In the second section, I examine people's stories of how they crossed the border using legal means, emphasizing how they relied on interpersonal skills to overcome the numerous challenges they faced. In the

third and last section of the chapter, I examine stories of how people dealt with the dangers of illegal immigration.

People's preparations for departure

People's stories of departure from Zimbabwe showed that some of them went through a great deal of pain and indecision in their preparations to move. Most of their preparations involved getting travel documents like passports and visas. For those who did not have a passport, the initial step was to apply for one. This could delay their departure, or prevent them from migrating altogether if they were denied. The application for a Zimbabwean passport itself proved to be tougher in the 2000s than it had been previously. This was because an increasing number of people wanted to get passports for at least two main reasons: to join others who were into cross-border trading, and more importantly, to leave the country in search of greener pastures. This was the case for Joseph, a married man in his mid-thirties. In 2004, Joseph and his wife decided that the time was ripe for him to leave Zimbabwe. They agreed that his wife would stay with their two young children in Harare while he went to find a job in another country. Depending on the outcome of his efforts, their plan was to get him to send them money and groceries as needed; they also planned that Joseph's wife and children would eventually leave Zimbabwe to join him. While they were working on the modalities of how life would look like, Joseph had to apply for his passport. From his words below, we get a better picture of how difficult just getting a passport was:

> Getting a passport was a war, to say the truth. Corruption at the Home Affairs Office was rampant. I was not spared in the scam, as I had to part with a couple of US dollars to get my passport, although the normal charges were in Zimbabwean dollars.

Several other people told me about the difficulties they faced when they applied to get a Zimbabwean passport. Although their stories had some variations, they largely confirmed what Joseph said. From what he said, we also see a few other important points. People were likely to try to leave the country with valid passports and resident permits before trying to leave illegally. Making this choice depended on other factors, such as people's personal circumstances and location in Zimbabwe. I was unable to get statistical data on passport applications submitted to the Registrar General (RG)'s office; however, media reports claimed that the RG's office was "overwhelmed" by a surge in new applications over the course of the 2000s.[9] Processing times for passports could last more than two years, depending on the application. This made people speculate that the government was seeking to deter citizens from leaving Zimbabwe. As Joseph said, long queues of applicants for passports became a common feature. This pressure encouraged government officials working in the RG's office to engage in corrupt activities. We can speculate that the same thing was on the rise in other government departments. Offices where people applied for things like birth certificates and national identity cards could have seen the same levels of corruption, as more people wanted these documents to arrange their travel. As a result, civil servants took advantage of people's desperate circumstances to supplement their own wages.[10] Under these conditions, ordinary criminals were also involved in some of the scams. Some of them pretended to be middlemen who charged people money to "facilitate" various kinds of service transactions. The sudden rise in the demand for passports and the inability of the RG's office to process applications explain why people like Joseph were asked to pay bribes in foreign currency. This also shows the ways in which the economy and Zimbabwe's currency had lost value.

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[9] Owen Garare, "Border Jumping on the Rise as Visa Rules are Tightened," *The Herald,* March 22, 2005, 1–2.
[10] "Open Letter to Police Chief," *The Sunday Mail*, October 31–November 6, 2010, B4; "Keep Investigating the Police, *The Herald*, November 7, 2010, 7.

People's preparations to leave Zimbabwe were also met with other hurdles. Making the right plans for departure and raising money for travel and living expenses were some of the important challenges the people I interviewed mentioned. Another of the things people grappled with was the choice of destination country. Although most chose to go to South Africa because of its close physical proximity, shared history with Zimbabwe, and the size of that country's economy, others went elsewhere. The choice of destination was influenced by factors including visa requirements. This is another point I took from Joseph's testimony. His views represented the sentiments of other migrants:

> After getting the passport, I had to decide where to go. With our neighbouring countries applying stringent visa requirements due to the influx of Zimbabweans, my option to move to South Africa was met with tough requirements for a visa. I needed 3,000 South African rands [slightly over $300 Canadian dollars]. For me, this amount of money was a fortune. However, I later raised it by saving, selling some of my possessions, and borrowing from friends and relatives.

People like Joseph used everyday language to explain the challenges they faced in their preparations for their eventual departure from Zimbabwe. Their views evoked deeper themes, such as the nature of the state and citizenship rights. Joseph's words were also a subtle critique of the state in Zimbabwe, whose policies were forcing people out. Joseph did not criticize the government directly, but he expressed his disappointment with having to leave. He would not have had to leave if the state had been doing its job and things were normal. He spoke about how hard it was to leave, but he was also bitter about *why* he had to leave. His words of bitterness about the difficulties of getting a passport and bribing officials were also a way of criticizing an abnormal environment. As a citizen with rights, he should have been able to get a passport easily and at a reasonable charge. Joseph's words revealed his criticism of restrictions on human mobility imposed by both the Zimbabwean and South African

governments. His words about strict visa requirements were a plea for the right of people to be able to exercise freedom of movement.

The challenges Joseph spoke about in his plans were quite similar to those of other migrants such as Miriam.[11] Miriam's testimony also deepened my knowledge of why people left Zimbabwe and the difficulties of planning their journeys. Miriam moved from Harare to live in Limpopo, South Africa in the mid-2000s. She was in her twenties when she left Zimbabwe. She held a bachelor's degree in English literature from the University of Zimbabwe. After her graduation, she taught at a private school attended by the children of business people and government officials. Her university education was the reason she had the opportunity to teach at a private school. Miriam was in a better position in terms of income than government-employed schoolteachers in Zimbabwe. Most of them had diplomas and certificates from teacher-training colleges, not degrees. Her income was above that of government-employed teachers. This enabled her to endure the economic crisis better. What persuaded her to leave was the knowledge that her academic qualifications and teaching experience were in great demand in the more stable economy of South Africa. But it was still a formidable challenge for her to obtain a Zimbabwean passport and South African work visa. People who offered to facilitate her application demanded sexual favours that she was not prepared to give. This is why she said the Zimbabwean passport had become "gold."

Potential migrants usually found ways around restrictions, despite the challenges of getting vital travel documents. Apart from bribing officials, people used family ties and other social networks to ease their efforts. The media in Zimbabwe reported that people were using

[11] Miriam, email and Facebook communications with author, October 2, 2012.

counterfeit passports. Others used passports from countries like Mozambique and Malawi, which were relatively easy to apply for.[12] Four of my informants admitted to me that they had used fake passports to leave Zimbabwe and get into South Africa. To them, using fake passports was "the only way out."[13] The lesson I took from these conversations was that people were prepared to commit crimes and risk prosecution in order to achieve their goals. People were even more determined to cross national and regional borders despite the efforts of governments to prevent them from traveling between countries.

People's preparations to leave Zimbabwe were complicated further by the lengthy and cumbersome process of applying for resident permits for destinations like South Africa, as Zimbabwe's neighbours continued to tighten their immigration demands. They understood that the political, economic, and social conditions in Zimbabwe were getting worse and that people were resorting to outmigration to cope. Some of the tough immigration conditions set by South Africa had existed before, having been imposed during apartheid. These were tightened and rigorously enforced in response to the exodus from Zimbabwe. Applicants for residence or work permits had to submit an invitation letter from someone in South Africa, or a letter of employment offer.[14] Some people were able to meet these requirements, but most failed. Some of those who failed tried to use fraudulent means to get the necessary documents.[15] It was only after the formation of the government of national unity in Zimbabwe in 2009 that South Africa made policy changes to facilitate the entry of Zimbabweans. An outcome of the changes was the Dispensation of Zimbabweans Project, which sought to

[12] Interview with Bernard, Tonde, Jason, and Herbert, Johannesburg, January 18, 2011.
[13] Interviews with Bernard, Nyade, Sarah, and John, Johannesburg, November 18, 2010.
[14] See http://www.home-affairs.gov.za/index.php/immigration-services, accessed Jan 12, 2016.
[15] Interviews with Bernard, Nyade, Sarah and John, Johannesburg, November 18, 2010.

regularize the immigration and stay of Zimbabweans in South Africa.[16] A detailed analysis of how different governments in southern Africa responded to the crisis in Zimbabwe and the resulting massive movement of people falls outside the scope of this chapter; one of the best analyses available is Tara Polzer's book.[17]

People cited several other things they took into consideration as they prepared to leave Zimbabwe. One of them was the question of what to do with one's property. Some people sold their property cheaply, including houses, vehicles, and furniture. Others gave these belongings to relatives and friends to look after.[18] We have also seen in the story of Joseph how difficult and stressful it was for people to leave their families behind. But in all this, what I got from people's accounts was a high level of determination to leave. Part of why this came through in my interviews was that people were already out of Zimbabwe, and much of what they said was meant to justify the course of action they had already taken. This was part of how people defined their identity and made meaning of their lives. They did this by amplifying the obstacles they faced and by juxtaposing them with the end result, which created a sense of triumph. Having obtained the travel documents and raised money to leave, the next step was to embark on the physical journey itself. In the next section, I explore how migrants described the journey itself and their entry into South Africa by legal means.

Descriptions of legal entry into South Africa

[16] See http://www.dha.gov.za/index.php/immigration-services/zimbabwean-special-permit-zsp, accessed January 12, 2016.
[17] Polzer, *South African Government and Civil Society Responses.*
[18] Interview with Modest, Pretoria/Tshwane, November 14, 2010.

Zimbabweans I spoke to who left their country in the 2000s said their journeys of migration to South Africa were a landmark and memorable moment in the lives. In particular, they drew my attention to their very first trips out of Zimbabwe as an experience that changed their lives. They told me about these moments in descriptive terms. I present some of their stories in this section. Several things explain people's vivid memories of crossing the border. I went beyond their words and uncovered why they presented the journeys as landmark experiences. Many of the stories I was told were positive and triumphant. Many migrants said their subsequent crossings were relatively easy compared to the first. The cumulative effect of these stories was a narrative of mastery people wanted me to take away, something that cuts across this dissertation. They highlighted the seemingly insurmountable obstacles they encountered, and then they showed me how they were ingenious enough to overcome them. It is quite possible that some people rued ever having left Zimbabwe for South Africa. But the frequent tendency in people to speak well about a course of action already taken prevented them from expressing regret. Some had a very difficult time on their way, and many may actually have failed in their first or second attempts to leave Zimbabwe. However, not all of them were going to admit that, because they wanted to glorify their deeds and paint a picture of perseverance and success.

People remembered their initial journeys to cross the border and were excited to talk about them. This was because those were their first experiences of that sort. People were also upbeat because the first trip was symbolic and they encountered many new things. The new things they met caused them to have strong feelings of excitement, fear, and anxiety. By undertaking the journey, they had committed themselves to leaving their families, jobs, and country. The journey meant taking the risk of venturing into the unknown. As such, it was both traumatizing and liberating. Some of the things they faced were due to the mode of transportation they

used, and their level of preparation. Other experiences were based on their assumptions and personal expectations. About ninety percent of the people who said they got into South African legally took a bus across the border. Miriam's journey illustrates some of the common experiences for those who travelled by bus, and these are also applicable to those who went aboard haulage trucks, known in Zimbabwe as *magonyeti*.

Road transportation was by far the most common way Zimbabweans got to South Africa. People who travelled from Harare to Johannesburg covered a distance of 1,116 kilometres. This trip took them about fourteen to twenty hours by bus, depending on the weather, road conditions, and traffic at the border. Miriam took a bus from Harare to Johannesburg and then a train to Cape Town. She covered a distance of 2,186 kilometres over a few days. It is not surprising that she described her bus ride from Zimbabwe to South Africa as "the most torturous" journey of her life. Her narrative was typical of other people who went to South Africa by road. We can see from her story that it was not only the long distance that made the journey unpleasant, but several other encounters.

> The whole trip from Harare to Port Elizabeth in the Eastern Cape was long and tiresome. More than half of the people on the bus did not have passports. They gave money to the bus driver to negotiate with immigration officials on their behalf, causing long delays at the border and along the way. Many soldiers and the police looking for border jumpers started to appear from Musina, a town just after the border. Those who had not paid the driver were taken by the police to await deportation. The South African police and army officials were raking [in] a lot of dough from the unfortunate situation of Zimbabweans.[19]

Coming face-to-face with immigration officials, police, army, and criminals was a nerve-wrecking experience. In the testimony above, Miriam mentioned some of the common

[19] Miriam, email and Facebook communications with the author, October 2, 2012.

challenges faced by people who travelled to South Africa by road. She also revealed some of the strategies they used to overcome these challenges. We see that an illegal underground system had developed for those who did not have travel documents to cross the border. People bribed bus drivers, immigration officials, and members of the South African police and army. It would have been a lot harder for people to use corrupt methods to cross the border if they were flying. The levels of congestion at the Beitbridge Border between South Africa and Zimbabwe encouraged corruption and smuggling. Mere greed and the chance to make money were some of the things that encouraged officials to engage in corrupt activities. The story of Miriam dovetails with academic studies on the nature of regional borders, and confirms earlier studies that have explored the smuggling of goods along the Zimbabwe-Mozambique border.[20] Such studies have shown that smuggling and crime are a key source of income for traders, migrants, and state officials.

The economy of corruption along Zimbabwe's borders with its neighbours flourished because law enforcement agents also benefitted from it. This is a reflection of what happens when the formal economy has failed to sustain livelihoods, and when the rule of law plays second fiddle to rules of survival. Miriam's story and the research of Nedson Pophiwa clearly indicate that people used bribes and other underhand deals to navigate the border. Miriam expressed her bitterness when she said people had to pay bribes to immigration and security officials to cross the border. She lamented how people took advantage of the poverty of Zimbabweans to make extra money. Miriam's testimony was also a critique of the exodus itself. She found it abnormal to have so many people from Zimbabwe leaving their country. Her words were critical of the

[20] Nedson Pophiwa, "Smuggling on the Zimbabwe-Mozambique Border," in Crush and Tevera, *Zimbabwe's Exodus*, 291–302.

abuse of power by state officials. We also get the sense of powerlessness often found among the poor, caused by their lack of access to effective ways to fight their oppressors. As a result, they become participants in the very activities that oppress them.

Crossing the border was the main challenge in people's efforts to enter into South Africa. Migrants were mostly worried about being denied entry and getting deported back to Zimbabwe. This happened mostly to those who did not have valid documents. People with passports and permits were sometimes denied entry, after being accused of not being the true bearers of those documents.[21] The difficulty in crossing the border was a result of South Africa's stringent immigration requirements, inherited from the apartheid era. During apartheid, the South African state erected walls around itself to prevent growing African nationalism from eroding white supremacy. These walls from the past have largely remained intact, more than two decades after the fall of apartheid. They explain some of the hatred and frequent xenophobic attacks against foreigners in South Africa.[22] Migrants were also anxious about crime, extortion, and harassment by officials at the border, especially by the police, army, and unscrupulous "middlemen." It is thus ironic that this economy of corruption was one of the main ways migrants gained entry to South Africa. Despite South Africa's efforts to prevent immigration, people still found ways to overcome the strict controls. Although corrupt deals were most rampant at the border, they were not limited to the border. They occurred at almost all points of contact between South Africans and immigrants.

[21] Interview with Nyade, November 18, 2010.
[22] Neocosmos, *From "Foreign Native" to "Native Foreigners*."

Crossing the border successfully brought a huge sense of relief and joy to people. They spoke of their amazement at seeing better roads and buildings, and of having access to better services.[23] However, this did not mean their trouble was over. New challenges usually emerged. After getting into South Africa, people became even more aware that they were foreigners there, because many things were different from Zimbabwe. Those who travelled alone said they usually felt lonely and nostalgic, which made them feel a sense of loss. A young woman named Rebecca said she felt extremely vulnerable, because for the first time, she was alone, without parents or siblings.[24] She also did not trust the security officials in South Africa; instead of helping, they were known for taking advantage of immigrants, especially young women. Migrants had to deal with fatigue, hunger, and the danger of running out of money. Rebecca said these troubles reminded her of the Shona idiom, *"Kusina mai hakuendwe,"* which means it is dangerous to venture into unknown territory.

Once in South Africa, people developed stronger feelings of vulnerability and an acute awareness of their status as foreigners. Several other things contributed to this sense of vulnerability and uneasiness. My informants said they felt more deeply insecure on their first trips than on subsequent journeys. We can see why people were anxious in the second part of Miriam's testimony, quoted below. She mentions some of the things that made migrants feel unwanted and threatened. The quotation continues Miriam's description of her journey from Harare to Port Elizabeth. This time we pick it up after she had crossed the border.

> I bought a train ticket to Port Elizabeth in Johannesburg. Waiting for the train, I noticed that the police, most of them in plain clothes, were everywhere looking for foreigners. Two of them apprehended me when they heard me speaking in Shona on my cell phone. They demanded to see

[23] Interview with Knox and Nyade, Johannesburg, November 18, 2010.
[24] Interview with Rebecca, Lebowakgomo, November 2008.

> my passport. I showed it to them, but still they were not satisfied. They wanted money.

Getting harassed by the police was one of the greatest challenges many Zimbabweans and travelers from other African countries faced in South Africa. Crossing the border made people anxious, but dealing with members of the South African Police Services (SAPS) was worse. The attitude and actions of the police made foreigners feel unwelcome. They felt that they were in danger of being stopped and needlessly grilled. Travelers dreaded meeting the police for fear of being insulted, harassed, and victimized financially. The fear of being caught and deported on either genuine or spurious grounds always caused an adrenaline rush. Although Miriam had a valid passport and resident permit, the police still expected her to give them money. Having a valid passport and visa, which were difficult for people to get in Zimbabwe, thus did not guarantee their safe passage and peace of mind in South Africa. There were multiple levels of bureaucratic authority to satisfy. Some were formal and others clandestine. This removed the excitement and joy people may have felt in having left Zimbabwe for a supposedly better place.

Zimbabweans who went to South Africa in the 2000s soon learnt that giving money to the police was unfair but perfectly "normal." This was unusual to many at first, and irritated new people like Miriam on their first days, but it did not take them long to understand the unwritten rule called *kudiza*, meaning giving the police money in order to get around. This system closely mirrors the former apartheid-era pass laws used to separate people who came from the rural areas from those who were legally entitled to live in towns. Zimbabweans entering South Africa came to know that it was vital to carry some money to give to the police, even when they had valid documents. They also had to carry some change to give to thieves and armed

robbers, who could easily turn violent if they did not find money or a valuable asset, like a cellular phone, to take. Miriam's testimony confirms the findings of the secondary literature, such as the research of Julia Hornberger. Her research showed that the harassment of immigrants by members of the SAPS was a part of the legacy of apartheid, and a form of contemporary xenophobia in South Africa. [25] Several other migrants echoed Miriam's experiences, and spoke about their deep hatred of the police. Whereas Miriam was puzzled that the police expected her to give them a bribe, Deezert argued that bribes to the police were an essential part of adaptation.[26] Drawing from his experiences, he said the failure to bribe the police was, in actual fact, abnormal. He reminded me of what happens when the abnormal becomes embedded in social practice until it becomes accepted as normal.

Coming into contact with unfamiliar languages and cultural practices made newcomers realize the extent to which they were the "other." As she sat on the train, Miriam said she felt tense, as though she were a criminal. On the train, she interacted with people who behaved like hooligans. She also sat among mothers, teenagers, and children speaking in IsiXhosa and Afrikaans, foreign languages to her. Her inability to understand the local languages and take a part in some of the conversations on the train reinforced her foreign identity, easily setting her apart as an outsider. She was going to Port Elizabeth for the first time, and her harassment by the police had contributed to uncertainty and fear. I personally also got to understand how it feels to be a foreigner during my fieldwork in South Africa. Apart from my inability to speak local languages, my manners and outlook made it hard for me to fit in easily, particularly during

[25] Julia Hornberger, *Policing and Human Rights: The Meaning of Violence and Justice in the Everyday Policing of Johannesburg* (London: Routledge, 2011), 74–86; "Deportation Threat for Undocumented Zimbabweans," IRIN, accessed July 6, 2011, www.irinnews.org/report/93164/south-africa-deportation-threat-for-undocumented-zimbabweans.
[26] Interview with Deezert, Johannesburg, December 7, 2010.

the first months. I was scared to jaywalk and used to wait for the traffic light to change and marveled when other people approached the streets and walked across through fast traffic. After a few weeks, I myself was doing the same, although my heart would pound each time I put my life at great risk by jaywalking. Students at the University of Johannesburg said they could tell I was a new Zimbabwean in South Africa; to them, I was too formal in my manners.[27] It dawned on me that I was using politeness and formality to navigate unfamiliar territory, which could have been a skill other newcomers used too, but in my specific situation, it sounded like, in fact, this formality was a barrier rather than a helpful strategy.

Miriam's story of trials and tribulations on the way to and in South Africa was similar to that of Philemon.[28] Philemon also took the bus from Harare to South Africa, but his destination was Pretoria/Tshwane. He had a relatively comfortable journey because it lasted only fifteen hours. Philemon crossed the border legally and got his travel documents verified by the police. He too, spoke about how some people did not have passports and visas. The bus crew negotiated with immigration officials for them using bribes. As a male, Philemon was less anxious than Miriam on the journey. His readiness to pay bribes and his shorter journey made his overall experience less painful than Miriam's. However, as the next section will show, the experiences of both Miriam and Philemon contrast in some key respects with the stories of other people, revealing differences in experience depending on gender and age. Their stories also differ sharply from those of migrants who did not have passports and permits, and had to enter South Africa illegally.

[27] Informal conversation with Nhlalala and Thandeka, Johannesburg, December 12, 2010.
[28] Interview with Philemon, Suncrest Colony, Pretoria, November 11, 2008.

The stories of Joseph, Miriam, and Philemon indicate that some migrants who left Zimbabwe in the 2000s used valid passports and permits to enter into South Africa. They overcame the common challenges of getting travel documents. Their stories corroborate the results of a survey carried out in 2005. It showed that over forty percent of documented entrants used permits to get into South Africa. The percentage of people who used permits rose from little more than seven percent in 1998 to forty percent in 2005.[29] These numbers clearly indicate that a high but difficult-to-determine percentage entered the country illegally.[30] People also found it cumbersome to renew their permits regularly once in South Africa, often letting them lapse and thereby altering their status to that of illegal immigrants.[31] But the increase in the percentage of people who entered legally is also significant; it shows that more people opted to use permits during the exodus than had done prior. From this data, we can extrapolate that a greater proportion of people used legal means to enter South Africa despite an overall increase in the volume of immigration. This trend challenges the perception in much of South Africa that most migrants from Zimbabwe entered illegally.[32]

In this section, I drew from the testimonies of Joseph and Miriam to probe how Zimbabweans who went to South Africa in the 2000s described their journeys. I highlighted some of the main hurdles they faced, such as applying for visas. I showed that migrants dealt with the prospect of being denied entry, and then being arrested, detained, and deported to Zimbabwe by both legal and underhand means. I explained that people put emphasis on their journeys because some of them were leaving their country for the first time. The journeys symbolized

[29] Crush and Tevera, *Zimbabwe's Exodus*, 252.
[30] Polzer, "Regularising Zimbabwean Migration to South Africa."
[31] Interview with Bernard, Johannesburg, December 19, 2010.
[32] Polzer, "Regularising Zimbabwean Migration to South Africa," 3.

their escape from the political, economic, and social woes in Zimbabwe. Theirs were journeys about their efforts to regain hope. Overall, the stories I drew from culminated in a narrative of victory. The people told me of the problems they faced, which were real, and how they overcame them.

The narrative of success was evident in people who crossed the border using legal means. They faced fewer difficulties because they used legal methods. However, the victory narrative was even stronger among the second group of people: those who crossed the border illegally. Some of them walked through forests, crawled under fences, waded across the dangerous Limpopo River, and fought off robbers and wild animals. This illegal crossing was widely reported by both the South African and Zimbabwean media.[33] In the next section, I focus on how people spoke about illegal crossing, and the risks they faced. Instead of placing emphasis on how migrants were vulnerable, as the media and much of the extant literature does, I underline how their words revealed a sense of victory over adversity.

Stories of illegal entry and surviving danger

Many Zimbabweans entered South Africa illegally, although the number of people who did so remains unknown.[34] Those who entered illegally were compelled to do so by the intensity of the political, economic, and social woes in Zimbabwe. This was particularly acute in the middle and later years of the 2000s, when the aggregate volume of people leaving Zimbabwe spiked.[35]

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[33] "SA Grapples with Immigration Influx," *The Financial Gazette*, March 27, 2005; Garare, "Border Jumping."
[34] *Ibid.* 5
[35] Crush and Tevera, *Zimbabwe's Exodus*, 4.

We get an idea of how difficult it was to get statistical data on illegal entry from the humorous remarks by South Africa's former Home Affairs Minister, Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma. She was asked how many Zimbabweans were in South Africa illegally. In her reply, she said, "I don't know. If somebody's here illegally, how do I know they are here? I do not know – that's an honest answer."[36] Migration scholars such as Loren Landau have also stressed the difficulties of measuring illegal Zimbabwean immigration into South Africa. In the absence of accurate numbers, scholars have been left with little choice but to guess and generalize. The difficulties of getting accurate figures on migration are not confined to the movement between Zimbabwe and its neighbors; they are common everywhere because illegal migrants tend to be hidden. In African countries, the cross-border movement of people tends to be more difficult to measure because of limited human and financial resources.[37]

My interviews showed that four people, or twenty-three percent of my sample, crossed into South Africa illegally. These were John, Tira, Sarah, and Yellow. The overall percentage of people who crossed illegally may be higher, but it was difficult to hold a conversation with people about illegal entry. Some of them may have felt that they were making a guilty confession if they admitted that they got into South Africa illegally. They would have been worried about the consequences of such an admission to their personal dignity and continued stay. But people who were in South Africa on passports and permits were usually easy to identify. Some of them took out their papers and showed them to me. They were accustomed to moving around with photocopies of these papers, just in case they had to prove their status to police.

[36] "South Africa: How Many Undocumented Migrants? Pick a Number," IRIN, accessed November 13, 2009, www.irinnews.org/report/87032/south-africa-how-many-undocumented-migrants-pick-a-number.
[37] Aderanti Adepoju, "Migration in Africa: An Overview," in Baker and Aina, *The Migration Experience in Africa*.

People used several illegal ways to enter. Some had counterfeit or borrowed passports. Some were also smuggled in haulage trucks, which is how a middle-aged man named John got to Pretoria/Tshwane.[38] Crawling under, climbing over, and sneaking through holes cut into the border fence were some of the other main ways people got across the border. These illegal methods caused immigrants to be referred to as "border jumpers," a label that was then applied to almost all foreigners in South Africa, as was *makwerekwere* (babblers). These became essential components in the language of xenophobia and exclusion among South Africans, as they grappled with the entry of newcomers from Africa and the rest of the world. In the rest of this chapter, I use the stories of three representative people, Tira, Sarah, and John, to explore why and how people crossed into South Africa illegally. Their examples reveal the risks associated with illegal crossing, how people overcame the risks, the importance of their journeys, and how they recalled and talked about them.

Border jumping is one of the ways Zimbabweans have always used to get across into South Africa, even before the exodus of the 2000s, especially people from the Matebeleland regions of the country, who, in fact consider going to South Africa as a rite of passage. Apart from being one of the main ways people have used to travel back and forth across the border, border jumping was also the riskiest, and this was even more so in the 2000s, when more people were using it and the authorities were stepping up efforts to prevent people from illegal migration. Border jumping involved crossing flooded rivers and walking through the bush. Migrants jumped borders out of desperation. They were convinced that the associated risks of getting caught or dying while crossing illegally were worth taking. This also occurs, of course, in other parts of the world; in the Americas, migrants jump borders to smuggle illegal substances as

[38] Author's interview with John, Pretoria/Tshwane, November 11, 2008.

part of organized operations of drug and weapons trafficking.[39] People from Mexico also do this just to get themselves into the US; and it's not always a matter of a criminal operation. In the case of Zimbabwean migrants, the pressure to escape from the national crisis and the close proximity to the country of choice were some of the factors that drove people to border jump. The failure to get travel documents, the unwillingness to follow immigration legalities, and a daring attitude compelled also some people to "give it a try."[40]

Illegal crossing into South Africa from Zimbabwe was a risky undertaking. People told stories about how they had confronted life-threatening situations. They told me that some of their colleagues had lost their lives along the way. Crawling past the border fences and wading across the Limpopo River posed serious risks. But it was the danger of being attacked by robbers along the border and in the surrounding forests that posed the greatest danger. Most of the stories people shared with me were about how they had narrowly escaped death. This is what came out in the story of Tira. He was in his early twenties when he went to South Africa. Originally, Tira came from the Nyajena area of Masvingo in southern Zimbabwe. In Zimbabwe, he had survived political violence and other life-threatening scenarios. He claimed that it was his previous experiences with violence that emboldened him to try to cross into South Africa illegally. Before going to South Africa, Tira had completed his Ordinary Level studies in Zimbabwe. His grades were not good enough for him to go for tertiary education. Having dropped out of school, he left his hometown in the late 1990s and went to Kwekwe, a mining town in central Zimbabwe. At first, he worked as a farmworker for a white farmer,

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[39] Bruce Bagley, *Drug Trafficking and Organized Crime in the Americas: Major Trends in the Twenty-First Century* (Woodrow Wilson International Centre for Scholars, Latin America Program, August 2012, 7–12), accessed November 13, 2014, http://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/BB%20Final.pdf.
[40] Interview with Tira, Lebowakomo, November 14, 2008.

and later, for the local municipality. When Zimbabwe's economy experienced severe difficulties in the early 2000s, Tira quit his job. He joined hundreds of other poor Zimbabweans in illegal gold mining, known as *makorokoza.* As a gold digger, Tira lived a dangerous life, marked by rivalry between diggers, fights, and murders. He also told stories of sex binges, illness, suicides, and witchcraft in the communities of diggers. His experiences and survival in Kwekwe were about how he struggled against poverty. I verified some of his stories with other Zimbabweans he lived with in Lebowakgomo.

Previous life experiences on the margins, such as Tira's, were vital to how people chose to cross into South Africa. Tira's journey to South Africa reflected this reality. He chose to emphasize how he survived an attack by a gang of armed robbers, known locally as *maguma-guma.* In the following excerpt from his story, the dangerous nature of illegal crossing becomes vivid.

> I was severely wounded a short distance after crossed the Limpopo River. It was in the middle of the night, as we walked in a group of twelve people, when a gang of *maguma-guma* waylaid us. There were about fifteen or more of them waiting in the bush. They greeted us in broken Shona, asking for money, food, and clothes. When we told them we had no money, a fight broke up, as they wanted to strip us naked and probably rape the few women who were with us. We fought their group for a moment, but we were overpowered. They were armed with knives. One of them, a tall guy with missing teeth, stabbed me in the abdomen during the fight. Some of the women managed to escape, but two of them were captured. I think they were abused. I can't recall everything that happened. The only thing I remember was regaining consciousness in a hospital in Musina.

Tira's story was not isolated but rather a common theme that ran across many people's tales. As he narrated his ordeal, Tira removed his shirt and showed a large scar across his abdomen, and other ones on his arm and face. Although people knew how dangerous it was to attempt illegal crossing, the fact that they continued to take the risk underlines how desperate they

were to leave Zimbabwe. It seemed as if they equated crossing into South Africa with their very survival. Similar stories were about how they were arrested by the South African border patrol police and detained to await deportation back to Zimbabwe.[41] From these common tales, we notice that some of the people who tried to get out of Zimbabwe ended up in worse situations because of hunger, fatigue, and getting lost. Evidently, these experiences traumatized them. They sometimes became emotional when they recounted stories about how they or people they knew were robbed or raped, and how friends or acquaintances were murdered, on the journey.

Women and children were more vulnerable than men when they tried to enter South Africa illegally. This was partly because the journeys required considerable physical strength and endurance. The United Nations noted that as the crisis in Zimbabwe grew worse from the middle of the 2000s onwards, more women and children joined the ranks of migrants.[42] The increase in the numbers of mothers and children was another new feature of migration out of Zimbabwe. It underlined the unprecedented nature of the turmoil they sought to escape. They too, sometimes made the choice to migrate illegally. Getting out of Zimbabwe increased the exposure of these women and children to violence along gender lines. In Tira's encounter with robbers, both men and women were strip-searched and robbed of money, clothes and food. This subjected them to humiliation. However, women were even more violated because the robbers inserted fingers into their bodies. They argued that there was a chance that the women were hiding money inside their bodies. Ironically, it was Tira, a man, who had inserted money

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[41] Gift Phiri, "South Africa Deports 25 000 Zimbabweans," *The Herald,* June 22, 2010. 4

[42] "2015 UNHCR Subregional Operations Profile – Southern Africa," accessed August 9, 2009, www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/page?page=49e485c66&submit=GO; Alexander Betts and Esra Kaytaz, "National and International Responses to the Zimbabwean Exodus: Implications for the Refugee Protection Regime," UNHCR Research Paper No. 175, accessed August 9, 2009, www.unhcr.org/4a76fc8a9.html.

in his anus, thinking that only women would be suspected of such things. Unfortunately, the robbers knew that men also hid money in their anuses. They found the money he was hiding. It is difficult to know how common the practice of hiding money inside one's body is, but such stories are also usual in the drug trafficking industry.

The hardships of getting out of Zimbabwe and navigating the routes to nearby countries were more pronounced among women than men. Women were often sexually humiliated, exposed to diseases, and were at the risk of falling pregnant if they were raped. We get a picture of how some of these hurdles were gender-specific from Tira's story, above, but also from the story of Sarah. Sarah was a mother of two who left Zimbabwe in the middle of 2008. It was the year migrants described as the worst in recent memory.[43] In Zimbabwe, Sarah was unemployed, and had lived with her husband and children. Her level of education was not high, as she had dropped out of school in Form 2. In Zimbabwe, her sources of livelihood and ability to provide for her children were thus limited. Her husband eventually left her for another woman, forcing her to return to her parents, who were also poor. Her parents then asked her to leave her children with them and go to South Africa. Her migration to South Africa was thus not driven by expectations of a high standard of living, as was the case for better-educated and professional-class migrants; this was simply her survival plan for her family and herself.

Sarah story me a story about how women experienced the dangers of crossing into South Africa. She did so by walking across the flooded Limpopo River with a group of over fifty people. However, after crossing the border, she was out of money and was stranded. She was afraid to look for work in the border area, for fear of being found, detained, and deported.

[43] Interview with Sarah, Brixton, Johannesburg, December 4, 2008.

Eventually, she slept with a fellow Zimbabwean to get shelter and more money for the rest of the trip to Johannesburg. Stories of women migrants resorting to part-time prostitution for money, food, protection, and shelter were common in the everyday conversations I had. They showed how migrants used sex as a short-term survival tool. Sarah was also a victim of gang rape along the way. She said this incident changed her life forever and she lived with the fear of having contracted disease. The incident also left her with a general hatred for men. Her ordeal was even more difficult to deal with because her assailants had been wearing army uniforms. She believed they were soldiers, who also demanded money from their victims. Therefore, the very people she expected to get protection from abused her. This brings to mind what happens during war, when security personnel can take advantage of the vulnerability of civilians.

The stories of Tira and Sarah revealed the dangerous nature of illegal border crossings. These stories corroborate the dominant narratives in the media and NGO literature. Much of that coverage belabours the dilemma of migrants and their vulnerability to evils like crime and disease.[44] This literature has shown how difficult it is to stamp out crime against migrants. Some migrants themselves are perpetrators of violence. They work in cahoots with criminals and security details from South Africa and Zimbabwe.[45] Fortunately, greater attention by the media and NGOs to the plight of migrants has prompted the South African government to increase surveillance on the border to reduce both illegal immigration and crime.[46] The stories

[44] Consortium for Refugees and Migrants in South Africa (CoRMSA), *Protecting Refugees, Asylum Seekers and Immigrants in South Africa*, Johannesburg: CoRMSA, 18 June 2008.
[45] "Braving Peril to Reach South Africa: Gangs, Crocodiles, and Deportation Await Zimbabweans Crossing the River Border." Al Jazeera Online, http://www.aljazeera.com/focus/2008/07/20087188353663376.html , accessed on July 18.
[46] *Ibid.*

of migrants like Tira also deviate from the narratives of the media and NGOs in some notable respects. The main narrative by NGOs is that migration has led to human rights violations though indiscriminate arrests, detention of migrants in inhumane conditions, and deportations.[47] However, the stories of migrants with whom I spoken revealed that they were not always victims. People like Tira and Sarah spoke about their quandaries in order to draw attention to their heroism and ability to overcome tough circumstances. They admitted that it was hard to escape to another country, but they made it against all odds. This is important to highlight because it restores power to migrants as agents in their own lives. It also drives home the idea that people overcame strict government efforts to keep them out of host countries.

Migrants were often met by new challenges after their arrival in cities like Johannesburg. Common challenges included not having a place to live and running out of money and food. Migrants also got stranded when they lost contact with the people who were supposed to meet them and give them temporary housing and food, which is what happened to Joseph and was a feature in the testimonies of other people I spoke with.[48] When these things happened, people became doubtful and distressed. These feelings could linger for varying amounts of time depending on their ability to adjust. For Joseph, feelings of anxiety were worse in the first few weeks and months. Jobs were scarce, causing a deep crisis of expectations to set in. Migrants needed work permits, which were difficult to get. For at least two months, Joseph lived with the thought that his migration to South Africa had been a mistake. Despite their sufferings along the way and in the initial weeks and months, however, people were generally

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[47] South African Human Rights Commission, "Lindela: At the Crossroads for Detentions and Repatriation," Johannesburg, SAHRC, December 2000; Lawyers for Human Rights, "Monitoring Immigration Detention in South Africa," Johannesburg: LHR, December 2008.

[48] Interview with Joseph, Ormonde Business Centre, Johannesburg, October 21, 2010.

upbeat about their prospects. John expressed this sense of optimism when he said, "Whatever happened, we are here now. We made it. The focus is to look for opportunities to improve our lives. That is what we came for."

My research showed that well-educated people with urban backgrounds, some of them with a source of income, were more likely to try and get into South Africa legally. Men were more likely to attempt to enter illegally than women if they were unable to get immigration documents. Long periods of contemplation were a feature of how migrants planned their journeys of departure. Employed people like Miriam, Deezert, and Joseph considered the question of migrating for over two years. During this time, they weighed their options and gathered information from people around them, all of which was part of planning. On the other hand, unemployed people like Sarah made their decisions and plans in less time, except in cases in which they had to leave families behind. Taking the decision to leave one's job and family was the main consideration migrants factored in their plans to migrate. People who left in a hurry, usually to escape political violence, did not have much time to plan, which was the case with Munya. Although he had thought about migrating for over a year, the moment of decision came when he received a tip-off that ZANU PF supporters had plans to abduct him. He had a few hours only to make his escape.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I focused on Zimbabwean migrants' stories of their journeys to South Africa. These stories revealed that migrants used both legal and illegal means to get into South Africa. Their mode entry depended on how successful they were in getting valid immigration documents and money. More than three-quarters of my participants said they had entered

South Africa legally. This supports the trend in the available literature, which argues that more people entered legally than illegally.[49] However, once in South Africa, some migrants overstayed the validity of their permits, which made their continued stay illegal. Such people did not consider themselves to be illegal immigrants, even though technically they were; they were in limbo as they awaited the outcome of their applications for longer stays and asylum. In some cases, stringent immigration laws and lack of money prompted people to enter South African illegally. Sometimes even those with proper documents were turned back, with the option of trying again, or jumping the border.

Migrants attached great importance to their journeys across the border. From their words, it was apparent that these journeys were much more than the physical relocation from one territorial jurisdiction to another. These journeys were deeply symbolic. Crossing the border symbolized an act of escape from and survival in an economy in rapid contraction, and from a political environment of repression and violence. Migrants also spoke about how they overcame a host of obstacles that seemed insurmountable as they moved towards larger cities like Johannesburg. While some opted to work in the border areas of South Africa, most of them dreamed of better job opportunities in the larger cities. Migrants faced barriers like deportation, discrimination, and xenophobia, but their descriptive accounts revealed their strong determination and ability to negotiate and overcome. Their stories demonstrate both the strictness of immigration regulations and also the porous nature of these restrictions.

Having defied obstacles, the next stage in the lives of migrants was to settle down and find employment. In the next chapter, I turn to what they experienced in this endeavour. Their

[49] Crush and Tevera, *Zimbabwe's Exodus*, 5.

experiences of the South African job market give us a clearer picture of how they adjusted to living abroad. Their employment and sources of incomes played a major role in how they lived.

Chapter 4

The Search for Employment and Work Experiences

Vignette

> I am a married man, nearing my forties. In Zimbabwe, I was a social worker. When I came to South Africa, I started off as a labourer on a construction site. The work was hard and the money was very little. I was lucky to find another job as a security guard; after six months in construction. Working as a security guard is not hard; but risky, because of crime here, and the money is not good. I am always looking for a better job. Why am I happy? I send money, furniture, and groceries to my wife and family in Zimbabwe at the end of every month. *–Joseph, a Zimbabwean in Johannesburg, South Africa, November 16, 2010*

Introduction

A burning desire to find employment and to provide for themselves and their families was the main reason Zimbabweans abandoned their country and went to live in other nations during the course of the 2000s. The words *"mabasa"* and *"mari,"* which mean "jobs" and "money," were dominant in the formal interviews and casual conversations I had with fellow Zimbabweans about their departure from Zimbabwe. This was not a surprise, because the quest for better economic opportunities, particularly the search for jobs and the desire to raise incomes, is among the main reasons people migrate the world over.[1] Given the nature of Zimbabwe's economic collapse, it was to be expected that people would want to leave. However, the stories of migration I collected and presented in this chapter are about how people *understood and presented* what motivated them to migrate. What I realized from these

[1] For a detailed discussion of different migration theories, see Douglas S. Massey, Joaquin Arango, Graeme Hugo, Ali Kouaouci and Adela Pellegrino, *Worlds in Motion: Understanding International Migration at the End of the Millennium* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998).

stories is that people moved mainly because of emotional motivators, but justified their actions with logical explanations. The departure stories of Joseph and Miriam, for instance, which clearly illustrate how people weighed the pros and cons of migration, revealed the outcome of an emotional process, although it came out as a logical process in their stories, mainly because the stories were told in retrospect. Examples given in this and in other chapters thus illustrate the operation of underlying emotional motivators that lay behind people's decisions to migrate.

Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of human needs argues that the main reason people go to work every day is to satisfy a range of needs; mainly physical and security needs. The main source of personal security for the majority of people in modern society is gainful employed and a source of income. The business class derives its security from business and people who belong to that class are secure when the economy is performing, but they get worried during a recession. Likewise, the working class gets insecure during an economic downturn; because of unemployment and low incomes. This explains why Zimbabweans mentioned the search for jobs and money to explain their departure in large numbers. It was because they felt insecure and endangered in Zimbabwe. They chose to leave the country in order to restore their broken sense of personal security. Several other emotional motivators were also apparent in their stories of departure. These included feelings of frustration that arose from the fact that the national economy was broken and their hopes of political changes quashed.

Many people were full of expectations upon arrival in South Africa. My research showed that some of them, especially educated professionals, expected to find employment in their fields of training Others believed that they would find their dream jobs, while yet others were modest

in their expectations. They were more prepared to settle for whatever reasonable opportunity came their way, hoping to upgrade later. Whether someone had high, medium, or low expectations, what was unmistakable was that most people were ambitious to find a job or something to do to look after themselves. From the outset, the world of employment and the need to improve their livelihoods was behind people's migration. Other political and social considerations were of secondary importance.

Joseph's words quoted at the start of the chapter nicely capture some of the key moments in people's participation in the job market in South Africa. What is striking was people's level of determination to find jobs to provide for themselves and their dependents. Equally important was how they expressed a strong sense of responsibility to help sustain their parents and extended families back in Zimbabwe. In Joseph's words, we also see how people's careers were downgraded upon their movement from Zimbabwe to places like South Africa. Joseph's case represents how educated, skilled, middle-class people abandoned what were once promising prospects in Zimbabwe out of despair. They went on to take jobs of lower income and status. Some of their employment choices were usually made out of desperation. This reduced their social status and demeaned them.

Despite these challenging conditions, many people still felt that they were better off being elsewhere than Zimbabwe. They sought to project the image that things had improved. To a certain extent, this image was true, because the economies of the countries they went to performed better than that of Zimbabwe. As a result, they had relatively easy access to basic needs like food and clean water, which were in short supply in Zimbabwe, especially at the height of the crisis in 2008. Their presence in an environment in which things actually worked

gave them hope and motivated them to agency. However, their feeling that things had improved, which they presented most of the time in their stories, coexisted with certain harsh realities, including stagnation and impoverishment. People did not dwell too much on these negative realities. It is the coexistence of these multiple and conflicting realities that makes an inquiry into their work experiences both interesting and challenging, which is why this is an important theme of my dissertation.

My focus in this chapter is on the stories people told about their search for jobs and about their work experiences. This area is important to explore because some of their most vivid stories were about searching for jobs and working, and also because the vast majority of migrants went abroad to look for work. My overall approach is two-pronged. First, I present people's narratives about searching for jobs and working as foreigners. I highlight some of the ways they searched for jobs, the obstacles they faced, and their levels of success. My contention is that people went out to look for jobs from a position of desperation. This compelled them, especially newcomers and unskilled people, to work in menial occupations for extended periods of time. Chances of finding better jobs with higher incomes existed, but these required a great deal of time and effort. Second, I analyze their stories to find embedded meanings, given the fact that much of what they said speaks to the broader theme of my dissertation: adjustment and personal identity formation.

People spoke about spending considerable amounts of time out of employment and living in poverty. They also admitted to a lack of employment security and to working in terrible conditions. They shared stories that suggested that their standards of living were rising, and that they were helping family left behind in Zimbabwe, or trying to. While some of them were

improving, and giving assistance to those back home, others were not doing much. It is these contradictions that I seek to play out in this chapter using specific cases of people's work experiences. The examples I cite show the co-existence of betterment with reversals of fortunes, stagnation, and continued marginalization. There is a growing body of literature containing important insights into the employment conditions of Zimbabweans in South Africa. Scholars have written about the topic mainly in the context of South Africa's poor policies and resources in response to the needs of migrants.[2] This analysis is important, but my focus on migrant experiences gives a richer and more textured script based on people's voices.

In this chapter I tap the stories of sixteen Zimbabweans. I draw from the testimonies of Zivai, Joseph, Andrew, Mutatiwa Miriam, Nyenge, Deezert, Tafadzwa, Jason, Ben, Tonde, Supa, John, Rudo, Mary, and Sandra. All of them were well-educated and skilled; but in South Africa, they were all-working class and low-income earners. I use the example of Zivai to highlight the educational and professional qualifications of migrants, and to explore some of the obstacles they faced in their search for jobs. Zivai's example shows the discrepancy between the education and skills of migrants and their real employment chances. I also draw from Nyenge, who said that although she worked as a domestic worker, her life had "greatly improved." I use the stories of Joseph and Deezert to illustrate the anguish people endured when they left their jobs as civil servants in Zimbabwe and found themselves on construction sites and working as security guards.

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[2] Jonathan Crush, *Covert Operations: Clandestine Migration, Temporary Work and Immigration Policy in South Africa,* Migration Policy Series No. 1 (Cape Town: SAMP, 1997); Jonathan Crush, Abel Chikanda and Godfrey Tawodzera, *The Third Wave: Mixed Migration from Zimbabwe to South Africa,* Migration Policy Series No. 59 (Cape Town: SAMP, 2012).

The chapter is in four sections. The first section shows the relatively high literacy levels of Zimbabweans. This was a benefit in the search for jobs and in traversing new economic and social settings. It also identifies some of the key obstacles people faced in their search for jobs. My focus in the second section is on the diversity of people's experiences, based on their education and skills. I place emphasis on the widespread problem of job insecurity, but I highlight some success stories too. I contrast the expectations and experiences of educated and skilled people, who mostly targeted the urban market, with those of people with modest levels of education and skills, who had lower expectations and targeted the rural economy. In the final half of the chapter, my focus is on one of the more common jobs in which people found themselves engaging: prostitution. I reveal who got involved in prostitution and why, and I use the experiences of prostitutes to argue for a link between poverty, migration, and the spread of diseases.

Facing disillusionment in the search for employment

People of all educational and professional backgrounds were a part of the exodus from Zimbabwe in the 2000s. The departure of highly educated and skilled people was particularly worrying. While well-educated Zimbabweans were among those who had left in previous waves of migration, the scale of their exit in the 2000s was striking and unparalleled.[3] This fact has been revealed and confirmed in a growing body of academic literature.[4] I highlight this here in order to reveal the calibre of people I will be talking about later. My review of the

[3] Tevera and Zinyama, *Zimbabweans Who Move,* 33–40.
[4] Daniel Tevera and Jonathan Crush, "Discontent and Departure: Attitudes of Skilled Zimbabweans Towards Emigration," 112.

literacy record of migrants is to underline the paradox of high levels of education and skills, versus the reality of unemployment and deskilling. This shows how some of these people's hopes were destroyed, and how they ended up living in desperate levels of poverty.

Alice Bloch has analyzed the educational and career qualifications of Zimbabweans in South Africa and the UK.[5] She showed that eighty-six percent of Zimbabweans arriving in the UK in the early 2000s could speak and write English fluently.[6] She also noted that eighty-two percent of newcomers in the UK and South Africa had some form of professional training. Of these, thirty-eight percent had a first or second degree. Nineteen percent had a diploma in higher education, and three percent had a professional qualification. Sixteen percent of those with higher levels of education had a qualification in business studies. The proportion with a qualification in education was at fourteen percent, and those in healthcare were at eleven percent. Seventy-one percent of those in both the UK and South Africa had been employed in Zimbabwe before they left the country. Fifteen percent were students about to transition into the labour pool. Noteworthy in this study was that eighteen percent of people were in managerial posts, and eleven percent had been teachers.

The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) also recognized the educational and professional skills of Zimbabweans, both those still in Zimbabwe and the ones departing. In 2010, the international body ranked Zimbabwe as the country with the highest literacy rate in Africa, at ninety-two percent.[7] This reflects the substantial amount of investment in education

[5] Bloch, *The Development Potential of Zimbabweans in the Diaspora*, 35–61.
[6] Bloch, *The Development Potential of Zimbabweans in the Diaspora*, 35–60.
[7] Kitsepile Nyathi, "Zimbabwe: Country Leads in Africa Literacy Race," accessed July 14, 2010, http://allafrica.com/stories/201007150032.html,.

the government of Zimbabwe had made in the first two decades of the country's self-rule.[8] It was a loss to Zimbabwe when that massive investment in education did not translate into higher levels of economic and social development. The people who left took their knowledge and skills abroad. Some of the people who left found employment outside their fields of expertise. Many people thus had good educations, but the disappointing thing is that they were usually not able to take advantage of them.

My fieldwork confirmed the fact that most Zimbabweans who left in the 2000s were well-educated and skilled. All my interviewees had reached the Ordinary Level. More than a quarter had an Advanced Level certificate. Three-quarters had professional training. Other people I met informally had backgrounds in various fields, including education, nursing, policing, and social work. There was, however, no direct correlation between these qualifications and what they were now doing. The gap was more pronounced among newcomers. As I expected, this group was the hardest-hit by the crisis of expectations upon arrival. I want to start off by taking a look at the predicament faced by a man named Zivai.[9] I use his example to illustrate the qualifications of migrants and their dismay when they discovered the limited use of their education and skills in the South African context. Zivai's story represents those of other people who were educated and skilled, but found themselves roaming the streets of cities like Johannesburg looking for work, or working as general labourers. Suffice it to say that this problem was not limited to Zimbabweans living in other countries; it was a common problem even before they left the country, and their departure only made it more visible.

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[8] Gibbs Y. Kanyongo, "Zimbabwe's Public Education System Reforms: Successes and Challenges," *International Education Journal* 6(1)(2005): 65–74.
[9] Interview with Zivai, Crown Mines, November 13, 2010.

Many Zimbabweans invested large amounts of time and money to get well-educated. The thinking was that a good education would help them live better lives. This was the case of Zivai, who was nearing his 50s when he went to South Africa in 2009. He had studied for an Advanced Level certificate in Zimbabwe in 1987. This was no small achievement, because he had decided to continue with his studies after returning from the war of national liberation. He took advantage of the government's efforts to educate the previously marginalized Africans. He benefitted directly from the government's educational programs in the 1980s. Zivai went on to study for two diplomas in accounting, believing that education was the key to success. His knowledge did indeed help him, as he worked for sixteen years as a senior administrator and payroll manager for a company in Zimbabwe. Just before his departure to South Africa, he had started his own company. He was an arts promoter, working with other people to get stone sculptures from Zimbabwe to global markets.

Zivai's profile illustrates the developmental trajectory many Zimbabweans believed in after independence. They were full of hope and expected big things from life. Zivai managed to realize some of his goals. He was well-educated and trained, and he built a dream home. However, the decline of Zimbabwe's economy in the 1990s and its collapse in the 2000s eroded his dreams. His political views were accurate: he blamed the centralization of political power and the rise of state repression for the nation's decline. He mentioned that state repression, corruption, and joblessness were contrary to the ideals of the war of national liberation. As an educated and mature person, his analysis of Zimbabwe's decline was sophisticated. He recalled the socialist promises made during the war of liberation and how the nationalist government quickly forgot them in the 1980s. He was also deeply critical of the adoption of economic structural adjustment policies by Zimbabwe's government in the 1990s.

He understood and lamented how this policy integrated Zimbabwe into the global neoliberal agenda, which impoverished the majority of the country's citizens.

When Zimbabweans like Zivai arrived in South Africa, their immediate goal was to find a job and a place to live. Many of them were also hungry and broke. For several months, Zivai lived with other desperate Africans at the Central Methodist Church. He spent time browsing the Internet and sending his Curriculum Vitae to various companies. He phoned some of these companies and went to their offices in person. For more than six months, Zivai remained unemployed. He started doubting whether he had made a good move by going to South Africa. In the following quotation, he reveals one of the obstacles he and others faced in their search for jobs.

> The most challenging thing is to have a work permit. You are required to have the SAQA (South African Qualifications Authority) [first], which you have to pay for. After having obtained the SAQA, you have to apply for a job. You can only apply for a work permit after you have signed a contract with a company. To get a work contract is really difficult.

Getting a valid work permit was one of the most difficult things for foreigners in South Africa. It was tough for foreigners to apply for and get a work permit because of high levels of unemployment in South Africa, and also because the South African government wanted to protect local workers. The standard regulations did not allow the issuing of permits to foreigners when South African citizens with the relevant skills were available for work.[10] From Zivai's words, we see that it was difficult to get legal work permits because people had to sign a contract with a company before they could apply. From the company's point of view,

[10] "Types of Temporary Residence Visas," Department of Home Affairs, Republic of South Africa, accessed June 6, 2011, dha.gov.za.

it would be unattractive to sign a contract with a worker who did not yet have a permit. These rules would have been easier to navigate for workers with special skills, but they were almost insurmountable for people seeking to get into common occupations. Their effect on foreigners was to remind them constantly of their non-citizenship status, which frustrated their efforts. This frustration is evident in the following words, again from Zivai:

> I was very confident of getting a job as an accountant in South Africa. My CV stood out among other job seekers. I have a good work record and language skills. Like other Zimbabweans, I can read, write, and understand English very well. I have gone almost everywhere in Johannesburg, but not a single company has invited me for an interview. My CV and certificates are useless. Now, I rely on part-time and menial jobs that do not pay well.

To circumvent the requirement for a work permit, most foreigners worked illegally. This compelled them to take almost any job offered them, especially in blue-collar sectors of the economy, which had lower levels of government regulation. This prevented them from making a formalized and more effective contribution to the economies of both South Africa and Zimbabwe. It also exposed them to exploitation because they were underpaid and outside the protection of labour laws. Migrants also faced other barriers in their efforts to find employment, such as racism and social discrimination. Local South Africans, too, discriminated against foreigners for fear of competition from often better-educated and more-skilled migrants, who accepted lower wages. This hatred often flared up into open conflict and violence, such as the xenophobic attacks that occurred in May 2008, leaving sixty-two people dead.[11]

[11] Jonathan Crush, ed., *The Perfect Storm: Xenophobia in Contemporary South Africa* (Cape Town: SAMP: Institute for Democracy in South Africa, 2008); Ashwin Desai, "After the Rainbow: Following the Footprints of the May 2008 Xenophobic Violence in South Africa," *Review of African Political Economy* 37(123): 99–105.

Many Zimbabweans had to deal with the emotional pain of leaving prestigious jobs in Zimbabwe and working in little-valued jobs in South Africa. We saw this in the case of Joseph in the previous chapter. He was an experienced social worker in Zimbabwe. In Johannesburg, he felt incredibly lucky when he found a job on a construction site. He was happier when he found a second job as a security guard, but the sense of having been demoted from social worker never left him. The feeling of failure could have been even greater, because Zimbabweans looked down upon little-valued and menial jobs in their own country; these, however, were the jobs they sought aggressively in South Africa. They felt relieved when something came up, even when it was a menial job. Nineteen people I interviewed formally had worked on construction sites in the first months after their arrival in South Africa. They did not have any call to use their previous skills. They were also prepared to work for low wages in dangerous environments, simply because they did not have much of a choice.

The deskilling and exploitation of migrants is a well-researched and documented feature in the secondary literature, such as in the work of Abel Chikanda.[12] Rather than waiting for their applications for work permits to be processed, Zimbabwean professionals in South Africa were forced to take any job that came their way, as they needed to make money immediately. Besides the medical professionals studied by Chikanda, teachers were also among those who had difficulties finding positions in South Africa.[13] This forced some of them to work as general labourers for construction companies and as security guards. The deskilling of labour is also common among migrants in developed nations. In countries like Canada and the United

[12] Abel Chikanda, "The Migration of Health Professionals from Zimbabwe,"110–28; "Brain Drain from Zimbabwe: Profiles and Motives of Potential Migrants," in *The New Geography of Human Mobility: Inequality Trends?,* edited by Y. Ishikawa and A. Montanari (Rome: Italian Geographic Society, 2003), 117–39.
[13] Zenzele Lungile Weda, "Factors Influencing the Migration of Teachers from Zimbabwe to South Africa" (PhD diss., University of South Africa, 2012).

States, educated and skilled migrants from developing nations have often found themselves working outside their fields of specialty.[14] While the literature abounds with examples of this phenomenon, my interviews shed more light on how people confronted and talked about this reality. What did it mean for them to exchange suits and ties for coveralls and safety boots?

The following testimony, given to me by Deezert, reveals how people felt when they lost incomes, personal pride, and social status. Deezert shows how people navigated from one form of disillusionment in Zimbabwe to another in South Africa. This shattered their sense of dignity and forced them to rethink their ideas of who they were as individuals.[15]

> In Zimbabwe, I was a well-respected secondary school teacher. My school was in a peri-urban zone in Kwekwe. Like other teachers, I left my job out of frustration. It was very demeaning to stand in front of students and teach them barefooted. Some of my students went to South Africa for part-time work during the holidays. They brought back nice things, which I could not afford myself, although I was salaried. I started to go to Johannesburg to look for part-time employment on holidays, going back to my teaching post during the school term.

In this excerpt, Deezert told us that he left Zimbabwe hoping that things would be better in South Africa. But once he abandoned his teaching position and crossed to South Africa permanently, he was even more frustrated at the discovery that opportunities in the teaching field were scarce. His search for a teaching job was more difficult because there was no demand for teachers trained to teach Shona and religious studies. Deezert spent all his money travelling from one school to the next, only to be told that his knowledge and abilities were not needed. After a few months, he gave up the search for a teaching post and joined others

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[14] Bonnie Slade, "Engineering Barriers: An Empirical Investigation into the Mechanics of Downward Mobility," *Socialist Studies* 4(2)(2008): 22–3.
[15] Interview with Deezert, Johannesburg, November 28, 2010.

in the construction sector, which he had previously shunned. Suddenly, he no longer had the respectable titles of "teacher" and "sir." He started to speak of the same hardships other Zimbabweans experienced while searching for jobs in South Africa. His tale was similar to those of other professionals like Zivai and Joseph. It did not matter whether someone was male or female; the vast majority of people went through the same initiation exercise, as I had gathered from Miriam. As mentioned above, she had a bachelor's degree in English literature from the University of Zimbabwe.[16] She found a teaching job eventually, after a year of desperate searching. She only found it because she agreed to teach at a rural school, where basic standards were backward compared to the private school she had taught at in Harare. Even then, she had first worked as a waitress and cleaner at a Cape Town hotel.

When we look at the experiences of Zimbabwean teachers in South Africa, we see that their chances of getting hired depended on their levels of qualification and their subjects of expertise. People with a university education had better chances than those trained at a college. Those trained in science subjects had higher chances than those trained in languages and arts subjects. But a common trait among most educated and trained professionals was that they had worked in menial and low-income occupations. It was this downgrading process they resented the most, which showed how they left one form of disillusionment only to encounter another. Although some of them were climbing the ladder, my interviews and conversations showed that it took many people an average of three-and-a-half to five years or more in South Africa before they found a job they liked, whether it was in their field or another. Those who were rising through the ranks were often also upgrading their skills and education to increase their competitive advantage.

[16] Miriam, email and Facebook communications to the author, October 2, 2012.

The foregoing discussion has shown that educated and skilled professionals from Zimbabwe faced daunting difficulties in their search for jobs in South Africa. This was contrary to their expectations. I have cited some of the main reasons behind these challenges, and presented stories of people expressing their frustrations. However, these troubles did not dissuade people from believing that something positive was happening or would happen, because they were in South Africa. I discovered other key dimensions in the lives of migrants and their work experiences from interviewing them. One of the greatest challenges they mentioned was that they did not have any sense of job security. Most of them worked for paltry wages, but still, believed this was better than being jobless. It is to these challenges that I turn to in the following section of this chapter.

Dealing with job insecurity and working for low wages

The work experiences of various Zimbabweans who went to South Africa in the 2000s exhibited some notable similarities. However, key differences also existed, based on factors like age, education, skills, marital status, and gender. Well-educated and skilled people usually targeted the large urban markets of Johannesburg, Cape Town, Durban, and Pretoria/Tshwane. They suffered the greatest levels of deskilling and frustration. Another category was made up of people with modest levels of education and skills. They usually targeted the semi-urban and rural economies, where competition for opportunities was lower. It is vital to examine the stories of these people. Some of them worked on farms, in the construction and security industries, and in domestic service. Some of the jobs in these sectors are labour-intensive, risky, and low-income. I also want to state from the outset that exploitative labour practices did not affect foreigners alone; local workers, too, were affected.

I am fully aware that my choice of low-income occupations does not give an accurate representation of the overall forms of employment experience for Zimbabweans in South Africa. I was not able to learn the numbers of people who were in white-collar jobs because this fell outside the scope of my research. However, by taking a cursory look at some media reports, I surmised that, in fact, a significant number of Zimbabweans worked in the white-color sectors of the South African economy. Further research is needed in this regard. The reason I focused on those on the margins is because despite their marginal status, their experiences tell us a lot about the lives of migrants, especially about their sacrifices. The stories in this section debunk the idea that the lives of migrants improved after migration. Ironically, migrants themselves were the strongest promoters of this idea.

The exploitation and ill-treatment of workers was evident among both women and men, although the specific dynamics often differed. Let us take a look at the story of John, a Zimbabwean man who was in his late twenties.[17] In Zimbabwe, John worked as a machine operator at Hippo Valley Estates, a sugar estate near the town of Chiredzi. He had a secondary education and was married, with a four-year old son. At Hippo Valley Estates, John lived in a large house in a quiet area of town. He was proud to be a machine operator, because many other workers in his age group were sugar-cane cutters. Their work was arduous, but the income was paltry. Everyone's wages lost purchasing power in the 2000s because of inflation. This is why John left his wife and son behind in 2005 to join other Zimbabweans trekking to South Africa. With his experience, he was optimistic that he would get a job as a machine operator or driver. When he arrived in Tshwane, he lived with Philemon, a Zimbabwean friend who worked on a chicken farm. The only job he found after getting his South African resident

[17] Interview with John, Johannesburg, January 2009.

permit was as a garden caretaker. For several months, John lived with his friend in a tin cabin on a farm. This pained him, because his house in Zimbabwe had been large. Fortunately, living on the farm was relatively cheap. This enabled him to buy new clothes and send some groceries to his wife and mother. He was also happy when he could extend his residence permit for another three months.

Bad news came just when John felt that he was starting to pick up the pieces. He lost his job a week before I had an interview with him in Sunset, a farming area on the outskirts of Tshwane. He described how he lost his job in the following story.

> I worked for three months as a "garden boy" [caretaker]. My employer was a farmer of Dutch descent, a very nice guy. They paid good money, sometimes a thousand rands per month. I lived with a fellow Zimbabwean down the road, going for work in the mornings. I left my workplace whenever I was done my duties. I put manure in the garden, removed the weeds, planted veggies and flowers, and took care of the yard. The work was so easy. It was better than cutting sugar cane, which is what I did before I was taught how to operate the machine back home in Zimbabwe. One day my boss's wife lost her handbag and suspected that I had stolen it. She fired me right away. Later, she found the handbag in the trunk of the family car. But I never got my job back. Right now, I am looking for another job. It's not easy.

The story of John illustrates the lack of job security that was a central motif in the stories of other Zimbabweans. This lack of job security undercuts the narrative of migration and progress migrants usually related. John's dismissal was under dubious circumstances, pointing to the nature of relationships between employers and workers. John had what seemed to be a cordial relationship with his employers. What he lacked is what he needed the most: job security. Without it, he could not feel secure, and unfortunately he was fired without grounds. The short-term nature of service and the fear of losing a source of income caused a great deal of anxiety among many people to whom I spoke. Both locals and foreigners lived with these

experiences, but their impact on foreigners was greater. Other people I spoke with, such as Deezert and Teekay, had been fired before. Sometimes this had happened because of false accusations, just because the employer did not want to pay them and knew they could not seek legal recourse. These experiences induced financial crises and instability in these Zimbabweans' lives, affecting their families, dependents, and their social relationships with others.

Losing a job could have a devastating impact on a migrant's personal life. Related outcomes like suicide, crime, and domestic and social violence could ensue. It meant the loss of a source of income and not being able to pay bills. In turn, this meant getting evicted from rented housing, losing personal belongings to creditors, and becoming destitute. It could get so bad that some of the people I interviewed had been beaten up and threatened with death if they did not pay back money they owed.[18] Although people were in the habit of helping each other out, things became difficult when the helpers were also unemployed. At this point, getting laid off could destabilize social relationships severely. I got a better understanding of how these dynamics played out in the lives of migrants when I mediated a dispute between two men from Zimbabwe. One of them, named Jason, had been laid off from his job as a security guard.[19] Jason was emotionally distraught and battled to keep suicidal thoughts at bay. He accused his co-workers and friends of causing his dismissal. In the following quotation, we see how he tried to come to terms with his situation:

> My world has collapsed. I do not know where to begin. I don't have money for rent and food. My parents in Zimbabwe expect money and groceries next week. I have to pay back debts. I have accounts for property to pay. I will lose everything I bought, because my payments are outstanding. How

[18] Interview with Supa, Crown Mines, November 19, 2010.
[19] Informal group meeting with Jason, Ben and Naboth, Crown Mines, January 2009.

> do I break the news to my wife? No one wants to help me. It is better to die than to face these problems.

Jason's words show us the high value people placed on having a job and that other aspects of their lives, including their social relationships, depended on their employment status. When Jason broke the news of his job loss to his wife, the problem became worse. He told her that a co-worker of his named Ben was the one who had gotten him fired. He had heard through gossip that Ben had told the supervisors that he always came to work drunk or hung over. In turn, Jason's wife called Ben's wife and insulted her. The row escalated until Ben walked for five kilometres from Turffontein to Crown Mines to confront Jason. The two men were at each other's throats, fighting and threatening to kill each other. As an outsider, but as someone known to both families, I was asked to mediate.

My mediation efforts gave me a chance to reflect on what getting fired meant in these people's lives. I linked this incident to my research agenda – specifically, to my quest to know migrants' work experiences. What I saw were the disruptive effects of losing a job and what occurs when people's hopes for a prosperous life are crushed. Jason's layoff jeopardized his short-term survival strategies and his long-term personal development goals. He was fighting hunger himself in Zimbabwe, and he was the only source of groceries and money for his elderly parents. He wanted to buy cattle, a grinding mill, and electrical appliances. He was trying hard to save money for his return to Zimbabwe, so that he could show off his newly-acquired social status to people who were still in Zimbabwe and to fellow Zimbabweans who were living as migrants in other parts of the world. There was a lot of pressure on him. He was keen to show others that his stay in South Africa had not been in vain. He wanted a better life for himself. He also wanted his children to grow up with computers, radios, digital video decoder (DVD)

players, and other tokens of modernity. He did not want people to think that he had failed when they did not see these signposts of success. He was concerned about his sense of himself as a man. His dismissal put these multiple goals beyond his immediate reach.

Jason's job loss also explains the causes of common family feuds and social tension. His layoff and subsequent dispute with Ben revealed that the bonds among co-workers, supervisors, and employers were usually tenuous. It also exposed the fact that individuals, households, and extended families could suffer greatly from a single person's loss of income. Jason's layoff made me realize how precarious the livelihoods of people to whom I spoke really were, because they depended on wages but had no job security. I was able to see how hard lay-offs and joblessness were on people, because it was common for people to get laid off, especially unskilled and low-income workers. The worst-affected groups of people were maids, garden attendants, construction workers, and security guards. They could be laid off easily, sometimes without a satisfactory reason. By explaining how a national context marked by high levels of joblessness and the lack of job security among immigrants and locals, I was able to douse the feud between Jason and Ben. Both men were got a better understanding of their situation as immigrants in an environment of high unemployment a few weeks later, when Ben was also laid off and the two of them went around together looking for new jobs.

Joblessness, job insecurity, hard work, and low wages were some of the defining traits of the lives of Zimbabweans to whom I spoke in South Africa. These were common facts of life among newcomers who had limited options. These people were usually desperate to make income quickly for their own survival and to fulfill family and other obligations. In a difficult environment of limited job opportunities and temporary residence status, a high number of

Zimbabweans worked as security guards. I was unable to learn the precise number of people who worked in that capacity, but got a strong sense that newcomers were easily absorbed into the industry from my interviews and daily interactions with people. In one of my group interviews in Crown Mines, six out of ten participants were security guards. Others were former security guards who had moved onto other occupations after several years of living in South Africa. Several reasons were behind the high number of people working as guards, including the high rate of crime in South Africa, which makes the security sector one of the largest in South Africa. As well, people from Zimbabwe were usually prepared to accept lower wages than were South Africans, which played into the hands of security companies. Some security companies hired foreign workers who did not have valid permits to evade labour regulations and maximize profits. For their part, security guards were aware of the low wages they were receiving. Some of them compensated for this by stealing from their employers. I was told of cases of security guards teaming up with criminals to steal.[20]

Although my sample was small, my findings that many of the Zimbabweans with whom I interacted were in low-income occupations tallied with the results of a survey conducted among Zimbabweans in Johannesburg. The survey was done in 2007 by the SAMP. It revealed that most people worked in the security, hospitality/service, or domestic sectors, accounting for thirteen, twelve and eleven percent of respondents respectively. Higher-income professionals like medical practitioners and business owners accounted for three percent of all respondents. Hawkers, teachers, artisans, shop assistants, and hairdressers accounted for ten, nine, seven, six, and five percent of survey respondents respectively. My research confirmed this information, but I went beyond the numbers and extracted descriptive accounts of how

[20] Interview with Andrew, Johannesburg, December 2010.

people fared at work. I got a better sense of the contrast along class lines when I made a personal visit to a former professor of mine and to an engineer. Their living standards were in sharp contrast to those of other people, who lived in the ghetto. They were mature adults with considerable professional experience behind them in Zimbabwe. They were employed full-time and enjoyed benefits like subsidized housing, vehicles, and medical insurance. Their working and living conditions tallied with their occupations. They enjoyed life in South Africa, but were uneasy about the high levels of crime, of which they could be targets because they were wealthy.[21]

Apart from formal employment, Zimbabweans also eked out livings through informal jobs, which they called "hustling." Women in particular were prominent as vendors of a wide variety of consumer goods. They also solicited actively for part-time jobs, working for individuals, companies, and local governments. They cleaned streets and parks for money from municipal councils. Women also did temporary jobs as seamstresses, babysitters, washers, and house cleaners. These informal and part-time contracts were convenient for some employers who did not wish to hire full-time labourers at higher pay. Women employed in part-time jobs came together and formed groups or unions. These groups had various levels of organization and membership that enabled them to resolve petty disputes arising from competition for clients. The leaders of these groups united members to bargain for better wages. I witnessed an incident in which a group of fourteen women from Zimbabwe beat up a man who had refused to pay for some services. These alliances showed that people were developing an awareness of group interests, although the groups were informal. Members were able to develop a sense

[21] Informal discussion with Professor Huni, Pretoria, January 18, 2009, Informal discussion with Engineer Manex, Pretoria, January 19, 2009.

of belonging, however tenuous. In the following section, I analyze people's strategies of adjustment in a constraining environment.

Exercising human agency on the margins

Were the work experiences of migrants always negative and depressing? Did migrants regard themselves as victims of exploitation? If this was so, then how do we explain their continued presence in South Africa, and the fact that their discourses often portrayed South Africa as a haven? Although I did my research among the poor and exploited, I concluded that their experiences were diverse and rooted in personal circumstances. Some of them had positive stories to tell and specific examples of how their lives had improved. As a researcher, I found it difficult to take what they said about themselves at face value. But I also realized the importance of listening to and appreciating what they thought and said about themselves in a non-judgmental manner. From some of their stories, I concluded that even when they lived on the margins, they still exercised human agency. They were doing *something* to improve their lives, even when it appeared trivial to me. I picked up a few stories that illustrate how people felt they exercised agency on the margins.

When people faced the difficulties of finding employment, they usually involved themselves in various self-employment activities. My attention was drawn to a group of young male Zimbabweans in Crown Mines, who sifted for gold dust from nearby disused mines.[22] They were known as *makorokozas* in the local community. They claimed that they made more money than their counterparts employed in the formal sector. While their counterparts were usually broke, the *makorokozas* seemed to have cash most of the time. They also claimed that they

[22] Interview with Tonde and Supa, Johannesburg, November 2010.

were satisfied with their business activities because they did not have supervisors telling them what to do. They chided prostitutes from the neighbourhood and accused them of risking their lives for "sick money" through sex work. Ironically, these gold panners were some of the sex workers' clients. It was also ironic that the *makorokozas* belittled the sex workers when their own lives were endangered by their work in disused mines. The *makorokozas* also used dirty water to sift gold particles from the soil, a practice that exposed them to water-borne diseases. I asked them why they used filthy and foul-smelling water when clean water was readily available. They said using dirty water did not bother them, as long as they were able to find gold dust.

Despite facing challenges, some people remained hopeful, and sometimes this was not because of actual material improvements in their lives. The mere fact that they were in South Africa could have made some people like the *makorokozas* become nearly delusional because they were in an environment in which considerable economic activity took place. The mere belief that life could improve, rather than tangible improvements themselves, played a part in sustaining hope, particularly among those of modest education. Let us look at another example of people who really believed that they were progressing, despite evidence to the contrary.

The story of Nyenge illustrates how some Zimbabweans working and living in South Africa felt their lives were evolving for the better. Apart from revealing that, as discussed above, people were being downgraded professionally, it also showed what some people considered a successful transition.[23] Nyenge was in her mid-forties. She was single and lived with her boyfriend. She had obtained a secondary education in Zimbabwe before working in several

[23] Interview with Nyenge, Pretoria, October 14, 2010.

lower-income occupations in Mashava, a mining town in central Zimbabwe. She also worked for a white couple for a few years as a maid. Then an opportunity came for her to work as a general labourer for Mashava Mine. She used her education, determination, and networks with junior managers to learn how to drive a forklift, which was a male preserve at the time. As a female forklift operator, Nyenge was satisfied with her job and income. However, when Zimbabwe's economy imploded in the 2000s, she left for South Africa, like scores of other Zimbabweans. In South Africa, she expected to get a job as a forklift operator. She thought that her experience in Zimbabwe would increase her chances; however, she failed to find such a job. She ended up working on a commercial farm. In the quotation below, she describes her typical day as a farm labourer, and the resulting disappointment.

> I worked for a farmer, who produced tomatoes for sale in town, and for export. All workers got up very early in the morning. Work started at five am. We went to the farm with baskets to pick tomatoes. We put them into trays of different grades. Picking tomatoes was hard. It pained my back. Many workers on the farm complained about back pain. Some of them always leaned forward when they walked, especially those of middle age and the elderly. For me, it was not the physical demands of the job, as I am used to hard work. The wet weather bothered me a lot, because we worked in the rain most of the time, with short breaks after every few hours. The money was very little, only enough to buy some food, but nothing else. The farmer had a small compound for his staff workers. The rest of us lived at a nearby squatter camp.

Nyenge's testimony shows the difference between academic analyses of migrants' lives and what migrants themselves thought. Some academics, including Blair Rutherford, have cited testimonies such as the one above to make the argument that migrants made little headway in their efforts to accumulate wealth.[24] It is accurate to conclude that Nyenge's story is one of hard work and exploitation, just like the stories of other farm labourers in the Limpopo

[24] Blair Rutherford, "Zimbabweans on the Farms in Northern South Africa," 254–63

province of South Africa. The average wage for farm workers like her was about two hundred rands for two weeks' work. It was out of desperation that Nyenge agreed to work for a minimal wage. There were also more female than male farm workers on the farms, suggesting the exploitation of labour along gender lines. Another striking revelation in Nyenge's testimony was the negative implications of farm labour for the health of workers. Because of the nature of the work they did, workers suffered physical exhaustion and back pain from bending over for long hours, picking farm produce like tomatoes.

People like Nyenge vividly recalled the hardships they endured in their first months in South Africa. But after talking about these hardships, they also gave a narrative of improvement. As I expected, they claimed that life in South Africa was better than in Zimbabwe. Nyenge said, "My life is a lot better here, because I can look after myself. I do not have to depend on anybody. I also pay school fees for my brother's son, who is studying in Zimbabwe." Nyenge's narrative of improvement was more evident in my second interview with her in 2010. At that time, she was a domestic worker on another farm, located about forty-five minutes from Tshwane. She said she was happy that she had left the farming area of Limpopo for the peri-urban area in Tshwane. At that time, she no longer worked in the open picking tomatoes, but in the farm's home, where the work was light and the conditions of service were better. She still complained about low income, but she was thankful that her employer gave her some of the supplies she needed. This enabled her to remit cash and groceries to her relatives in Zimbabwe. In the following excerpt, a sharp contrast between her first few months in South Africa and what she accomplished after two years is unmistakable. This suggested that her life had indeed improved.

> There are different types of jobs on a farm. I used to work hard in the fields, picking tomatoes. It was really hard. Now my life is a lot better than it was in Limpopo. My employer pays me 800 rands (about $92 CAD) a month. I also work part-time for his friends on their farms, cleaning houses, doing dishes, laundry, and babysitting. Life is fairly cheap on the farms [compared to] in the towns. I don't buy everything. I get much of the food I eat right here on the farm. We get milk straight from the cows every day. We get eggs as soon as they are laid. My employer slaughters chickens every week. He also brings game meat. My small freezer is always full. I give some of the meat to my brother and his family in Johannesburg. I buy special clothes for myself once in a while. My boss's wife gives me clothes she does not wear any more, including shoes, make-up, body lotion and the like.

Some Zimbabweans who worked in South Africa started off in low-income and grim working conditions. Nyenge's testimony exemplifies the chances they had, however, slim, for what looked like upward social mobility in their lives. Indeed, some of them managed to make significant improvements in their lives. At the time of my last interview with Nyenge in 2010, she worked for yet another white farmer in the same area. She expressed her changing fortunes in remarkable terms. She lived in a larger house, plastered with cement and newly painted, unlike the former house on the previous farm, which had bare brick walls. The new house had electrical power from a power generator, which they used for lighting but not for cooking (she still used firewood for that). She also had access to a toilet and running water, unlike the pit latrine at the previous farm. She had access to more food and clean water, and her relationships with her employer and his friends were cordial. She had invited two of her cousins from Zimbabwe to join her. She had helped them find jobs as housemaids on nearby farms. Her tale was one of hard work, focus, perseverance, and slow upward mobility. She still wanted to work as a forklift operator, but she was not as interested in that as she had been at the start. Her goals in life had shrunk to fit her present circumstances. What also made her content was a newly issued work permit valid until 2014, for which her employer had helped her apply.

This enabled her to travel to Zimbabwe whenever she wanted and still re-enter South Africa. Rather than breaking her back picking tomatoes, working as a domestic servant was "easy."

Understanding how the poor and marginalized perceived their social world gets more complicated when we look at other examples. Initially, I dismissed Nyenge's claims that her living conditions were improving as an example of someone who wanted to exaggerate her otherwise limited achievements. My view slowly changed when I met other women, like Sarah, who told me that their situations were getting better.[25] Sarah also worked as a domestic servant for a black South African landlord. Her employer had several properties in the location under lease. He also owned a construction company and was always hiring part-time workers. People approached Sarah as the caretaker when they needed housing. She used her influential position as a broker to help fellow Zimbabweans find accommodation and temporary jobs. In turn, Sarah received favours and kickbacks from those who wanted to access the resources over which she exercised control. She felt empowered, and said that her social position had enabled her to look after herself. She was also able to send material support to her family and children in Zimbabwe.

Low-income Zimbabwean workers in South Africa also admitted that some of their working conditions were exploitative, although they still felt that what they were doing was better than not doing anything at all. These ongoing realities reveal the uneasy coexistence of marginalization and improvement. Such realities were evident in the story told by Faith:[26]

> I get up at five am daily, and leave for work thirty minutes later. It takes me another half an hour to walk to my boss's house. I work from six to six, with only two short breaks for breakfast and lunch. I'm always standing,

[25] Interview with Sarah, Brixton, January 2009.
[26] Interview with Faith, Johannesburg, November 22, 2010.

> doing one thing or the other; mopping the floor, wiping countertops and other surfaces, doing laundry and dishes. My boss's wife does not like it when I take an unscheduled break. She inspects my work and complains about things. I go to my house tired every day. Sometimes I am unable to cook for my family. I eat a sandwich only, before going to bed, unless my husband cooks before he goes for his night shift.

Faith's story reveals the overwork, ill-treatment, and underpayment of many domestic workers in South Africa, both locals and foreigners. These conditions have been detailed and analyzed in some of the secondary literature, such as in the work of Sally Perbedy and Natalya Dinat.[27] Women workers to whom I spoke who worked in unregulated sectors, such as domestic service, were particularly vulnerable to various forms of abuse, including sexual exploitation. Those working in the retail sector, such as till operators, cooks, and servers, were also exploited compared to their colleagues in middle- and upper-income professions. In Nyenge and Faith's cases, the difference between their working conditions was that Nyenge worked for a white commercial farmer on the outskirts of the city, while Faith worked in town, where there were more duties to be executed. In my view, these minor differences in their working conditions did not displace the fact that both were underpaid and powerless to bargain for better wages. Women's work experiences in particular uncovered the fact that their entry into waged labour increased their overall work load, as they had to provide for families and continue to perform domestic and maternal functions.

The reality that as well as working for wages, women often also continue to perform domestic duties at home permeates much of the newer literature on women and migration. Scholars have noted that the role of women as breadwinners is becoming more common in migrant

[27] Sally Perbedy and Natalya Dinat, *Migration and Domestic Workers: Worlds of Work, Health and Mobility in Johannesburg*, Migration Policy Series No. 40 (Cape Town: SAMP, 2005).

households.[28] Although this argument does not challenge the established fact of exploitation, it acknowledges people's increasing ability to do more to change their situation. Both Nyenge and Faith complained about the hard working conditions they endured. They still placed value on working for a wage, however, and said this increased their overall participation in the economy as producers and consumers. I will return to these arguments with more specific examples in Chapter 6, which deals with how people from Zimbabwe perceived emerging conceptions of gender roles.

The current literature on migration in southern Africa has confined the narrative of migration and betterment to skilled professionals. No sustained effort has been made to extend it to people working in low-income sectors. Scholars have shown that that the lives of educated, trained, and middle-income earners improve after migration, usually because of hard work and determination. This analysis is available in many studies, such as one focusing on the migration and social welfare of Zimbabwean education and health professionals in Botswana.[29] This argument for migration and betterment is not hard to sustain among professionals, but it is harder to make, let alone sustain, among low-income migrants. However, the narrative of betterment is not limited to skilled people. I extended it to low-income earners as well, showing that all social classes experience some forms of mobility and it is easier to move within a class than between classes. Drawing from the stories of the people to whom I spoke, which were about working conditions, I saw that the poor did not always look at themselves as victims; in their eyes, positive things were occurring.

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[28] Belinda Dodson , Hamilton Simelane, Daniel Tevera, Thuso Green, Abel Chikanda, and Fion de Vletter, *Gender, Migration, and Remittances in Southern Africa*, Migration Policy Series No. 49 (Cape Town: SAMP, 2008).
[29] Albert Makochekanwa and Prosper Kambarami, "Zimbabwe Skilled Migrants in Botswana: What Are the Impacts?, in *International Migration and Development in Eastern and Southern Africa,* edited by Assefaw Bariagaber (Place: Organization for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa, 2014), 17–54.

Different ways of understanding the same social reality imply that we interpret life's events differently because of our social positionality. For academics, it is easy to see the continuation of misery and exploitation in the stories of migrants, because we know they can do better. But we also need to value their views even when these contradict. Some of the people I spoke with changed their stories from one occasion to the next. People claimed that they were doing fine after their arrival in South Africa, and then claimed to be living in misery the next day. Their stories and how they understood the same stories were not static. Some of these contradictions occurred partly because of my relationship with them as a researcher. Some people may have felt ashamed to admit to me, a fellow black Zimbabwean, that they were not making any meaningful progress. They may have churned out a narrative that spoke to what they thought I wanted to hear.

Finding a job was one of the greatest difficulties Zimbabweans living in South Africa experienced. This was mainly because they were in an economic context of high levels of unemployment. People were desperate to survive and they were under immense pressure to provide for the extended family in Zimbabwe. I was not able to determine whether people were actually doing this successfully or not; however, I was persuaded by their words that the need to remit money and goods to family in Zimbabwe was a constant thought on their minds. I observed a huge amount of activity involving buses, haulage trucks, and private vehicles ferrying commodities from Park Station in Johannesburg to Zimbabwe. The need to remit contributed to a strong desire to find a job or a source of income. Because of the need to survive and achieve personal goals and also the need to send money and goods home, some people decided to venture into prostitution. In the next section I focus on prostitution as one of the popular forms of employment and as a survival strategy.

Surviving on prostitution despite the risks

Prostitution was one of the major forms of employment for some Zimbabweans who went to South Africa in the 2000s. I was not able to determine the number of people who took to prostitution to generate income because of the shadowy nature of the activity. However, I concluded that prostitution was an important economic activity. It ranked high on the list of activities most of my informants mentioned when I asked them how people survived. They cited formal employment, informal jobs, business, crime, and prostitution as the five key activities people undertook for a living. In this final section of the chapter on the employment experiences of Zimbabweans living in South Africa, I argue that prostitution was a key avenue of employment. More importantly, my focus on prostitution taps the experiences and words of sex workers to reveal the links among migration, poverty, and the spread of disease. I draw from the words of three women from Zimbabwe – Rudo, Mary, and Sandra – and from two men. The men with whom I spoke, Joseph and JC, were not prostitutes themselves, but they had experience working in pubs and had insight into the lives of sex workers and their clients. The stories of prostitutes illustrate that people can end up making wrong choices when they operate in extremely difficult circumstances in their exercise of agency.

The first story I focus on is that of Rudo, who was twenty-four years old.[30] Before she left for South Africa in 2004, Rudo worked as a nurse at Parirenyatwa, one of Zimbabwe's largest hospitals. She had been in South Africa for six years at the time of the interview. Rudo said, "I tried hard in my first year to find a job as a nurse, but that failed. I did not have a work permit. At various points I tried other types of jobs, including domestic work and cleaning. I

[30] Interview with Rudo, Johannesburg, November 11, 2010.

became a server in a restaurant. Slowly, I started sleeping around to make more money." From her testimony, we can see that Rudo left Zimbabwe with noble intentions or particularly high expectations, but if she had been issued a work permit, her life could have gone in a totally different direction. Like Zivai, she was unable to satisfy the requirements for foreigners to work legally in South Africa. She ended up doing what Zimbabweans called *"basa rese rese,"* which means any job. Her work environment in a pub in which she did not earn enough money to live on limited her choices and contributed to her reluctant decision to engage in prostitution. In the excerpt from her testimony below, we can see that Rudo was in denial that her career had changed from being a nurse to a prostitute.

> I came to Johannesburg a few months ago from Pretoria. This is not my full-time job. Life is hard, you know. I'm only 24. I was forced to make money by selling my body. I don't want to be called a prostitute. I'm just a girl like everybody else. I come here to make a quick buck for rent, groceries, and to support my child. She lives with my mother in Zimbabwe. If I make good money from my other job, I don't do this. I mean . . . I just come here [a nightclub] for drinks and to socialize.

Some Zimbabweans who ended up in commercial sex work like Rudo claimed that they did not do it voluntarily, but because they were poor and desperate. The example of Rudo shows that she did not consider prostitution a full-time job. She slept with men for money to meet pressing financial needs. Although she said she wanted to quit because her conscience convicted her, chances were that she would in fact keep engaging in sex work, as she was already trapped in the vicious cycle of poverty; in this respect, Rudo's story dovetails with some of the push factors that drove people out of Zimbabwe, discussed in chapter 2. As a single mother, she needed to provide for her child, as well as for her own mother. Rudo did not talk about Zimbabwe's economic collapse directly, but about the need to look after her child and herself, but her inability to sustain her family was an outcome of a collapsed

economy. Going to South Africa was her way of doing something about her situation. Once there, she faced disillusionment when she could not maintain her career as a nurse. This drove her into prostitution, which is also what we see in another testimony, that of Mary. Her story reveals an even deeper level of desperation; unlike Rudo, Mary had lost hope, and her behaviour was more reckless.

Mary's story underlined how precarious the lives of vulnerable groups of migrants were. Mary had finished her Advanced Level education in Zimbabwe in 2003. She took a secretarial course in Harare in 2005. She decided to skip the border into South Africa to try her luck as a cross-border trader two years later. She professed not to know how she ended up cruising for customers in nightclubs, but her efforts as a trader had not paid off. Rudo said she made an effort to use protection during intercourse with men, whereas Mary said using protection was a lower priority. Mary lived in the rough and poverty-stricken township of Thembisa, where competition for clients was stiff. As such, she said her top priority was to find clients. She was carefree when she spoke about the risks migrant sex workers faced. Speaking in Shona, she said: "*Ko kusiri kufa ndekupi? Kana ukagara unofa nenhamo, ukahura unofa nechirwere. Kuhura kuri nane, nekuti kwave nemacondom nemaanti-retrovirals.* condom *ndiro* best friend *yangu*." ("I will die from poverty if I sit at home. I will die from diseases by turning to prostitution. Making money from sex is a better devil. I can use condoms and anti-retroviral drugs. A condom is my best friend.")[31]

Poverty and diminishing opportunities even after migration perpetuated negative attitudes like Mary's. She suggested that prostitution was the only available option for survival, but this

[31] Interview with Mary, Johannesburg, November 11, 2010.

statement was mostly to defend her sex work. Despite the hardships of getting jobs and the low levels of income on offer, not everybody became a prostitute; it was thus not really accurate for Mary to say that she became a sex worker because she ran out of options, though this was perhaps partly true. Even more worrisome was how Mary downplayed the risks of contracting diseases when she said prostitution was her best option; she indicated that she was less likely to take measures to prevent the spread of disease because she prioritized money over her own health. What was even more disturbing to me was that Mary had a modest level of education that did not tally with what she was doing and with her attitude. She showed me another dimension of the impact of the collapse in Zimbabwe: people were more prepared to take dangerous risks because they felt that they were out of options. Mary said that a condom was her "best friend," meaning that the fear of contracting diseases still bothered her. It is possible that she talked about using condoms in order for me to conclude that she practiced safe sex when that may not have been the case.

I verified the fact that prostitution was not limited to women. My interview with a middle-aged man named Joseph suggested that men were becoming prostitutes in greater numbers than I had initially thought. Joseph was a security guard at Ormonde Shopping Mall in Johannesburg. He came face-to-face with male prostitution because male prostitutes and their clients gave him money to allow them have sex in toilets and dark alleys at the mall. Another informant named JC confirmed what Joseph told me. He said Zimbabwean men were taking advantage of the permissive laws in South Africa to have sex for money.[32] It was a challenge to know whether they were expressing their sexual preferences more freely or out of their need to earn income. JC was a former member of the armed forces in Zimbabwe. In South

[32] Interview with JC, Johannesburg, November 20, 2010.

Africa, he worked as a bouncer at a club in central Johannesburg. He knew several male and female Zimbabwean prostitutes. His comments also dovetailed with those of Sandra, another female prostitute I interviewed in Zimbabwe, but who had lived in Johannesburg before and went there regularly.[33] Sandra said prostitution was more profitable in South Africa than in Zimbabwe, because of higher rates of unemployment in Zimbabwe, which limited people's ability to spend money on prostitutes, and also because of public campaigns against HIV and AIDS; the risks, however, were higher in South Africa. From the stories of Rudo, Mary, Joseph, and JC, I was able to draw a link among poverty, the personal choices of some migrants to become prostitutes, and the spread of HIV and AIDS.

At least four main points are evident in the foregoing discussion about prostitution among Zimbabweans in South Africa. These underline the risky social conditions of Zimbabweans in general, and especially low-income migrants. Although the statistics were a challenge to get, partly because of the unregulated and secretive nature of the industry, I assumed that people became part-time or full-time sex workers due to narrow economic options. The cases of both Rudo and Mary show that they became prostitutes only when their initial career choices failed, at least from what they said. Rudo and Mary's choices to become prostitutes despite their relative education and training showed how Zimbabwe's plunge devalued people's educational qualifications. Both ended up in the same lower social class as their counterparts who had little or no education and training. As their education and skills were rendered of little value, their own social and economic value dwindled, and their sense of self-worth diminished. They felt discomfort and anger at being called prostitutes because of the social stigma attached to the work.

[33] Interview with Sandra, Harare, February 4, 2011.

The example of Rudo showed that lower-end prostitutes were trapped in poverty. This reduced their chances of moving on to higher income and less-risky work. However, rather than lose hope, some of them still believed in brighter futures. Rudo held onto the dream of returning to her former profession of nursing and being reunited with her family. These hopes existed alongside fears, such as those of disease and dying in a foreign country. Rudo represented the views of other prostitutes when she spoke of her fear of getting sick. From what she said, it was evident that the fear of catching diseases was pervasive among sex workers. Prostitutes in South Africa in general were at high risk of getting sick; however, those from Zimbabwe were at an even higher risk because of their low social and economic status in a foreign country. Their poverty and desperation usually drove them to take risks other sex workers would not take. The worst experience for Rudo and her friends, including South Africans, was when clients refused to wear condoms during intercourse. Rudo said some men insisted on having sex without a condom even after being educated about the risks of unprotected sex. Although some women refused to entertain such clients, not all were able to do so all the time. Men could turn violent and beat up sex workers for refusing to have sex without a condom, as well as for demanding payment.[34]

Sex workers were sometimes forced to risk their lives because they were desperate for clients and money. Rudo said this dilemma was common to all sex workers. The dilemma arose when clients offered more money than the usual rate to have unprotected sex. Rudo experienced this problem personally, and she admitted to having made bad choices out of desperation for money to pay for rent and food, and to meet other urgent needs. Sex workers themselves were not united, and appeared not to have full control over their bodies. I was told of cases in which

[34] Interview with Rudo, Johannesburg, Saturday March 12, 2011.

sex workers gave in to their clients' unsafe sex demands for fear of losing business to another prostitute. The fear of going home without money for their needs thus narrowed people's choices when it came to having safe sex. The words of the three women also indicated how men were culpable and had to share the blame for the spread of infectious diseases.

Zimbabwean prostitutes said they were fully aware of the risks to their lives posed by the work they did. They claimed to take measures to reduce their vulnerability. They said they took part in some public health campaigns, particularly those about the social and economic circumstances bearing on health. In the area of HIV and AIDS, they said their efforts were to talk about the positive impact of prevention and treatment. My interviews and informal discussions showed that people were open to talking about safe sex, HIV and AIDS, which revealed the progress made by public education campaigns, including efforts to de-stigmatize diseases. The views of my informants tally with some of the findings of NGOs, some of which are involved in the fight against the social marginalization of immigrants. Organizations such as Doctors without Borders have consistently raised awareness about the marginalization of migrants, and have tried to meet some of their material health needs.[35] The Zimbabwean migrants to whom I spoke were vocal in raising awareness that their levels of poverty and social marginalization raised their exposure to activities that could result in disease. At the same time, their status as foreigners in their host countries hindered them from gaining access to good healthcare. They were usually unable to afford hospital and prescription fees. They faced negative attitudes and practices from healthcare employees.[36] These challenges

[35] Médecins Sans Frontières, *No Refuge, Access Denied: Health and Humanitarian Needs of Zimbabweans in South Africa* (Johannesburg: MSF, June 2009), 13–18.
[36] Jonathan Crush and Godfrey Tawodzera, "Medical Xenophobia: Zimbabwean Access to Health Services in South Africa," Migration Policy Series No. 54 (Cape Town: SAMP, 2011).

complicated their efforts to adjust to life in South Africa, and some of their energy was aimed at redressing these malpractices.

Conclusion

The main reason large numbers of Zimbabweans left their country abruptly in the 2000s to live in other countries like South Africa was to escape Zimbabwe's economic crisis and to look for employment. In this chapter, I explored some Zimbabwean migrants' employment experiences. My argument was that their employment experiences were central to their overall life experiences in another country. I noted that many people had to deal with the tension between having high education and professional skills on one hand, and limited job opportunities on the other. This was itself a reflection of economic stagnation in South Africa. I described some of the obstacles migrants faced in their search for jobs, including their temporary residence status. Despite these challenges, people were assertive that something positive was occurring in their lives, and it is this that was intriguing. It enabled me to show the existence of multiple realities in their lives. I grappled with the reality of economic marginalization, which is well-represented in the academic literature, and also that of material progress. This second dimension seems less plausible, but it was one that the people to whom I spoke sought to promote. They claimed that despite living in poverty, they were still managing to survive and help their families in Zimbabwe.

Some of the people who left Zimbabwe and settled in South Africa exchanged one set of problems for another. While this was the case, it is important to realize that some of the problems they faced in Zimbabwe were of a different nature from those they faced in South Africa. The problem of unemployment exemplifies this. People's chances of finding jobs in Zimbabwe were almost non-existent in the 2000s, because the national economy was shrinking

at an alarming rate. When people arrived in South Africa, their chances of getting jobs improved; because the South African economy functioned, although the competition for jobs was still tough. The only difference was that migrants experienced various levels of deskilling. Most of them ended up in labor-intensive and menial job, which are shunned by locals. In terms of their social lives, my interviewees made it clear that their problems were no longer of the same nature. In Zimbabwe, they were unable to meet basic needs, such as food, water, and medical care; even when they had money to pay for goods and services. In South Africa, they could meet these basic needs, although they confronted other concerns which had not bothered them in Zimbabwe, such as xenophobia and higher levels of violent crime. At the end, migrants were more prepared to face social problems in South African than economic and political problems in Zimbabwe.

The narratives of continuing socioeconomic marginalization and material progress are even more stark in their contrast to one another when we consider the lives of Zimbabweans in middle- and upper-income brackets. I did not draw much from these groups and my conclusions might have been different if I had probed the lives of university professors, healthcare personnel, businesspeople, sports stars, retail operators, and musicians; their stories support the narrative of betterment more effectively than the stories of the poor. The stories of the poor to whom I spoke reveal their efforts at and desire for success. What I did here was to represent their views, showing that these did not always tally with reality, but that they were worthy reciting due to their inherently subjective nature. Sometimes people promoted the narrative of betterment because they were talking to a fellow Zimbabwean. Saying they were making progress even when they were not was a way of maintaining their personal dignity and

self-esteem. The tension between what people said and how they actually lived also comes out in the next chapter, which focuses on the social conditions of the migrants with whom I spoke.

Chapter 5

Confronting the Paradoxes of Migrant Adjustment

Introduction

One early morning in 2008, I was at Marabastaad Retail Market in Pretoria/Tshwane, South Africa. I was waiting for a commuter bus to take me to Suncrest, a farming community on the outskirts of the city. I mingled with the market crowd for a while, before I entered a restaurant located on the south of the market. The sound of familiar music drew me to the restaurant and the latest songs by Zimbabwe's top singers, like Oliver Mutukudzi, Thomas Mapfumo, Nicholas Zakaria, and Alick Macheso, filled the air. When I got in the restaurant, the server approached me confidently and asked me a question in my language, Shona: *"Ndokupai chii?"* (What can I get you?"). I bought something to drink and sat close to the pool table to watch a group of people play. Everyone around me spoke in Shona, which surprised me a little. Soon I started feeling as if I was in Harare, Zimbabwe's capital city, when in actual fact, I was in South Africa!

My experience above leads me to the main focus of this chapter: the strategies Zimbabweans used to adapt to living in South Africa. My story above illustrates some of the ways people transition when they have left familiar territory and are thrown into a new and unfamiliar setting. The very experience of being in a new place was a problem. I did not know anybody. I was anxious about getting lost, getting mugged, failing to connect with my contacts, and not having a place to sleep. There was a need to find ways to deal with the problem of being a foreigner in South Africa; or at least that was what I felt. Luckily, the loud and familiar music

drew me to the restaurant and my interaction with the people was made easier because they spoke a familiar language. Despite developing more confidence, I did not forget that I was a new person in an alien environment. Upon further reflection, it dawned on me that I was engaged with the process of migrant adjustment – and then I wanted to know how other people had grappled with the problem of adapting to different social environments, and how they explained it.

By adaptation, I mean the process whereby a person encounters a new or unfamiliar set of circumstances and is compelled to *change* something about himself or herself so as to create harmony between the old and the new. In this chapter, I frame the process of migrant adjustment in the context of Zimbabweans in South Africa as something that began with the existence of a problem and then moved towards a solution. In other words, migrant adjustment was a way of solving a social problem. In the lives of the Zimbabweans I studied, the problem was that of being foreigners. Building familiarity and nurturing a sense of belonging were what constituted migrant adjustment or "figuring things out." I illustrate the process of adjustment by isolating another pertinent problem Zimbabweans faced in South Africa, the scarcity of housing, which was a direct hindrance to their efforts to establish a foothold in a foreign land.

The Zimbabweans with whom I spoke encountered a new set of economic, social, and cultural conditions when they moved to South Africa. These conditions required them to adjust how they lived in order to fit into a new environment. Adapting to new conditions involved adopting new norms, but also retaining old ones. In this chapter, I do three things. First, I examine how these people navigated unfamiliar social environments and tried to forge a sense

of belonging. Second, I look at how they maintained ties with family and friends. My own personal experiences meeting other people from Zimbabwe at Marabastaad prompted me to explore this facet in greater detail. The question of how people expanded their social networks and forged ties with new people intrigued me. I describe people's strategies for integration and whether they were successful. Third, I go beyond what people said and pay attention to how things appeared to be. This was helpful, because people chose to emphasize how successful they were at networking and integrating, but I discovered layers of ambiguity and contradictions pointing to the coexistence of multiple realities such as the persistence of loneliness and social marginalization. This chapter contributes to the main arguments of the dissertation in a number of ways. I explore the everyday social conditions of migrants and the problems they faced. A focus on the solutions they devised, the quality of lives they lived, and how well they were able to integrate with South Africans is also vital. On a broader theoretical level, my interest on their living conditions leads to an exploration of how they sought to satisfy social needs after settling in a different and usually alienating environment.

In this chapter, I draw from personal interviews with sixteen Zimbabweans living in South Africa. My informants were Deezert, Nyenge, Teekay, Zivanai, Shaleen, Callen, Mai Rwizi, Brix, Naboth, Jason, Dzimez, David, Tonde, Zivai, Monya, and Dan. The testimonies of Deezert and Teekay were particularly illuminating. They considered themselves to have mastered life in South Africa, and spoke about how comfortable they were getting around. I discovered that they were, in fact, fearful of crime and socially insecure, despite their talk of being masters. Apart from interview material, my analysis also draws from the secondary literature and from the work of humanitarian NGOs.

The rest of the chapter proceeds as follows. The first three sections address some of the main strategies newcomers from Zimbabwe used to adapt to new social environments after their arrival in South Africa and during the course of their stay in the country. I explore how they adapted by living with other Zimbabweans whenever they could, and by forging a sense of togetherness through informal solidarity networks. In the second section, I show how they adapted through the use of modern communications technology, primarily the cellular phone. The third section shows that people were able to learn local languages quickly, which to eased communication and facilitated their adjustment. Occasionally, Zimbabweans also changed their manners in an attempt to pass as South Africans. My discussion of migrant adjustment strategies shows that people's words culminated in a narrative of gaining mastery over a new social setting. In the fourth part of the chapter, I examine some of the social problems people faced, such as living in poor housing. This lowered people's quality of life and undercut the narrative of mastery. The final section of the chapter continues on the theme of how people dealt with social marginalization. I present some of the personal strategies they used to try to alleviate the problem of scarce and poor accommodation.

"We don't have anything, but we are together."

Many Zimbabweans I met in South Africa during my fieldwork usually admitted that they lived precariously. This was due to unemployment, low incomes, crime, and other forms of discrimination or violence committed by the state and local South Africans. The sub-heading above is a statement by Deezert that refers to the difficulty of living in poverty, one of the main challenges in Zimbabweans' efforts to adapt and integrate – although Deezert felt that being together with other Zimbabweans mitigated this hardship somewhat, as I discuss below.[1]

[1] Interview with Deezert, Crown Mines, November 18, 2010.

Many of the obstacles they talked about astounded me. I found myself wondering, as Westerners usually do, how low-income and poor people survive. Most of the people I met and spent time with did not drive fancy cars. They did not live in large and well-furnished houses. They did not wear expensive clothes, and they were usually underemployed. They certainly lived on less than a (Canadian) dollar a day. How did they cope and make meaning out of life? In the midst of all this, the Zimbabweans with whom I spoke still wanted me to understand that "life goes on."

The statement by Deezert that "[w]e are poor, but we are together," also carried an answer to the question of how people made meaning out of life: migrant adjustment through a sense of togetherness. The importance of this was expressed by many people I interacted with, albeit in different ways. It is therefore vital to explore in some greater detail the extent to which togetherness played a part in Zimbabweans' efforts to adapt to life in South Africa. The people I interviewed wanted me to believe that they had a lot of hope that their lives would improve. They went on to present me with narratives of mastery and social integration. I asked them where their hope came from, and they mentioned a lot of social activities that kept them occupied. These activities included participation in recreational events, strolling through city parks, watching sports, attending weddings, going to church, and visiting friends and family. As an outsider, I did not take these social activities seriously, initially, thinking that they were not important to my research. But in fact, people cherished and celebrated them and I gradually saw their importance in people's lives. People described their daily activities at length to prove that their lives were not all about misery and hardship. This narrative of mastery is important to capture, because it flies in the face of the dominant NGO and academic literatures, which are mainly about people's misery, and downplay their positive stories.

Bringing up and appreciating the narrative of mastery is important, but it is also necessary to interrogate it – because not all that was said was accurate, but everything was said for a reason.

I asked my interviewees the question, "How were you able to adjust to living here [in South Africa] after your arrival?" Nine people said they knew someone already in the country who took them home from the main bus terminus in central Johannesburg. People like Tonde said it was "not that difficult" to get around because a relative was available to show them the way. Three people, Deezert, Yellow, and Teekay, said it was "very difficult," because they were unable to connect with their contacts and ended up stranded at the Central Methodist Church. Searching for jobs became even harder because they had to find a better place to live, as the police constantly raided the church. All the people I questioned initially focused their answers on the days and weeks after their arrival, which was the most difficult time. However, they came to understand that adjustment was a process, not an event. They estimated periods of between a month and more than a year to be their adjustment timeframes. I got the sense that those who went to South Africa after 2008 may have found it relatively easy to get around. This was because there were many Zimbabweans by then, which made it relatively easy to meld and escape police detection. Also, immigration laws were a bit more lax in the late 2000s, which enabled people to focus more on finding jobs and places to live than on running away from the police.

The underlying message I got from these conversations was that people's ability to connect with relatives, find friends, and forge new ties with other people was the most vital skill they used to tame the unfamiliar. This dependency on social networking skills supports Robert Putnam's theory of social capital. Putnam defined social capital as features of social

organization, including networks, norms, and social trust, that favour coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit.[2] He borrowed some of his ideas on social capital from Alexis de Tocqueville, who traced American democracy to a vibrant civil society in the 19th century. de Tocqueville and Putnam both claimed that Americans nurtured strong social engagement and fostered open discussion of common political and economic issues through informal and formal associations. These discussions helped to generate and disseminate important information and knowledge, enabling citizens to make informed decisions on key aspects of life. Putnam further noted that social capital was a vital tool for social integration, and that it raised individual productivity.

Putnam's theory of social capital applies to Zimbabweans living in South Africa. Due to close proximity and modern technology, most of them actively maintained social ties with people in Zimbabwe, while they established new networks abroad. The people I interviewed said they either called or sent text messages to relatives and friends in Zimbabwe at least once a week. Half of them said they communicated with people in Zimbabwe daily, mostly their parents and other relatives, exchanging the day's greetings. Only two people said they contacted their relatives in Zimbabwe only "once in a while." Zimbabweans said they used many channels of communication to stay in touch. They used social media, letters, word of mouth, and return visits. My interviews thus suggested the existence of enduring and strong ties of communication between Zimbabweans in South Africa and those still in Zimbabwe, which is a key feature in the lives of migrant populations elsewhere.[3] However, I also believe that some

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[2] Robert D. Putnam, "Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital," *Journal of Democracy* 6(1): 1995, 65-7.
[3] Philomena Okeke-Ihejirika. "Home-Sweet-Home, but Exactly Where? African Women's Immigration and the Challenge of Establishing Selves," in *Gendering Transformations: Culture, Race, and Identity in Africa and Her Diaspora,* edited by Chima Korieh and Philomena Okeke (London: Routledge, 2009), 150–66.

of my informants exaggerated the frequency of their contact with people in Zimbabwe. It was a social expectation among migrants to maintain strong social ties with family and relatives. Failure to do so brought strong community censorship. People would not have wanted to admit that they did not maintain strong ties for fear of appearing to be negligent.

Zimbabweans adapted to new environments by building new networks with fellow migrants, and with South Africans. Some of these ties were short-lived and established only for immediate gain. Others were more durable, depending on the purpose. My research showed that people were anxious and prepared to build new ties as quickly as possible, because these were advantageous to their bid to access scarce resources. I discovered a great deal of interdependence among migrants, which made it easier for them to manage scarce resources. They relied on each other for vital information about the journey from Zimbabwe, about living in South Africa, and about job opportunities. There was a strong sense of community and togetherness in how they shared vital supplies like food and housing. This togetherness increased their trust in each other, which built a sense of personal and group security. Adherence to communal living standards of sharing food, accommodation, clothes, and other resources, particularly among those with a rural background, was vital.

The yearning for and practice of group solidarity was more pronounced among people living in Lebowakgomo than among those in the larger and more alienating urban areas. A young man named David said, "If we have to move to Johannesburg, we move together. No one should move alone, and no one should stay behind."[4] His words indicate how people created a sense of togetherness, which was vital to overcoming fear and loneliness. People also shared

[4] Group interview with David and others, Lebowakgomo, November 18, 2008.

sleeping space, food, drinks, cigarettes, and other necessities and comforts. This was a key strategy for coping with poverty. They also lived in close proximity to each other and visited one another frequently. As an outsider, I found it hard to find out where someone lived, because many people shared sleeping quarters and ate together. Many of these bonds had originated in Zimbabwe. They were more common among those who attended the same schools, and among those who came from the same villages and areas. Some of the bonds were based on totems and others on intermarriages. Some people worshipped together and thus stuck together even when they did not have prior knowledge of each other. Many Zimbabweans attended churches that were also attended by South Africans. Religious beliefs thus played a part in how Zimbabweans navigated new social and cultural spaces in South Africa. Some of their beliefs pertained to spiritual healing and protection from evil attacks. This was an area people like Dzimez emphasized when they invoked spirituality to explain their safety in an unfamiliar environment.[5]

Migrants also relied on many social activities to stay close to each other. Drinking parties, music, and sports events were key features in their lives. They played mostly Zimbabwean and South African music to entertain themselves and to enhance their sense of integration. These activities created a sense of community and kept them united. To an outsider like me, drinking and playing music seemed trivial. But for other people, including a young male Zimbabwean named Tonde, these things were hugely important. A lot of people used their knowledge of local music to fit into different local social circles. Tonde said his knowledge of South African music and his dancing abilities enabled him to make new friends, and to integrate more easily

[5] Interview with Dzimez, Lebowakgomo, November 14, 2008.

with locals.[6] People even mistook him for a South African, an image he actively cultivated for quicker integration. Zimbabweans also depended on sports events to entertain themselves. They were joyful when South Africa hosted the 2010 FIFA World Cup tournament. They literally forgot their troubles when the senior national soccer team of Ghana qualified for the quarter-finals.[7] Andrew and Desire expressed the views of other migrants when they said the World Cup tournament took away a lot of stress. They celebrated the success of South Africa's bid to host the tournament. They also cheered for their favourite teams during the tournament, in addition to following local sports leagues. Events such as the World Cup tournament created both job opportunities and entertainment for Zimbabweans and others.

Family visits were another prominent way for exiles to rekindle relationships and foster a stronger sense of community. I was able to see the significance people attached to such visits on a Saturday afternoon in November of 2008. A bus pulled up at the side of a dirty road to drop off a passenger, a middle-aged woman. The woman, who was well-dressed, smiled as she talked on a cell phone. She looked around like someone lost. Then she burst out laughing when she saw a group of eight people, young men and women, running towards her to welcome her. They shook hands and hugged before they walked to a nearby house, talking cheerfully. The woman was named Nyenge, originally from Zimbabwe, but now living in Pretoria, South Africa. On this day, she was visiting her three brothers, Dan, Naboth, and Nomore, who lived in Lebowakgomo, South Africa. The three brothers took their sister home, and it was not long before the house was packed with people, most of them from Zimbabwe. A few of the people who joined were local South Africans. The house became a hive of activity,

[6] Interview with Tonde, Johannesburg, October 22, 2010.
[7] Interview with Nyade, Desire, Bee, and Andrew, Johannesburg, October 23, 2010.

with people preparing food, bringing out drinks, and blasting loud music. The guest of honour herself stayed for only a few hours, and then went back to Pretoria in a vehicle, which she just flagged down and stopped on the roadside. However, the party did not stop when she left; it spilled over into the following week. People continued to talk about it for several weeks after.

I witnessed several other visits among Zimbabweans, similar to the one described above. The visits were among my interviewees in Pretoria, Lebowakgomo, and in Johannesburg. I noticed some important patterns and started to think about what these visits meant in people's lives. People seemed to attach great importance to these visits, which they celebrated with much pomp and fanfare. Upon further inquiry, I started to gather some statements used to capture the significance of family visits. For example, when they talked about Nyenge's visit, people said, "We celebrate because the one who was lost has been found." From this statement, it was clear that people got "lost," both literally and metaphorically, when they moved across borders. People lost their contacts in the process of moving from Zimbabwe to South Africa or between different places within South Africa. This could happen because of something simply, like their phones getting lost or were stolen, or because of larger matters, like the sheer size of South Africa. Their whereabouts would then become unknown for a period of time. This is why they celebrated when they came together. During Nyenge's visit, I noticed that all kinds of people called her "sister." She in turn called them "brothers," although she was meeting them for the first time. This reminded me of when I had introduced my friend David to a group of my playmates in Edmonton in the summer of 2006. When I told them David was my "brother," one of them asked, "Really? You guys don't look the same. Is he your *real* brother? I mean, your *real* brother?" In the context of Zimbabweans in South Africa, words that denote relationships, such as "brother," "sister," or even "homeboy" acquired greater

usage and new meanings. It was through their usage that people strengthened their affection for each other, thus creating stronger social ties that enabled them to feel more secure in foreign spaces.

These ideas of group solidarity were important for people to be able to *feel* that they were together. At times, they dissolved when people decided to pursue personal routes. This is what happened to the group of people I met and interviewed in Lebowakgomo. Some of them had lived together for close to a year, and yet many joined and left the group as circumstances dictated. Most of them moved into the interior of South Africa individually, and they were all dispersed by the end of 2010. Some of them returned to Zimbabwe after a few years in South Africa. But what was important at the time was the sense of togetherness they instilled in each other. What we see from these developments is the difference between what people said and what they actually did.

Using modern communications technology

Zimbabweans were also able to navigate new social conditions in South Africa by taking advantage of modern communications technology. People relied on cell phones to stay in contact with their families in Zimbabwe, and to reach out to friends, relatives, and acquaintances living elsewhere. Because most people felt a need to keep in touch, they regarded cell phones as a necessity. Exchanging phone numbers was a common thing for people to do. We can see this from what Jason, a migrant in his thirties, said. He said having a phone in his pocket made him feel "safe and powerful," because he could pass information on to others quickly.[8] With cell phones, the world was literally at people's fingertips. They

[8] Interview with Jason at Marabastaad Retail Market, Pretoria, Monday November 10, 2008.

could access world news, and important information about jobs and social gatherings of interest. It was easy for them to learn about pertinent current affairs, including social unrest, crime, and volatile situations like xenophobic attacks in South Africa through their phones.[9] People also used their phones to listen to music, to use as a flashlight, or simply to show their social status.[10] Other positive things people said about their phones included the ability to request a return call when they did not have credits or airtime to call. This was quite convenient for working-class and other low-income people like Dan. Dan said he used the callback feature quite often. Interestingly, he did not like other people asking him to call them back for fear of using up his credits. Poor people were more likely to use this feature than those who could afford more airtime.[11]

Recent studies have shown how modern communications technology has helped migrant communities to integrate more quickly into host societies. My research about mobile phones dovetails with the work of Mirjam de Bruijn and other scholars.[12] They have explored how cell phones revolutionized communications in Africa. Migrants yearned to have access to cell phones not merely to place a call or to send a text message, but also to surf the Internet.[13] Surfing the Internet and sending emails was relatively cheaper and more convenient than going to Internet cafés, where the computers were usually slow and the cost high. A migrant named Cullen, who was in his thirties, mainly used his phone to go on social platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp. People without phones could get lost easily, as was the case with

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[9] Group interview with Dan, Rebecca, Tira, and Nyenge, Lebowakgomo, November 2008.
[10] Interview with David in Lebowakgomo, February 5, 2009.
[11] Interview with Dan in Lebowakgomo, December 18, 2008.
[12] Mirjam de Bruijn, Francis Nyamnjoh, and Inge Brinkman, "Introduction: Mobile Communications and New Social Spaces in Africa," in *Mobile Phones: The New Talking Drum of Everyday Africa,* edited by Mirjam de Bruijn, Francis Nyamnjoh, and Inge Brinkman (Bamenda, Leiden: Langaa RPCIG, African Studies Centre, 2009), 11–16.
[13] Interview with Cullen, Johannesburg, November 18, 2010.

Jocelyn. She lived a short distance from her friend Miriam, but the two were unable to stay in touch most of the time because Jocelyn did not have a phone.[14] Jocelyn's situation was common among migrants, who were often lost to their peers because they lived in remote locations. It is also possible that people like Jocelyn chose to isolate themselves by not having a phone or by changing their phone numbers to avoid social responsibilities.

People celebrated the usefulness of cell phones in helping them master new social territory. However, a closer look also revealed that having a cell phone in one's pocket could invite disaster. One of the major drawbacks of having a cell phone in South Africa was that they attract robbers easily. More than 100,000 cell phones were stolen each year in South Africa between 2005 and 2008.[15] Some of these were stolen with the use of violence and the use of dangerous weapons like knives and guns. People like Deezert and his wife had been victims of cell phone robbers on many occasions.[16] Robberies and other forms of violent crime were a common occurrence, especially in towns and cities. Robbers targeted handbags, cash, and cell phones, which they resold at giveaway prices. Such was the fear of losing cell phones that the majority of women preferred to put phones and money in their bras, rather than in their handbags. They believed this would deter robbers, as they would be more likely to notice an attack and scream for help.[17] Despite these setbacks, it was obvious that access to modern tools of communication was one of the ways migrants were able to get around because they could access vital information easily.

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[14] Miriam, Facebook communications to the author, October 13, 2012.
[15] Clayton Barnes, "Don't Block Your Stolen Cellphone," *Iol News*, http://www.iol.co.za/news/south-africa/dont-block-your-stolen-cellphone-413577, accessed on August 23, 2008.
[16] Interview with Deezert in Crown Mines, November 8, 2010.
[17] Interview with Faith, Johannesburg, November 8, 2010.

Adjustment using local languages and habits

Another of the important strategies Zimbabweans used to adapt to new social realities in South Africa was learning local languages as quickly as they could. Newcomers from Zimbabwe could generally communicate in English and in vernacular languages like Shona, as I did at Marabastaad Retail Market. However, their daily interactions with South Africans compelled them to learn local languages like Zulu, Venda, Xhosa, and Sotho. People from the Matabeleland parts of Zimbabwe found it easier to integrate, as they speak Ndebele, which is also spoken in parts of South Africa and is closely related to Zulu. This language advantage was one of the reasons Ndebele-speakers from Zimbabwe often claimed to be South Africans. They spoke South African languages more easily than people from Shona-speaking parts of Zimbabwe.[18] The ability to learn and use local languages was thus one of the main ways people used to traverse new social scenes. People I interviewed said they spoke at least one of the eleven indigenous languages of South Africa. It took most people about three months to understand the basics of local languages. They learned the languages without formal training, from everyday usage. What helped them was that South Africans are reluctant to speak to foreigners in English. They prefer to speak local languages, which forces foreigners to learn or be left out of everyday social interaction. I had countless personal experiences of this myself and was easily persuaded when other people told me they were able to integrate faster by learning to communicate using local languages.

Naturally, the people I interviewed were more open and felt more secure when they spoke to each other and to me in Zimbabwean languages. It was easy for people to meet each other

[18] Interview with Faith, Johannesburg, November 8. 2010.

after recognizing, through their common language, that they both came from Zimbabwe. They would band together and develop friendships more easily because of a common language. This is what my experience at Marabastaad Retail Market showed. There was a higher level of practical and strategic openness to locals among migrants. As Antoine Pécoud has noted, this openness tends to be more pronounced and necessary among vulnerable individuals and groups of people. Their usual efforts to move among different cultural milieux in spaces characterized by discrimination and insecurity compels them to be more open than usual.[19]

Speaking the same language and forging friendships were prominent features in the social lives of Zimbabweans in Crown Mines. A strong friendship bond existed between Deezert and Teekay. They spent most of their time together, although they lived in separate housing units. Deezert expressed their strong bond of friendship by saying, "We don't have anything, but we are together."[20] This was a powerful statement he used to shift emphasis from their condition of material lack to a celebration of togetherness. Their bond was so strong that it was the nucleus of a solidarity network of Zimbabweans in Crown Mines. They advised other people about jobs, how to apply for residence permits, and how to upgrade academic and professional qualifications. They also offered others financial help and acted as informal employment brokers. Their level of unity was rare, especially in an urban place like Johannesburg. In such a setting, friendships were based on a different set of factors, such as levels of education, career backgrounds, and age. People came together as friends and co-workers, showing how new ties in urban spaces complemented old communal ones.

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[19] Antoine Pécoud, "Entrepreneurship and Identity, Cosmopolitanism and Cultural Competences among German-Turkish Businesspeople in Berlin," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies,* 30 (1) 2002, 3–20.
[20] Interview with Deezert and Teekay, Johannesburg, October 22, 2010.

People's relationships and sense of togetherness seemed solid at times, but they could also be brittle and fleeting. What I saw were contradictions that suggested that people really believed in and lived the idea of togetherness, but were prepared to let it fall away when it did not promote their personal interests. Similarly, people held on to the feeling of friendship more than to friendship itself. The feeling of friendship gave them an assurance and sense of emotional security that would otherwise have been absent. Even when people invoked the idea of belonging and depended on it in many ways as migrants, they were prepared to move on and pursue more personal ambitions when it suited them. The transient nature of people's relationships was caused by loyalties that drew upon different factors. These factors included where they came from, kinship ties, levels of education, and whether they had rural or urban backgrounds. These friendships of a fractured played out in the case of Teekay and Deezert. They were very close for five years, but it was because they lived in each other's vicinity and saw each other daily. Their friendship dissolved, however, when Teekay moved out of Crown Mines. They were still friends on Facebook, but they did not exchange messages any more. They never bothered to call each other, and what really remained was the idea that they were friends. This showed that personal bonds tended to be less stable among those in urban areas, whose likelihood of moving from one place to another rose as they sought better opportunities. Migrants tried to adjust against the background of individualistic tendencies, and they dealt with inevitable social disconnections.

People strove to stay together for the obvious advantages reviewed above. However, some divisions still existed within the close partnerships of migrants, usually because of personal choices. The narrative of unity and mastery discussed above also coexisted uneasily with one of individualism and disconnections. People who drank the same brands of beer or smoked the same type of cigarettes were close to one another; those who did not have the same tastes

could be worlds apart. We learn this from Zivanai, a young unmarried man from Zimbabwe. He claimed that he did not hang out with people who drank *gojo* (undistilled beer), or those who smoked unprocessed tobacco. He claimed to drink distilled beer only, and he said if he did not have money for it, he simply would not drink. Zivanai also claimed that opaque beer upset his stomach and that it was for the "lazy and poor."[21] His sentiments were not limited to Zimbabweans in South Africa, but prevailed elsewhere. In Zimbabwe, people who drank distilled beer also stigmatized undistilled beer, although this was less pronounced. Two types of opaque beer were available for sale in Zimbabwe. One was served in a two-litre container called a "scud," and another was sold on tap. Zivanai did not shun these two types of opaque beer in Zimbabwe. He claimed that they tasted better than what was available in South Africa.

People's choices and habits, such as those Zivanai claimed, revealed how they yeaned to be economically well-off, or at least considered successful. Although he was a poor migrant, Zivanai preferred to drink more expensive beer in South Africa, although he did not mind drinking the cheap beer in Zimbabwe. It is very likely that Zivanai was being dishonest about this. He did not have a job or the money to back his claims. The importance of his words, however, lay in the fact that he wanted to adjust his tastes to match those of people of a higher class, and because he was in an environment with people of higher incomes.

The narrative of mastery presented above was certainly an important part of the social reality of migrants. However, this narrative minimized the effects of displacement from Zimbabwe. It seldom mentioned the disconnections, drifting, and desperation that were a painful reality of people's lives. People had to deal with fear, longing, and loneliness, a fact raised by a female

[21] Interview with Zivanai, Lebowakgomo, November 14, 2008.

migrant named Shaleen. She was in her forties and worked as a maid. Shaleen had never left Zimbabwe before her sojourn to South Africa in 2002. Two of her brothers were also in South Africa, but they did not visit one another. Her sisters were in the UK, but her parents and extended family were in Zimbabwe. This was the first time her family had been completely scattered, showing how the exodus disrupted the nuclear family. This dispersal of families and resultant feelings of loss and nostalgia were common to many Zimbabweans living in exile.[22] Those living closer to Zimbabwe could visit, if they had multiple entry permits and money. This was the case for people like Joseph, Deezert, Nyenge, and others, whose stories I have touched upon in the preceding chapters. The round trips they took between South Africa and Zimbabwe enabled them to master the routes linking the two countries. Return trips also gave travelers social satisfaction. They brought gifts with them and caught up with developments in Zimbabwe. Those who lived in far-off countries like Canada were sometimes kept from regular return trips to Zimbabwe by the high cost of air travel.[23] They dealt with nostalgia through social media platforms, music, sports, food, and regular phone calls to Zimbabwe.

My observations about the sense of loss that was evident in the lives of migrants are similar to those in some of the secondary literature, such as in the work of Eric Worby.[24] His research among Zimbabweans in Johannesburg showed that most of them did not have a fixed address. This was a sign of their disconnection from their surroundings. Homelessness may have affected some of them before they left Zimbabwe, especially after Operation Murambatsvina

[22] This is from my personal experiences, and from informal interaction with Zimbabweans in Edmonton.
[23] Informal discussion with Mablanko, Edmonton, July 13, 2012.
[24] Eric Worby, "Address Unknown: The Temporality of Displacement and the Ethics of Disconnection Among Zimbabwean Migrants in Johannesburg," *JSAS* 36(2)(2010), 417-431.

in 2005.[25] But the fact that they were now homeless foreigners made them even more vulnerable. I also found that at other times, people hid themselves from friends and relatives. Going underground could happen of one's free will or as a result of the disruptive nature of migration. People who chose to self-isolate did so for several reasons. Some of them sought to evade social obligations, such as helping new arrivals. Others were ashamed of their social status in South Africa, especially if their standard of living had gone down. Philemon, an accountant in Zimbabwe, expressed this point candidly. In Zimbabwe, he had lived in a large and well-furnished house in a low-density area. In South Africa, he shared a single-room tin house with two other people on a chicken farm. Their house was so tiny they could fit only a single bed in it. It was also poorly-ventilated, and they slept on the grass outside when it was too hot. They shared a single bathing room with fifty other workers. They lined up to use the bathing room in the early mornings when people took showers. Philemon said he agreed to our interview only because I was his "homeboy." He wanted the world to know the "real" condition of people from Zimbabwe in South Africa. If he had not known me beforehand, he would not have allowed me to see where he lived because of how squalid the place was. As such, in the eyes of those who might have been looking for him, Philemon was lost. He told me that he would come out only when his material conditions had improved, and he wanted people to throw a party when this happened. But the importance of what he said lay in how it gives greater nuance to our understanding of the "real" social condition of migrants.

[25] This was an urban clean-up exercise carried out by the government of Zimbabwe in 2005. It led to the demolition of thousands of shacks and "illegal" houses for poor people, leaving more than 700,000 people homeless, according to a report by the United Nations. For more information, see Maurice Vambe, ed., *The Hidden Dimensions of Operation Murambatsvina in Zimbabwe* (Harare: Weaver Press, 2008).

The foregoing discussion revealed the existence of multiple outcomes in the efforts of migrants from Zimbabweans to adjust to their lives in South Africa. The targets of my study were low-income members of the working class. I argued that their lives were portraits of the contradictions and ambiguities that characterized the ways migrants settled in different parts of South Africa. I have shown the different strategies people used to gain knowledge of where they lived. I have pointed out that people faced a great deal of social disconnection, some of it arising from problems related to a lack of proper housing. In the rest of this chapter, I discuss how this problem affected people and what they did to help themselves.

Homelessness and living in squalor

Zimbabweans who went to South Africa in the 2000s confronted a wide range of personal and social problems. Among these problems were unemployment, hunger, the lack of access to proper housing and medical care, and the ever-present fear of being arrested, abused, and deported back to Zimbabwe. Living with anxiety about possible xenophobic attacks and living in an environment with high rates of crime also robbed people of happiness. All these circumstances contributed to a deep sense of social insecurity, which stalled their efforts to pursue and realize their immigration goals. The overall effect on Zimbabweans' quality of life was clearly negative.

In this section, I focus on one of the major issues Zimbabweans faced in South Africa: housing. My argument is that the housing problems they experienced were among the most critical setbacks in their efforts to adapt. The housing problem took various forms, such as homelessness, residing in overcrowded and squalid conditions, staying in homes without basic

amenities, not having money for rent, and living in fear of eviction. I illustrate these conditions and their impact on people with specific examples I saw during my fieldwork.

My exposition of the social problems people faced, such as homelessness, limited access to housing, and squalid conditions, contributes to the dissertation's thrust in at least two ways. In the first place, I document the reality of how people lived. Second, I pay attention to how people constructed their sense of agency and decision-making. People lived in desperate poverty, sometimes with a horrendous lack of sanitation. However, they still maintained that having left Zimbabwe was the right thing to have done, instead of watching things collapse around them and doing nothing about it. Rarely did they regret having exercised this choice; instead, they celebrated it and felt that their lives had improved as a result. Therefore, what we see in what they were doing is the ambiguity inherent in the existence of hope in the midst of hardship. This ambiguity about whether people really improved their lives by moving out of Zimbabwe and going to live in the slums of South Africa runs through the rest of the dissertation. At a more analytical level, I am also highlighting what is usually hidden in their narratives about their lives abroad. I discovered that rarely did they speak to others about encountering misery when they went back to Zimbabwe. Their stories were mostly about their efforts to acquire material goods and live a good life, which is a fraction of the story. My analysis critiques their self-representations by showing that they moved from collapse to a different kind of poverty, although the wider context gave them hope.

My arguments and conclusions are drawn mainly from my close interaction with the community of Zimbabweans who lived in Crown Mines, who numbered more than 200.[26]

[26] Interview with Deezert and Teekay, Johannesburg, October 22, 2010.

This interaction was through formal interviews, informal conversations, and personal observation, over a period of six months. I also draw some of my main arguments from the secondary and humanitarian literature. I believe that some of the conclusions I draw about the living conditions of people in Crown Mines and in Lebowakgomo may also be applied to those of other communities of migrants, particularly those living in squatter and refugee camps in different parts of South Africa.[27]

The housing conditions of most people who lived in Crown Mines were quite dismaying, especially to an outsider. However, the people who lived there did not seem to be bothered by their situation. They actually considered themselves to be lucky to have a place to live, because they knew of other people who were homeless and slept on the streets. In fact, some of them had been homeless themselves after their arrival in South Africa. For them, having a place to rent, even in a shanty, was an achievement.[28] This does not mean they did not want to live in beautiful homes if they could afford to, but some of them seemed to have resigned themselves to the idea that they could not afford to live in a better place. Although people were happy and said they were well-off to have a place to live in, most of them were reluctant to talk about their housing conditions. They were quick to brush it off as a passing moment and chose to concentrate on other affairs. They were often embarrassed and uneasy with visitors from outside. Because of their reluctance to talk about their living conditions, I gathered much of my material by personally observing what was going on around me, and by spending some of my days in their homes. As time went by, I also became desensitized to some of the squalor around me. Fortunately, this was not before I had written my impressions

[27] UNHCR: The UN Refugee Agency, "Squatter Camp in South Africa Underscores Need for Urban Refugee Policy Review," 23 February 2006, accessed January 7, 2016, http://www.unhcr.org/43fdc3f82.html.
[28] Interview with Andrew, Crown Mines, December 12, 2010.

in my field notebook, describing how some of the houses looked like. What follows is an excerpt from my notebook:

> *August 18, 2010.*
>
> I looked at the state of the houses at one of the compounds. The houses belonged to African mine workers, who used to work at mines located nearby. The mines were abandoned about 10 years ago, because they were no longer profitable. The houses are old and in a state of acute disrepair. Walls and roofs are sagging in. There are large patches of missing paint and cracked and dusty floors. There is a bad odor coming from pools of dirty water from broken taps. There are two types of housing units; brick and cement houses, with electricity, tap water, and toilets, and then shacks without toilets. Landlords and tenants seem to be used to these conditions. They go about their everyday lives dodging piles of trash strewn around and occasionally, there are pools of raw sewage.[29]

From this notebook entry, it is clear that I saw the majority of people in Crown Mines living in squalid conditions. This highlights the shortage of proper homes for working-class and poor people on a large scale in post-apartheid South Africa. In Crown Mines, people from different countries in southern Africa lived together. Some of the people were professionals of higher income levels, who drove top-of-the-range cars. They opted to live there because housing was cheap and their priorities lay elsewhere. The problem of bad housing conditions was not limited to foreigners, but affected people along class lines. These conditions are also common to other low-income African countries. They indicate the persistence of poverty and the failure of governments to tackle the problem of inadequate housing. The lack of adequate housing also underlines the failure of the African National Congress (ANC) to fight poverty and squalor in South Africa. My observations revealed the persistence of income inequality in South Africa, which is marked by extreme levels of poverty, especially among blacks. Their

[29] Author's notebook entry, August 18, 2010.

lives contrast with the lives of whites and the emerging African middle class. The coexistence of affluence and poverty was so stark to me; it was as if South Africa were two countries in one, one for the poor and the other for the rich. The poor housing situation in Crown Mines was not about people's failure; it was a larger problem of poverty and social inequality that African governments have not dealt with adequately. These shortcomings become more apparent when we look at a specific case involving a family from Zimbabwe. The family lived in one of the shacks at Crown Mines, and their situation was worsened when a bulldozer demolished their shack. The shack was brought down because the city council wanted to use the land for something else.[30]

On October 19, 2010, a bulldozer from the local municipality pulled down a tin-and-plastic shack in which a Zimbabwean family lived. A man and his wife, both in their early twenties, and a three-month-old baby lived in the shack. Eight other people, both men and women, also lived in the same shack. Some of them lived there full-time, but others were temporary occupants who appeared to have been using the shack as intermittent shelter. Most of these people were not home when the shack was demolished. Only the woman of the couple, named Mai Rwizi, and her baby were home. With our help, she removed most of her belongings and heaped them outside. The things she was able to save were clothes and blankets, an old mattress, a radio and a television set, music CDs and DVDs, and kitchen utensils. The woman wept quietly as the bulldozer flattened the place in a few seconds. The driver of the bulldozer told her that only that shack was being pulled down that day. It was located on a spot on which a construction company wanted to erect a fence. She was also told that the remaining shacks and possibly the whole compound would be pulled down in a few months. The demolitions

[30] Author's record of a bulldozer driver, Crown Mines, Johannesburg, October 19, 2010.

were to pave way for a new shopping mall to be built by Chinese investors, but we did not have a way of knowing whether this was true or some sort of cover-up.

This incident showed that people could be rendered homeless and destitute without a thought about their welfare. I asked Mai Rwizi how she felt about the destruction of her house.[31] She likened it to Operation Murambatsvina. This was the second time such a disaster had occurred to her, after a similar attack on a shack in which she had been living in Zimbabwe in 2005. By drawing parallels between the South African incident and what took place in Zimbabwe, when the government destroyed poor peoples' homes, Mai Rwizi implied that neither government cared about the poor. She also said: *"Havachatida munyika mavo,"* which means, "They don't want us in their country anymore." This reaction was understandable, coming from someone whose hopes had been shattered, and who did not know what she was going to do to put the pieces back together.

This case of the Zimbabwean family whose shack was pulled down in Crown Mines was not an isolated incident. It was one among many that have occurred in the non-Western world, although the case of Operation Murambatsvina in Zimbabwe is perhaps the best-known. One of the things it exemplifies is the powerlessness of the poor and marginalized. In this case, we see the vulnerability especially of women to state policies that keep them in the vicious cycle of poverty. We can also see from the words of Mai Rwizi that it was easy for Zimbabweans in South Africa to link some of their misfortunes to their status as foreigners, because this was an easy and readily available explanation. What would have been more accurate is to say that both locals and foreigners faced the problem of inadequate housing, but its impact was likely

[31] Interview with Mai Rwizi, Crown Mines, October 19, 2010.

to be more severe for foreigners. At Crown Mines in particular, locals used their personal connections with municipal officials to ensure that their shacks were spared for the time being. This gave them time to look for alternative housing, or rebuild their shacks on other vacant pieces of land. However, on a larger scale, these developments had little to do with people's nationality, but simply showed how the growth of informal economies and settlements in Africa had created new problems for the state. What the continued marginalization of the poor really shows is that the state has been unable to cope with some of the outcomes of dwindling economies, like the proliferation of informal economies and ghettos.[32]

The foregoing discussion supports my proposition that social ills like homelessness and living in squalor hindered the ability of migrants from Zimbabwe to settle down in South Africa. Homelessness and squalor caused misery to individuals, their families, and their friends. It was also a major source of social tension and could lead to conflict and xenophobic violence. To illustrate how this could happen, let us look at another incident I witnessed, again at Crown Mines. It mainly showed how the struggle for a place to live was played out. We learn a few other dynamics that were vital to how Zimbabweans navigated the social terrain of South Africa.

Three weeks after the destruction of Mai Rwizi's shack, another housing incident occurred. Two middle-aged men from Zimbabwe wanted to build a new tin-and-plastic shack for a fellow Zimbabwean. The man, who was looking for a place to live, had gone begging to the other two. He wanted them to build a shack for him and his family in their backyard, as he

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[32] James Heintz, "Employment, Poverty and Inclusive Development in Africa: Policy Choices in the Context of Widespread Informality," in *The Political Economy of Africa,* edited by Vishnu Padayachi (London, New York: Routledge, 2010), 206–11.

had lived on the street with his family for a year. He promised to lend a helping hand with the task of building the shack and he also pledged to pay rent on time. The three of them dug up a trench for the foundation and put some posts in place, but they abandoned the project midway through. The reason they stopped was because their neighbour, a South African landlady named Magogo, had teamed up with her friends to stop them. She told them that too many shacks in the compound caused overcrowding and crime. She stopped them from putting up another cabin in order to maintain "cleanliness, peace, and order." The next quotation sums up how the men reacted.

> The women came here and stopped us from building the cabin. They said it is illegal. We are surprised. This is our landlord's yard, not theirs. Our landlord is from Zimbabwe. He gave us permission to build the cabin, knowing our problem. These women are not on the committee of landlords, but they control everything. We resent them. They have cabins and tenants in their yards. How can they stop us from helping a fellow Zimbabwean? Just wait. We will build the cabin at night.[33]

This angry reaction by these men from Zimbabwe shows us that the struggle for limited resources like a place to live could cause widespread social tension and conflict. At least two things caused this angry reaction from these two men, Madzibaba Zivai and Monya. The first was that women stopped them from building another cabin from which they hoped to make some money. This loss of potential revenue really angered them more than their stated reason for wanting to build the cabin, which was to help a homeless person from Zimbabwe. Second, they were humiliated because a woman had stopped them. They found it remarkable that women exercised power over a male landlord's property simply because their landlord was from Zimbabwe and they were South Africans. The argument that the women stopped the building of a new cabin to prevent overcrowding and bad sanitary conditions was nonsense.

[33] Interview with Madzibaba Zivai and Monya, Crown Mines, November 13, 2010.

They too, had more cabins in their own backyards than those standing in the yard of Zivai and Monya. But the men were powerless to act against the women in this situation because they feared causing even more chaos and straining neighbourly relations.

I would not have bothered to include this incident in my field notes had a large crowd of people not gathered to witness it. A verbal war had ensued between the men from Zimbabwe and the local South African women. Harsh words were exchanged, followed by some pushing and shoving. Battle lines were quickly drawn, and soon the whole drama developed into two groups of people facing each other: one group of South Africans and another of Zimbabweans. The incident almost degenerated into violence. It took the police several hours of negotiations to calm things down. What had started as a housing problem for a family of immigrants almost turned into xenophobic violence involving locals and foreigners.

The scarcity of resources like houses and jobs could easily trigger social violence. The two groups of people who almost fought were able to understand the importance of maintaining good relations. Zimbabweans were scared to escalate the conflict because they feared that South Africans would target them when feelings of xenophobia flared up. For their part, South Africans also feared that Zimbabweans were numerous and united enough to fight back.[34] These dynamics revealed the fear and insecurity that marked the lives of both foreigners and South Africans. Although South Africans had an advantage, they were careful not to exercise abusive domination over migrants. They feared upsetting the balance and causing violent clashes they were not entirely sure of winning. These dynamics of power played themselves out over such things as the construction of new shacks and people's access to water and

[34] Interview with Brix, Crown Mines, October 19, 2010.

electrical power. They point to the fact that living conditions, including the shortage of decent housing, could easily stir social conflict.

Despite the scarcity of accommodation and similar problems, people did not simply sit back and wait for a distant government to help them. Some of them were ambitious. They made individual and group efforts to alleviate the problem of housing shortages. We have seen how low-income and unemployed people decided to live in cheap housing, which was usually unhealthy and unsafe. More than half of Zimbabweans I interviewed were working-class and low-income people. They could not afford housing in medium-density areas like Melville, which cost over 1,500 rands per month. Security guards and domestic workers in South Africa made a monthly income of about 2,000 rands. Much of their income would be spent on rental payments if they chose to live in better houses. Given the fact that some Zimbabweans I spoke to in South Africa worked as security guards and maids, it is not difficult to see why they opted to live in poor houses like tin-and-plastic cabins. I know of a few people, however, who tried to upgrade their lives and went to live in better places. Their experiences are worthy taking a look at, because those people took actions to succeed, no matter how small.

The desire to live in better housing was particularly prevalent among the young and unmarried. They did not have families and could keep their expenses down. Let us look at the experiences of Naboth, who moved from Crown Mines in 2010 to a better place in Turffontein.[35] He moved into a single-bedroom apartment that had a kitchen, which he used as the living room because the flat didn't have an actual living room. He had his own toilet and access to clean tap water. His landlord gave him spare keys to the main gate, enabling him to come home in

[35] Interview with Naboth in Turffontein, Johannesburg, November 29, 2011.

his own time, thus avoiding getting locked out when he was late. Naboth spoke highly of his move, saying, "I left the ghetto, where life is worse than in a prison. Now I live in a better place. It's quieter, and the streets are cleaner here. Even the people belong to a higher class. All my friends want to be like me, for just a month, but they cannot afford the rent. That is why they continue to live in Crown Mines." Naboth said some of his friends wanted to visit him at the new place. He was happy to show them around when they visited. The house had a brick wall and electrical fence around. The landlord had two German shepherds. Naboth's move gave him a feeling of accomplishment and security. He could forget about living in the ghetto, where an expensive entertainment unit of his had been stolen.

Most people did not live in poor housing out of choice. The widespread problem of unemployment and low incomes left them with few options. For example, even after he moved into a better place, Naboth's problem was that he spent almost three times the money he used to spend on rent. At Crown Mines, he had spent less than 300 rands a month on rent; at the new place, he paid 800 rands. With a monthly income of 1,500 rands, Naboth was soon broke. He was unable to buy food, and soon went into debt. His landlord threatened to evict him at a time when had had no friends staying with him, an arrangement that would have helped him by splitting his rent bill; they preferred to stay at the cheaper old compound. Although Naboth looked for a better job to raise his income, his efforts came to naught, and he ended up with more problems than he started with. He was still happy that he had escaped the squalid conditions of Crown Mines, however. Just before the end of 2011, he packed his few belongings and took the bus back to Zimbabwe, leaving a trail of debt and broken promises. With the help of a brother living in Canada, he applied to study for a bachelor's degree at Great Zimbabwe University, having decided to act upon his ambition to get a post-

secondary education. Naboth had believed that he could live in a better place, and took action. He did not end up where he wanted to be, but his peers still admired him for taking a bold decision to change his life.

Some of the actions low-income and unemployed people took to help themselves included living in shared housing to ease shortages. In Crown Mines and Lebowakgomo, both married and single men and women suspended customary standards of privacy in their housing arrangements. They shared rooms and used limited space for multiple purposes. Kitchens were also used as living rooms where people mingled during the day. At bedtime, kitchens became bedrooms, where several families slept. Early in the morning, people folded their blankets and put them away, and the kitchen became a hallway. People also used kitchens as laundry rooms during the day, while younger men juggled soccer balls. All these activities showed how people could use the same space for multiple things. As an outsider, I found some of the arrangements to be awkward, especially when they did not work very well and verbal wars ensued. For example, people fought when women locked kitchen doors at night, keeping men outdoors. Men accused women of gossiping and of monitoring their love affairs, which destabilized these arrangements.[36] Despite looking chaotic, however, the communities I worked in were fully functional, at least from the point of view of their inhabitants. People felt that living together, even in crowded arrangements, helped them cultivate a sense of belonging. Things like sharing space and lending each other food and cooking utensils, which are sure signs of poverty in Western eyes, were perceived as signs of belonging and togetherness.

[36] Interview with Teekay, Crown Mines, December 2, 2010.

None of the people I interviewed in my fieldwork owned their own homes, except Jackie. The rest lived in rented units of various sizes, depending on family size. This is not to downplay home ownership among Zimbabweans in South Africa, as there are people who own homes, businesses, and property; it happened only because my target group of people were low-income, recently migrated, and of modest material means. Only two, Nyenge and Naboth, lived in a home with more than two bedrooms. Nyenge lived on a farm and did not pay rent. Foreigners in rural and semi-rural locations also lived in rented accommodation, but they generally had access to more than two rooms, and to private toilets. Those in urban locations usually rented single or two-bedroom houses. They shared facilities like toilets with other residents of their houses. Among the low-income and unemployed, the chances of purchasing and owning a house were slim, although some of the people interviewed said they owned homes in Zimbabwe. Some of them said they were prepared to live in squalid conditions in South Africa, while sending money to build or maintain better ones in Zimbabwe. It was difficult to know whether they were actually doing this.

From the foregoing discussion, several observations can be made about the housing conditions of recent Zimbabwean immigrants to South Africa. The first observation is that the chances of owning a home among recent arrivals were slim, because of foreign residence status and low incomes. Among the unemployed and low-income people with whom I spoke, living in rented accommodation was the norm. As a result of living in these rented accommodations, their housing standards were poor. People were prepared to live in poor housing conditions, however, rather than spend more on better places. In addition to living in poor housing, which often lacked lighting, clean water, and proper ventilation, people also resorted to shared accommodation. In light of this, we can conclude that the housing

conditions of newcomers led to higher levels of poverty and social marginalization. This conclusion applies to equally to educated people, and to those of urban backgrounds. Most of them did not find good jobs and income soon after their arrival in South Africa, and had to start rebuilding their lives from the bottom.

This section has focused on one of the main social problems Zimbabweans who went to South Africa in the 2000s faced: the problem of housing. I have examined how people encountered this problem, such as experiencing homelessness, living in tin-and-plastic cabins, having their shelters demolished, and struggling to pay rent. I have argued that the housing problem was among the things that affected people's ability to settle down and adjust to living in a new environment. I have used a descriptive analytical approach to shown how people remained hopeful despite these conditions, and highlighted some of the action steps they took to exercise personal initiative. People exercised their agency in different ways. Some residents of Crown Mines said they lived in poor houses but were saving money for luxury cars, expensive phones, flat-screen television sets, and fashionable clothes. Some of their goals were not about living in good places. It was about being able to showcase their status and make people think they were doing well when they visited Zimbabwe. The desire to project this image was also a part of why they thought being in South Africa was a form of accomplishment. The search for social status and prestige is a common form of human behavior and it is well-pronounced among migrants. This tendency to exaggerate social status was evident in countries such as Ireland in the 1970s and 1980s when a large number of men regularly went to England to find work. Men who had nothing in England would do anything they could to look very successful

when they occasionally went back to Ireland for visits.[37] The effort to find a higher status and approval is indeed a powerful impulse in human beings.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I explored the social conditions of Zimbabweans who went to live in South Africa in the 2000s. My emphasis was on the strategies they relied upon to adjust to the common challenges of living in another country. I argued that people were able to make the transition by using a wide range of interpersonal skills. They developed a strong sense of solidarity based on age, sex, and social background. They also maintained close ties with families and friends in Zimbabwe and in South Africa, from whom they drew vital information and social support. I also highlighted their efforts to negotiate with local South Africans for jobs, a place to live, and personal security for integration. In South Africa, they were usually able to learn and use local languages fairly quickly, which enabled them to socialize effectively.

In the last part of the chapter, I presented the living conditions of migrants, which complicated their efforts to adjust. My emphasis was on how migrants struggled to find a place to live and how most of them lived in poor conditions. This reflected their incomes, foreign status, and the short time most of them have been in South Africa. I noted their individual efforts to overturn marginality and to upgrade their living standards. I highlighted the fact that despite living in grim conditions, people still insisted that they had accomplished something, and that their lives were better in South Africa than they had been in Zimbabwe. This was partly

[37] I'm grateful to my editor, Kel Pero, who brought this to my attention and mentioned that there's a play called, "The Kings of the Kilburn High Road" that deals with this a lot.

accurate, because they had left a collapsed economy for one that worked. This made them feel better, but it was not necessarily a true reflection of how their lives had actually changed. Even if their social and financial circumstances remained marginal, however, being in an environment in which things worked sustained their hope. Despite challenges that would make us think of them as victims, which they were in many respects, their situations could be paradoxical. By unpacking that paradox and showing the existence of multiple and competing realities, my analysis has complicated how we understand the lives of people living on the margins. In the next chapter, my inquiry shifts to another key area in the lives of Zimbabweans living aboard: how they perceived the impact of migration on gender.

Chapter 6

Negotiating Gender among Zimbabweans in South Africa

Introduction

The massive exodus of people out of Zimbabwe in the 2000s contributed to notable changes in their understandings of gender. Although people of different ages and social status faced these changes, their impact on married couples was very pronounced. Married men had to perform "women's duties," such as cooking, washing dishes, doing laundry, cleaning the house, and changing diapers. Men's performance of these duties was not new, but they were doing these chores more frequently, in a different environment from their home country, which indicated a cultural shift. Men resented having to do women's duties, and they fought against the changes. But their loss of power was tied to their increasing failure to fulfill their breadwinner roles; and to a rise of their dependence on women for income and sustenance. Women stepped up their efforts to provide for families, while they continued to fulfill their maternal roles. Again, this was not new, but the intensification of the economic crisis in Zimbabwe forced women to join the labour market in larger numbers. This altered the gender division of labour inside and outside the home. The ways in which people *understood and talked* about these changes is the subject of this chapter.

I use the term *gender* to refer to social, cultural and physiological aspects linked to males and females. Gender is how a society defines masculinity and femininity. It is separate from sex, which refers to whether a person is male, female, or transgender. The difference between sex and gender lies in the fact that sex refers to biological characteristics, while gender is socially

ascribed. Gender roles are those expected duties, attitudes, and behaviours a society expects from males and females.[1] Different societies have different ways of determining acceptable levels of flexibility in the performance of gender roles. However, as this chapter seeks to illustrate, in times of rapid social change and crisis, limits are often in a state of flux and redefinition. This usually produces uncertainty about what behavior is appropriate. Gender norms are a society's shared values of behavior. Another useful concept is patriarchy, which is a system of roles and norms in which androcentric structures and codes of social arrangements favour men and sideline or oppress women and children. In a patriarchal society, women's experiences and treatment are usually not of their choice, but a function of norms established by men, usually with the unintentional approval of women.

In this chapter, I focus on how Zimbabweans who migrated and settled in South Africa in the 2000s understood changes in gender roles. I draw on their words to explore how they experienced, understood, and constructed what was changing. My interviews and interaction with them revealed that some of them believed that their exit from Zimbabwe had caused a fundamental redrawing of the gendered division of labour. This perspective was partly true, as this chapter will show. Indeed, notable changes were occurring for some individuals and groups of people, depending on age, education, skills, income, and marital status. However, I argue that people's notions and expression of change was oversimplified and exaggerated. Also, instead of resulting in more gains for women, the changes were tenuous, personal, and of a class nature, rather than being strictly gendered.

[1] Linda L. Lindsey, *Gender Roles: A Sociological Perspective, 3rd Edition* (Prentice Hall: New Jersey, 1997), 2.

My focus is on how men and women from Zimbabwe understood and spoke about gender changes after their settlement abroad. By asking probing questions and listening carefully, I noted that new modes of social interaction between men and women were developing in nearly all aspects of their lives. The household was the main arena at which the changes were most evident. There were changes in how families made choices about employment, money, and raising children. Well-educated and professional women in particular, felt that moving to another country had empowered and helped them consolidate some of their gains from Zimbabwe. They said settling in another country presented opportunities to resist most forms of male dominance. There was evidence that more women were being employed, earning income, and replacing husbands as breadwinners. These women felt that their ability to provide for their families put them in a better position to claim equality with men.

Some women felt that they were in charge of affairs at home. They also felt that their power at work was rising, because some of them had leadership positions and supervised men. Some single women also claimed greater autonomy and self-esteem in both the private and public realms. While people's testimonies seemed to support these changes, I realized that there was a tendency to minimize some of the obvious obstacles they continued to face. These structural challenges included social discrimination due to their foreign status. It also involved abuse by men, including sexual violence, verbal assault, and denied access to economic opportunities. Therefore, while some of the women's claims were true, it is important to question how deep the changes were. Were women really making any substantial progress? Granted, women's new roles often posed a real threat to the stability and comfort of men. As the stories recited below revealed, some men found it hard to handle independent and powerful women. They admitted noticing increasing acts of defiance and disloyalty from their spouses. My analysis

gives a more complex picture of what was really happening in the lives of the people I interviewed. Marital unions have become more disharmonious and vulnerable to collapse in the diaspora. While this trend is also evident in Zimbabwe among people who did not leave the country, there was a widely-shared feeling that marriages were subjected to extra strain by the movement out of the country and settlement abroad. Although several factors can be cited for this increase in tension and divorces, including rising poverty levels, the exodus brought another dimension.

The chapter builds from oral interviews with nine migrant women and five migrant men from Zimbabwe, who lived in South Africa. I present the experiences and testimony of Jackie, a middle-aged migrant woman from Zimbabwe. Her case supports the findings of other studies, which underline the increasing migration of women in different parts of the world over the last two decades, and the economic and social impact of their participation in labour markets.[2] I also use data from an interview with Auntie Maduve, an educated and professional woman, whose views were quite opposed to those of Jackie. I also spoke with Mai Brian and Mai Bee, who were from the low-income bracket and ambivalent about the changing gender roles at the household level. My analysis also draws from interviews with five Zimbabwean men, who confirmed that men's relationships with women changed upon arrival in South Africa. While they appreciated women's contribution to household incomes, they were bitter about living with powerful women, and they blamed women for strained marital relationships and divorces.

[2] Victor Agadjanian and Lesia Nedoluzhko, "Eager to Leave? Intentions to Migrate Abroad among Young People in Kyrgyzstan" (New York: Center for Migration Studies: 2008).

The rest of this chapter is organized as follows. In the first section, I highlight some of the key academic conceptions of gender and the theories that influenced my analysis. I introduce my interview sample briefly, because a detailed discussion of their profiles is available later. A brief overview of the changing patterns of migration out of Zimbabwe in the 2000s is offered, in order to connect this chapter to the themes highlighted in the main introduction. The main body of the chapter explores gender changes through the eyes of women. The highlight of this section is the contrast in the views of an affluent woman named Jackie and a less affluent woman named Auntie Maduve. The experiences of low-income migrant women are also analyzed in the main body of the chapter, followed by a summary and synthesis. The chapter concludes with a focus on men's views on gender. Men also perceived change, but they were not as upbeat as women. In fact, their words showed how they reacted angrily to what was going on, revealing how anxious they were, and also their efforts to come to terms with social changes. Because women's views were more diverse and nuanced than men's, the section devoted to them is disproportionately larger than that devoted to men's views, which were more homogeneous.

The migration and gender scholarship

Much of the scholarship on gender in post-independence Zimbabwe draws from the Marxist tradition. Scholars showed the ways in which the colonial state used legislation and other coercive apparatuses to subordinate Africans.[3] In her study entitled *Peasants, Traders, and Wives*, Elizabeth Schmidt showed how these measures affected men and women in different ways. She noted that women experienced a "double burden," first from the strong arm of the state

[3] Angela P. Cheater, "Industrial Organization and the Law in the First Decade of Zimbabwe's Independence," *Zambezia* XVIII(i)(1991): 1–14.

and then from patriarchy.[4] Schmidt brought to the fore how women played a huge role in the evolution of the colonial state and economy. Her work stimulated further studies, like Diana Jeater's *Marriage, Perversion, and Power,* which analyzed gender and sexuality in early colonial Zimbabwe, showing the impact of violence and colonial occupation on men's and women's perceptions of gender roles.[5] Elsewhere in southern Africa, Marxist feminists like Belinda Bozzoli explored rural-urban migration, production in the African and capitalist economies, marriage, and struggles over the regulation of women's sexuality.[6] They showed how women adapted to a burgeoning urban environment that was not based on kinship networks but on a different set of social relations based on class. Central to the analysis were the ways in which waged labour and the cash economy offered opportunities for men, women, and the young to break free from lineage control. Marxist feminists showed that Africans selectively internalized European concepts of gender to maximize the benefits and reduce the costs of interaction with the colonial regime. My own analysis and appreciation of how both men and women have fared under the current regime of capitalist crisis and migration in southern Africa is partially inspired by these studies. I deploy the framework of class to understand how migrants in different income brackets perceived gender-role changes. My analysis has also been influenced by more recent post-structural theories.

Therefore, this chapter applies both a Marxist and a postmodernist theoretical approach. The Marxist approach enables me to contrast how people of different educational and professional

[4] Elizabeth Schmidt, *Peasants, Traders, and Wives: Shona Women in the History of Zimbabwe, 1870–1939* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1992).
[5] Diana Jeater, *Marriage, Perversion, and Power: The Construction of Moral Discourse in Southern Rhodesia, 1894–1930* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993).
[6] Belinda Bozzoli and Mmantho Nkotsoe, *Women of Phokeng: Consciousness, Life Strategy, and Migrancy in South Africa, 1900–1983* (Martlesham, UK: James Currey, 1998).

backgrounds understood changes in gender. The postmodernist approach enables me to explore arrangements that favour gender inequality like patriarchy as socially constructed phenomenon. The postmodernist argument that power and systems of knowledge are products of everyday words and speech acts also allows me to interpret the words of my informants as part of their efforts both to express and to challenge gender inequality using everyday language. The words of Zimbabwean migrants in South Africa showed that deep-seated values were not expressions of essential realities males and females had experienced. Rather, gender ideas had been challenged by the economic and social realities produced by crisis and migration. As well, men and women alike sought to reshape conceptions of gender by taking on roles formerly reserved for either men or women, and through their words, they either challenged or maintained existing power relations.

My analysis contributes to the extant literature on migrant experiences in southern Africa. This literature has mainly documented the increased movement of women across borders, which has been stimulated by their greater participation in both the formal and informal sectors of the economy. The literature has also shown how women's greater mobility and employment have given them more choices, contributing to their emancipation. Recent academic studies have also documented the changing terrain of masculinity. Authors like Robert Morrell have described different facets of men's power and ability to exercise control in historical perspective.[7] While I pull from these authors and arguments, my key interest in this chapter is to ravel the complexities involved in the renegotiation of gender roles and values. I seek to

[7] Robert Morrell, "Of Boys and Men: Masculinity and Gender in Southern African Studies," *JSAS* 24(4)(1998): 605-630.

reveal some of the circumstances behind change, but also how patriarchal practices have endured.

In the 1970s and early 1980s, women's experiences were sidelined in migration studies. The few authors who wrote about women's experiences were mainly concerned with rectifying the imbalance in history writing. Their research was had a tendency to subsume women's experiences into androcentric analyses.[8] Significant changes occurred in the 1990s, when more scholars integrated gender into analyses of social change in Africa.[9] In particular, women's experiences of oppression under the colonial state and African patriarchy, and their struggles for freedom, were woven into the social history of southern Africa.[10] More comparative studies of women's welfare in non-industrialized countries also located them in mainstream social studies.[11]

In Zimbabwe, migration scholars focused on at least three key areas: the gender composition of migrants, the motives behind both women's and men's movement, and their experiences of moving. Various studies have showed that women made up at least forty-four percent of migrants who left in the 2000s.[12] This represented a sharp rise compared to earlier times. The rise revealed the greater mobility of women among different parts of the country, and across borders. This greater mobility increased their visibility in public spheres, because their

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[8] Belinda Bozzoli, "Marxism, Feminism and South African Studies," *JSAS* 9(2)(1983): 139-171.
[9] Cheryl Walker, ed., *Women and Gender in Southern Africa to 1945* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1990).
[10] Teresa Barnes, *We Women Worked So Hard: Gender, Urbanization and Social Reproduction in Colonial Harare, Zimbabwe, 1930–1956* (Portsmouth, N.H. Heinemann, 1999).
[11] Iris Berger and E. Frances White, eds., *Women in Sub-Saharan Africa: Restoring Women to History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999); Elizabeth Schmidt, *Peasants, Traders, and Wives: Shona Women in the History of Zimbabwe, 1870–1939* (Portsmouth, N.H. : Heinemann Educational Books, 1992).
[12] Jonathan Crush, "Linking Migration, Food Security and Development, " Migration Policy Series, No. 59, (Cape Town: SAMP, 2012)

participation in various economic activities rose. This reshaped their relationships with men in notable ways.

The extensive cross-border movement of women from Zimbabwe induced academic interest in their migration experiences. Some of the issues that caught the attention of scholars included women's reasons for migrating, their preparations for travel, their experiences in transit, their adaptation, and how their families and communities perceived them upon their return.[13] The treatment of women by the state also came under scholarly inquiry.[14] My study adds to our understanding of both women's and men's experiences after migration with a focus on family adjustment, emphasizing the ensuing of marital distress. I follow scholars like Colin Murray, who examined what happened when men left their homes for the wage economy.[15] However, my main focus is on the impact of relocation on couples who lived together after arrival. I touch on debates and notions about morality, masculinity and femininity, drawing from Dominic Pasura, who probed similar issues among Zimbabweans in Britain.[16] The next section is a review of the wider social context of economic crisis and greater mobility, which hastened and stimulated some of the changes.

Zimbabwean women's migration in the 2000s

They ways in which Zimbabweans have constructed ideas and practices of masculinity and femininity have undergone important shifts. The worsening of the political, economic, and social turmoil in Zimbabwe after the year 2000 created a context for the redrawing of gender

[13] Kate Lefko-Everett, "The Voices of Migrant Zimbabwean Women in South Africa," in Crush and Tevera, *Zimbabwe's Exodus*, 269.
[14] Ingrid Palmary, Erica Burman, Khatidja Chantler, and Peace Kiguwa, *Gender and Migration: Feminist Intervention* (London: Zed Books, 2010).
[15] Colin Murray, *Families Divided: The Impact of Migrant Labour in Lesotho* (Cambridge: CUP, 1981).
[16] Dominic Pasura, *African Transnational Diasporas: Fractured Communities and Plural Identities of Zimbabweans in Britain* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), esp. Ch. 4.

roles and norms. Although people's understandings of gender were changing before, because of the different conditions and influences, the crisis of the 2000s stimulated further changes in how men and women associated, and in their conceptions of gender. The turmoil that took place in the 2000s resulted in the loss of formal employment and incomes for both women and men, although they experienced the effects differently. Men were affected by the loss of employment and source of livelihood, as were women, but the results were more devastating for men because they were the main breadwinners. Women were also affected by the loss of employment and by falling living standards. This fundamental restructuring of the Zimbabwean economy, which featured the abrupt erosion of formal employment and the rise of informal work as a main household survival strategy, brought far-reaching changes in the gender division of labour. Secondly, the exodus of Zimbabweans to different parts of the world, which became unprecedented in the 2000s, also contributed to the reconfiguration of gender relations inside Zimbabwe. Both the crisis and the exodus altered relations between men and women in communities of migrants who went abroad.

Zimbabweans responded to the political, economic, and social environment in Zimbabwe in the 2000s by departing on an unprecedented scale. Migration to neighbouring countries had been a popular life strategy earlier, but the exit of more women was a prominent feature of Zimbabwean migration in the 2000s. According to various studies by the Southern African Migration Project (SAMP), the migration of women in the 2000s was on the order of four women for every five men.[17] Women of all social classes left the country, most of them in economically active age groups, from teenage girls to women approaching the age of fifty. Women also left for a wider range of social and economic reasons than men. They left to

[17] Crush and Tevera, *Zimbabwe's Exodus*, 17.

reunite with spouses, to enroll their children in schools in a more stable economic environment, for shopping, for health reasons, and to seek political refugee. However, the search for jobs and income was a key motivating factor behind most women's departure. This prompted them to look for formal employment and to participate in informal economic activities like cross-border trading. The increased entry of women into employment was partly in response to men's unemployment. When the economic crisis reduced men's ability to provide for families, women found themselves compelled to take a more proactive role in fending for families also. In this chapter, I argue that the benefit of outmigration was the opportunity for migrants to reshape gender. Living in another environment and working for a wage opened opportunities for women to challenge received gender roles. In some instances, this resulted in the reduction and elimination of their former dependence on men. However, women of lower levels of education and income were usually worse off in exile than before, because their entry into both the formal and informal workforces meant the responsibility of extra work without any significant changes in gender roles at home.

The greater participation of women as income earners made them breadwinners and heads of households. By breadwinner, I mean the member of a couple who earns more income than the other and is responsible and able to provide for the family. Traditionally, the title of head of household in a family was carried by the male partner, except when the male spouse was deceased, or in a single-parent household in which the parent was a woman. In a conventional Zimbabwean family context, the father was both the breadwinner and the head of household. It was, and still is, expected of him to live up to these titles. However, in times of rapid change induced by economic crisis, such definitions and designations lose their usual rigidity. It

became possible for women who earned more income than their spouses to be referred to as heads of households and men found it harder to hold onto the title.

Some Zimbabwean women who settled in South Africa were alone, having left husbands and children in Zimbabwe. They worked and remitted money, groceries, and goods back to their families. This trend was not new but a continuation of changes put in motion earlier, when African indigenous economies were incorporated into capitalism. This occurred firstly in the mercantile era, but intensified later under colonial rule. The economic crisis in Zimbabwe in the 2000s and the migration that resulted from it gave rise to new impulses that contributed to the speedier refashioning of gender roles and relations because the crisis destabilized older gender roles and norms. Older ideas of gender were challenged and often reversed. New conceptions emerged out of conflict, negotiation, and compromise. While the restructuring of gender roles took place in different areas of everyday life, it was the family unit and household arenas in which these changes were dramatized and expressed.

An affluent woman's views of gender

The case of Jackie provides an opportunity to examine how rich women from Zimbabwe in South Africa understood the shifting terrain of gender. Jackie was born and raised in Harare, Zimbabwe's capital, and had urban tastes. Despite her urban outlook, she claimed that she was a "typical Zezuru woman." This meant that she was from an area in Zimbabwe in which the Shona dialect is spoken. By identifying herself as a Zezuru woman, she was suggesting that she believed in African values, or *tsika dzechivanhu,* which for me, meant that she liked her African values despite living a modern Western lifestyle. She was in her early forties and had been married for almost twenty years, with two children. Her first child, a son, was nearing twenty years of age, and her daughter was a teenager. Jackie was a bank clerk and had a

certificate in Human Resources management from Speciss College in Harare. It was her education and professional experience that had helped her find a good job after moving to South Africa.

Jackie migrated to South Africa in the middle of 2008, to join her husband, Menzis, who had gone there six years earlier. Although she said the main reason for her migration was to reunite with her husband, she also spoke about the negative impact of Zimbabwe's political strife and economic decay. Jackie's husband had left Zimbabwe for South Africa in 2002. In South Africa, he worked for construction and security companies. He lived what Jackie called *"hupenyu hwepiki nefoshoro,"* which means a life of hard work and limited income. Despite being a general labourer and low-income earner, Menzis saved enough money to sponsor Jackie and their children to join him in South Africa in 2008. Upon her arrival in South Africa, Jackie joined other newcomers doing menial jobs. She cleaned offices and worked as a maid in private homes, which is what Zimbabweans call *basa rese rese*, meaning any job, particularly low-income and menial occupations. However, in a few months, she applied for and found a job as a clerk for the First National Bank of South Africa. With her education, skills, and experience, she moved up the ladder and was appointed a branch manager on an interim basis in just a year. Jackie then asked her husband to quit his job as a security guard and look for a better one. He was still unemployed when I visited their home in Sandton, an affluent area of Johannesburg.

Jackie said her monthly income in 2010 was slightly over R20,000, just above $2,000 in Canadian currency, but it may have been more with bonuses and allowances. She was also a successful businesswoman; she imported a wide range of goods from Asia for resale in South Africa and Zimbabwe. She had been an experienced and savvy cross-border trader in

Zimbabwe before she went to South Africa. Her migration to South Africa had given her a chance to expand her business activities. She was able to tap into Asian markets for purchases of clothes, furniture, and automobiles. Her business income surpassed her income as a bank manager. She owned a large multi-bedroom house. The house had a large yard, a swimming pool, and a thick brick wall around it. Like other homes of the affluent in South Africa, the house was equipped with a modern security apparatus. The security system included electric gates and doors, hidden cameras, alarms, and a direct, automated line to a security company. She also had a maid and a worker to maintain her garden, both from Zimbabwe. She owned two luxury vehicles, a new Mercedes Benz and a Prado. Jackie's success had been rapid and admirable, given the short amount of time she had been in South Africa. She ascribed her wealth to hard work, good business connections, and her Christian faith.

Jackie strongly believed that her education, professional background, and migration out of Zimbabwe had empowered her in her everyday interactions with men. I asked her to tell me what she thought had changed in how men and women from Zimbabwe related to each other in South Africa. She touched on several issues, drawing from her personal experiences at work and in her marriage. She said migration from Zimbabwe had challenged and altered some of people's basic assumptions about men's and women's roles at work and at home. The way she described her leadership position at work as a branch manager and how she associated with male workmates painted the picture of someone who exercised a significant amount of power, or at least felt she did. She said, *"Varume vekubasa kwangu vanondikwata,"* which meant that junior male workmates were scared of her, or deferred to her when she gave them orders. I asked if their demeanor was not simply out of respect for her as their manager, and if female employees did not do the same. She maintained her position that she was very powerful. She

added: "Older men in suits and ties jump when I ask them to do something." While these words may have been an accurate description of how Jackie related to male workmates, they were not necessarily evidence that major changes in gender roles were occurring. Granted, it was probably harder for male workmates to demean or abuse her due to her leadership position. But they could potentially demean younger and less-experienced women, since this would pose less of a threat to their jobs. Although I did not collect any direct evidence, I inferred that Jackie's power at work mirrored the level of power other professional women were able to exercise at work because of seniority and experience, educational and professional qualifications, and higher levels of income.

The changing power relationships in marriages were another area in which Jackie spoke to. She celebrated the entry of more women into waged employment, saying this resulted in more of them taking on the role of family breadwinners. She said such women were the "the new husbands." She felt superior to her husband because she made more money, paid the bills, drove nice cars, and lived in a luxurious house. She also paid the children's school fees and took care of the housemaid and gardener, in addition to looking after her husband's parents in Zimbabwe. When I asked how her husband felt, she said he was happy with the things she did for him and for the family. He was "deeply thankful" that she looked after his parents in Zimbabwe. When he was in a happy mood, he addressed her as "*Murume wangu,"* which means "my husband." In turn, she called him *"Mukadzi wangu,"* which means "my wife." She admitted this was just a joke between the two of them. She knew he called her "my husband" sarcastically, to make fun of their situation, in which she was the breadwinner and he was a dependent. They had found a way to lessen and accommodate the tension arising from their unusual situation.

Further elaborating on her relationship with her spouse, Jackie said Zimbabwean migrant men no longer had the same amount of control over women's sexuality in South Africa as they had had in Zimbabwe. To support her argument, she delved into the subject of sex in marriage. She claimed that married men had stronger claims to conjugal rights in Zimbabwe, but this was not the case once they were in South Africa. She likened Zimbabwean men in South Africa to toothless bulldogs, which "bark, but don't bite, as women are now in charge." She also told me that "[h]ere in South Africa, husbands beg us for sex. In Zimbabwe, it was their right, and we complied. But here, a wife may say, "No," if she is tired or not interested." I asked whether this was common to other people too, not just in her marriage, and she said it was "very common." She said, "Women are more open about their marital experiences and problems with each other. This is not just I, but other women [also] have greater say in the bedroom than they used to because men are powerless."

Despite an outward appearance of power and of being in control, however, Jackie's experiences and perspectives exhibited some contradictions. These suggested that her power over her husband was minimal in practice. For example, she admitted that her husband was "resistant to change." He beat her up regularly for small arguments when he was drunk, or even sober. It was common for him to threaten her with violence, which showed his belief that women should be under the control of their husbands despite education or income. In the section on men's views, I show that this was one of the key arguments men raised in their discussion of women; that women were to subject themselves to men.

Some of Jackie's sentiments were deliberately provocative, and more of a reflection of what she aspired to have in her marriage than what was actually occurring. I inferred that the

applicability of her conclusions to other women, even educated professionals like her, would be limited. As a powerful women speaking to a male interviewer, she may also have wanted me to feel the sense that she was more powerful than I. I could think of other women who subscribed to the idea that men and women were unequal and their roles in society had to be different. Although such women also believed in equal access to opportunities, they felt that the domestic arena had to reflect a hierarchy in which a male had more power than a woman. The contrast in what Jackie said she had and what other women said came out in the life and views of another migrant woman from the middle class, who wanted me to call her Maiguru (Auntie) Maduve. It is to her perspectives that I now turn in the next section.

Middle-class women's views on gender

Auntie Maduve was also a married migrant woman from Zimbabwe. Like Jackie, she was also in her forties. She came from urban Masvingo, in southern Zimbabwe, and was proud to have attended Victoria High School, considered to be for children of middle- and upper-income families. She had a Diploma in Education from a teacher training college in Zimbabwe, and several years of teaching experience in Zimbabwe. She had abandoned her teaching post in 2003 to join her husband in South Africa. They lived with three daughters who attended school in South Africa. In South Africa, Auntie Maduve was an elementary school teacher, and her monthly income was around R11,000, or just over $1,000 in Canadian money. Her husband worked as a low-level manager for a warehousing company. Their joint family income was about R25,000, which would have been enough for them to live well. The family did not own a house in South Africa, and they had plans to buy one. They had a house in Zimbabwe.

Auntie Maduve also said the economic crisis in Zimbabwe and people's migration to South Africa had accelerated the pace at which people experienced changes in gender roles. She

described several changes in the behaviour of men and women in South Africa, again ascribing some of the changes to migration to and residence in another country. The key difference between her and Jackie was that she was of moderate-to-conservative views. I asked if some of the gender-role shifts she spoke about were not taking place in Zimbabwe already. She admitted that some of the changes were already occurring, such as women's preference for wearing trousers and a higher rate of divorce among younger couples. But she maintained that moving to South African had quickened the pace of change among Zimbabweans there. I asked if the lives of women had improved after migration. She said, "It is true that women have benefitted from being in South Africa. They have acquired a stronger voice and more power, both at work and at home." She gave a more detailed explanation to support the idea that more women had reduced their dependency on men for sustenance:

> When we were in Zimbabwe, the majority of women used to stay home, raising kids. They waited for the husband to get paid at the end of the month. Then they would get whatever money the husband gives them to buy food, pay rent, and buy clothes. This still happens, but most women who came here in South Africa no longer wait for money from the husband. They work and do whatever they can to make money to look after themselves. They would die of hunger if they were to wait. They even work harder than men. We see young women wearing coveralls and helmets on construction sites, working alongside men. Few women did such a thing in Zimbabwe.

The migration of more women and their entry into waged employment was the single most important factor women mentioned in their discussions of changing gender roles. Auntie Maduve linked these developments to other changes in how families functioned. She said women who worked were more likely to experience strife in their marriages, especially those of young couples. She believed that professional women who believed in gender equality were taking their feminist ideas and quest for power "too far." She said that in doing so, they had lost their love and respect for men, "which does more harm than good to society." From her

words, we can see that Auntie Maduve was critical of gender equality. She said men and women "were not equal and should not be equal," and she believed in the gendered division of domestic labour. She maintained that married women were duty-bound to prepare food for their husbands, to clean the house, and to make the home comfortable. To her, the idea of gender equality was Western and a threat to African values. She was forthright when she said, "Western ways are fine for certain things, but we are following their ways too much at the expense of our own. That is why more marriages are collapsing."

What do we make of Auntie Maduve's words? Like Jackie, she was well-educated and had been raised in an urban setting. She was gainfully employed and lived a middle-class lifestyle. She admitted that migration to South Africa had wrought important changes in the welfare of women, but her statements were not as idealized and normative as Jackie's. She defended gender inequality, arguing that the gendered division of labour in the home was perfectly fine. She even attacked some women for taking the struggle for gender equality "too far." From Jackie and Auntie Maduve, we see that personal circumstances and preferences played a key role in shaping women's ideas of gender roles. While education and middle-class status suggested that women from such backgrounds might share similar ideas, this was not always so. Some people were able to pick and choose those aspects of what was changing which they felt would benefit them. They scoffed at those ideas they felt disadvantaged them. In the next section, I present the perspectives of a few more women – those of poor and working-class status.

Low-income women's perspectives on gender

The views of low-income migrant women from Zimbabwe on gender roles differed significantly from those of middle- and upper-income women, although some of their

everyday experiences were similar. We can observe some of these differences from Mai Bee, a married woman in her early thirties. She had an Ordinary Level education from Zimbabwe, but had never been employed formally before she left the country. When she moved to South Africa with her husband, she worked in various occupations. She worked as a maid, waitress, and cleaner, and she was also a cross-border trader and roadside vendor.[18] Mai Bee complained that her husband was unemployed, and thought that he was not looking for a job in earnest. This forced her to work harder, because she worked outside the home and continued to perform domestic duties. To make matters worse, her husband often spent some of the money she brought home on beer, cigarettes, and possibly other women. Her husband's laziness worsened the family's poverty. From her experiences, Mai Bee felt that men were inclined to be lazy if their wives worked. She felt that it was the husband's job to look after the family, while her job was to raise the children. These ideas confirmed her affirmation of the traditional gendered division of labour. While affluent women like Jackie celebrated being financially and economically independent, Mai Bee said she was "sick and tired" of being the breadwinner. She lamented that the main change she noticed in her marriage since having come to South Africa was that she worked extra hard for the family. Her husband was now dependent on her, which affected her health and fertility, as she complained that she was always tired. She was bitter that her husband insisted on controlling her income. She asked a rhetorical question: "Is it normal for a husband to demand a say in his wife's money? The normal thing is for a wife to control her husband's money. What is happening in my house is the opposite and very confusing."

[18] Interview with Mai Bee, Johannesburg, October 10, 2010.

Low-income women from Zimbabwe who worked as vendors and maids in South Africa were unanimous that they experienced more pressure when they joined men to work for wages or as petty traders. I got this perspective from another woman named Mai Fadzi. She had a secondary education, but was divorced and raising two small children. She married her husband in Zimbabwe and joined him in South Africa 2006. This was two years after he crossed the border himself. They broke up in 2009, leaving her to raise young children, aged eight and five. Her discussion of gender centered on her relationship with him. She said in Zimbabwe they had had some marital problems, "just like everybody else." However, these got worse when she joined him in South Africa. Mai Fadzi said she divorced her husband because *"anga asingabatsiri."* Saying this, that her husband was "useless," was an indirect way of saying his limited income and financial problems were to blame for the crisis in their marriage. This was also the cause of their eventual break-up. Her expression also linked his inability to provide for the family with diminished virility. Although she criticized him, Mai Fadzi regretted having parted ways with him. She said only after their divorce did she realize her mistake. She said it would have been better to endure his "uselessness" than to look after the children alone. Her longing to reconcile with him was now impossible to fulfill because of his marriage to another woman. This revealed how poverty undercut women's efforts to break away from men's domination. Mai Fadzi said she would not have regretted the divorce if she were materially secure and able to look after her children by herself.

As well as income and education, women's ages also played a key part in their understanding of gender roles. Young and married migrant women in their twenties and thirties also believed that major changes in how men and women interacted were taking place. This is what we get from the testimony of Joyce. Joyce's husband had stayed in Zimbabwe with the children while

she went to look for work in South Africa. Like others around her, she claimed to have been sending them money and groceries when she could. She said it was more common for men and women to live together out of wedlock in South Africa than in Zimbabwe. She also said, *"Vamwe vakadzi vava kuita sevarume,"* when she talked about married women living separately from their husbands were, which means some women were behaving like men. These words alluded to her perception that it was becoming more common for female migrants to have adulterous relationships in South Africa. This occurred because women were removed from the eyes of extended family, who would normally censor such behaviour.[19] Joyce lived with two female friends in South Africa who were also married but whose husbands were still in Zimbabwe. They remitted small amounts of money to husbands and children when they could. They expressed gratitude that they lived alone in South Africa, because they did not have to ask for "visas," or their husbands' permission to visit friends on the weekends, as they did in Zimbabwe.[20]

I asked younger married women whether living alone in South Africa did not tempt them to have affairs with other men. They expressed openness to this possibility. Referring to her husband in particular, Joyce said, *"Uye unorega mukadzi wake achiuya ega kuSouth Africa achiti unoitei? Unoti ndiko kungwara?"* ("He was foolish to let his wife come to South Africa alone. Did he think he was being smart to let me come here on my own, while he stayed?"). Joyce and her friends suspected their husbands slept with other women while they were away working in South Africa. These suspicions were bound to arise on both ends, and they were a reflection of reality and fantasies. To me, what was more important was that the migration of the 2000s

[19] Interview with Trish, Pretoria/Tshwane, October 17, 2010.
[20] Group interview with Auntie Patience, Joyce, and Solomon, Pretoria, October 14, 2010.

resulted in married women leaving home to look for sources of income while men stayed in Zimbabwe.

Mature but unmarried migrant women from Zimbabwe in South Africa gave yet another angle from which to study women's understandings of gender roles. Their attitudes towards marriage were intriguing, and often stood in sharp contrast to the views of their married counterparts. Auntie Patience was in her forties, unmarried, and childless. In Zimbabwe, she had been raised in rural areas, although she received a secondary education from a mission school in Masvingo. She had worked as an office clerk in Zvishavane, a mining town in central Zimbabwe, when she was in her twenties. She later joined an asbestos mining company as a scaffold builder, which is a male-dominated occupation. Although she mostly lived in town, she maintained her links with the rural areas through periodic visits at Christmas and other holidays. Auntie Patience endured the negative effects of Zimbabwe's declining economy throughout the 1990s. At that time, she joined other enterprising women like Jackie as a cross-border trader in an effort to supplement her income. However, in 2007, she skipped the border into South Africa and decided to look for a job. She worked for a few months as a farm labourer in Limpopo province, but her dream was to go to Pretoria/Tshwane or "Jo'burg" to look for a job.

Before she could find her dream job, Auntie Patience worked as a maid on a commercial farm. She lived with her boyfriend, who was in his fifties. He worked as a labourer on the same farm. The two had lived together for at least a year at the time of my interview with them in late 2008. She had a burning desire to get married to him, but feared that he had another wife

elsewhere in South Africa. Some of her views about gender came out in her comments about marriage, which I paraphrased:

> I work hard and look after myself. Like other women, I work harder than men. But working is not enough. I want to get married and live with a husband, like other women. I feel as if something is wrong with me. In my forties, I don't have a husband and children. When people talk about me, they say, "Here comes the unmarried one."

Women like Auntie Patience still held the belief that getting married and living with a husband was necessary, even though they were economically independent. Auntie Patience also felt that married women destroyed their own marriages by disobeying their husbands. She said women had a duty to ensure there was happiness in their marriages by submitting and treating their husbands well. She also said the migration of more women out of Zimbabwe was having a negative effect on marriages, as women were putting money before their marriages. Personal reactions to things like the social stigma to which people were often subjected were thus also important factors in how women understood gender roles.

A synthesis of women's views on gender

The lives and perspectives of Zimbabwean migrants presented in this chapter paint an ambivalent picture about how women and men experienced changes in gender roles. A quick glance at the words of the women to whom I spoke suggests that there was enough change to celebrate. But their ideas about greater mobility and increased participation in the public economy do not suggest deep changes in practical terms. Let us take a closer look at the impact of Zimbabwean migrant women's entry into waged employment in larger numbers. To what extent can we say waged employment improved these women's lot?

The entry of more women into both the formal and informal waged sectors of the economy sped up their propensity to view gender roles differently. People agreed that it was outdated and the cause of financial disaster for a family to depend on a single person's income. All women who participated in this study appreciated the opportunity to earn an income for themselves. For them, formal and informal employment meant that they could have access to more income, power, and higher social status. It also meant the ability to participate in a modern economy as consumers, and reduced dependency on men. The fact that more women increased their ability to sustain themselves and were less dependent on men was a key change, given that their prior dependency on men perpetuated gender inequality.

The case of Jackie strongly supports the idea that waged employment had a positive effect on women's material possessions, their standards of living, and their self-definition. Consequently, educated, professional, and upper-income women's conceptions of gender were undergoing the greatest alteration. A noteworthy outcome is that such women were more positive and vocal in commenting on the changes around them. Jackie represented the small but growing number of migrant women who used their professional status and better incomes to erode their former subordination to husbands. Such women had changed their lives and were able to exercise more power in their marriages and beyond. Women like her exuded confidence and pride. This is why Jackie called herself "*mhene*," which means a rich person. She also had the courage to stop her husband from working as a security guard, because she felt embarrassed by his continued service in the security industry. She did this because she had enough money to look after him. The very fact that her husband, who once worked for the Zimbabwean Republic Police (ZRP), was now dependent on her spoke volumes about how the tables could turn. The way Jackie discussed her workplace role and power over junior

males revealed her beliefs regarding how gender roles had shifted. In Zimbabwe, Jackie had worked as a junior clerk in a bank. She had faced frequent harassment from frustrated and impatient customers, especially males. It is likely that senior male workmates also patronized her. Although she was well-educated, trained, and was of the upper class, her ability to challenge gender inequality in the workplace was limited. According to her, this was altering in South Africa. She supervised older men in suits and ties, showing the importance of her new status. Jackie's words raised the hope that the struggle over patriarchy was progressing, but was it really moving as quickly as she implied?

Jackie exaggerated women's progress in undermining deep-seated patriarchal ideas. Her personal case had some notable peculiarities, such as her husband's lack of power because of his unemployment and dependence on her. However, it also appeared as if her modern lifestyle and the ideas of gender equality she embraced did not sit comfortably with her marriage, in which she was expected to defer to her husband. Her situation demonstrated what happens when modern and patriarchal values coexist. Her perspectives and power in the home would have been different if her husband had been gainfully employed. As a matter of fact, she had a deep level of respect for him, for the sacrifices he made for her and their children, when he sponsored them to go to South Africa. Her case showed the simultaneous existence of conflicting tendencies, marked by gains and reversals. Her views about gender may not have been applicable to other migrant women, especially those who did not have high-income jobs and social status, because such women wouldn't have the resources and resulting power that Jackie had.

Economic hardships in Zimbabwe and women's migration to another country facing some economic problems, but in which they had more options, made them develop a stronger sense of freedom. It was undeniable that domestic power dynamics in turn were filled with more tension, creating anxiety for families. I was unable to dig deeper into the sexual relations of married people with other female informants to establish and generalize the level of change. Some of the women I interviewed were uneasy about the topic of sexual relations, although they opened up about other general aspects of gender roles and values. That was, perhaps, to be expected with a male interviewer.

Zimbabwean men's loss of automatic sexual rights in South Africa did not prove that migrant women were the "new husbands," as Jackie said. Also, the fact that women could sue abusive husbands did not imply that they always took advantage of the law. Their failure to do so was sometimes out of ignorance, but also because of personal insecurity. The continuing levels of violence and rape in South Africa, a supposedly more liberal environment than Zimbabwe, cast a dark shadow over the claims of the women who said that their lot was improving. The contrast in women's perspectives is more evident when we take a closer look at the words of Auntie Maduve. While she was not as affluent as Jackie, she was her contemporary, and was also well-educated and employed. A notable difference, however, was that Auntie Maduve's spouse was employed, and in fact, he was still the main breadwinner of the household. Despite her education and relative financial independence, Auntie Maduve was a defender of patriarchy. This was because she felt more secure in a marriage than outside. She felt that marital stability depended on unequal power relations and women's subordination. Both Jackie and Auntie Maduve believed in heterosexual marriage. Their views seemed to suggest that the ideal of gender equality would be hard to realize as long as the institution of marriage was still

in place and highly valued. As the words of Auntie Patience showed, women continued to subscribe to some ideas that were opposed to gender equality because of social insecurity, and above all because of deep-seated cultural ideas.

Income levels were a major determining factor in how migrant women spoke about the ongoing changes in gender roles. Low-income Zimbabwean migrant women agreed with their better-educated and financially secure counterparts that their migration to South Africa had brought some notable changes to the structure and function of the family. However, they were less optimistic about their lot. They lamented the fact that they worked harder, probably harder than men, to generate household income, and they continued to perform maternal functions. Their words were in line with studies that have argued that women's greater involvement in waged employment has resulted in a double burden.[21] The outcome of any change in Zimbabwean migrant women's status was usually one of minimal gains and the perpetuation of deep-seated structures and beliefs. Women like Mai Fadzi still admitted, however, that they gained a measure of power and independence from greater participation in waged labour. They also said they knew about the Bill of Rights, also known as Section 9, of the South Africa Constitution, which guarantees equality and non-discrimination. The Zimbabwean women with whom I spoken said the Bill of Rights reduced their abuse by men. However, their use of it was still limited because they did not have sufficient knowledge about the South African justice system. Low-income women suggested that their interest was not necessarily in equality with men, but against various forms of injustice, some of them arising from the gendered

[21] Natalie Chen, Paola Conconi, and Carlo. Perroni, "Women's Earning Power and the 'Double Burden' of Market and Household Work," Warwick Economic Research Papers (Coventry: University of Warwick, Department of Economics, 2007).

division of labour. They expected some of these injustices to diminish as a result of their increasing contribution to household incomes.

The nature of change in Zimbabwean migrant women's social status revealed mixed and sometimes deeply contradictory results. Low-income women like Mai Bee said their hardships had increased as a result of poverty, despite their contributions to household income. Mai Bee spoke about how hard it was to look after her family. She objected to her husband's efforts to control the money she made. However, she chose to gloss over this predicament, accepting it as the reality of life, when she said her main interest was working hard for her family. From her testimony, we may extrapolate that low-income migrant women were sometimes worse off in South Africa than before. When we compare them to affluent women like Jackie, we notice some striking similarities, however, such as men's reluctance to change their patriarchal attitudes. Low-income women, however, had fewer options and more troubles because of poverty, unlike middle-income and affluent women. Not encumbered by poverty and dependency, they could consider divorce, for example, while low-income women were less likely to challenge male authority even if they had high levels of education. They were also less likely to extol the virtues of change, showing their continued belief in marriage as a source of social security.

Deep-seated ideas about marriage and patriarchy have persisted partly as a result of the continued economic crisis. This is what we see in the views of Auntie Patience. Despite a post-secondary education, a rural-urban background, maturity, and some material stability, she still maintained her faith in the hierarchical marital union. She felt strongly that it was important for her to get married. Her willingness to submit to a dominant male figure showed that her

ideas of gender were lukewarm. Auntie Patience also revealed how being raised in a predominantly rural background influenced her thinking. She succumbed to family and social pressure to conform to prescribed values. Her interest in getting married was not a personal choice alone. It shows that she was under social pressure, and felt derided and ostracized for being unmarried in middle their ages. Despite adopting certain modern values that came with education, town life, and waged employment, women with both a rural and an urban upbringing were likely to be less of a challenge to deeply-seated patriarchal practices.

Age was another key determining factor in how women perceived gender roles. Younger women like Loveness, who were in their late teens or mid-twenties, believed that living alone in another country had enabled them to mature early. They gained enough confidence to discuss personal desires with friends and male contemporaries. The changes these "born-frees" alluded to were part of how Zimbabwean society had changed. However, living in another environment also posed challenges to the structure of the nuclear family for migrant Zimbabweans because family members were now living in different parts of the world. Young men and women were ushered into the realm of independent decision-making sooner than they might otherwise have been, because they were away from parental control. As Loveness said, young men and women were engaging in behaviour like drinking beer and smoking cigarettes much earlier than she had seen them do in Zimbabwe. In a foreign country, youths were more prepared to take risks, being far from parents and subject to peer pressure. Another young migrant woman from Zimbabwe, who called herself Mainini, captured some of the changes in her living environment that pertained to her personal growth into a young woman. One of the things she enjoyed about being in South Africa was taking photos of friends and of herself. She took photos so that she could show them to people in Zimbabwe on her return

there. Her main idea was to use the photos to strike back at men who used to make fun of her looks before she moved to South Africa. She wanted to show these men photos of her surrounded by friends and admirers to prove that she was beautiful. Although her physical appearance had failed to get her the attention she wanted in Zimbabwe, she suggested that the environment she was in influenced her sense of femininity, giving her confidence to associate with men in a way she had not been able to do at home.

I showed the multifaceted ways migrant women from Zimbabwe understood their interaction with men in South Africa. I showed that women believed that some notable changes had taken place in terms of gender roles in their community, and they ascribed some of the changes to their migration to another nation. However, I questioned how deep these changes were. While I agreed with some of the women's general observations, I also showed the coexistence of continuity and change, and the uneven nature of change on the basis of education, income levels, age, marital status, and individual choices. Below, the focus is on how men perceived gender roles, and on what they said about these changes. I show that men also felt that notable changes had occurred, but their understanding of these changes was different from women's. Men's ideas were also more homogeneous that those of women, despite different levels of education and income among the men to whom I spoke.

Men's perspectives on migrant women

Male migrants from Zimbabwe in South Africa also admitted that they had noticed changes in their socialization with women. Like women, they too believed that some of these changes were mainly due to their migration from Zimbabwe to South Africa. Generally, men welcomed some of the changes, such as women's more active role in generating income. However, a key difference was that while women welcomed most of what was occurring, men's perspectives

showed that they were less open to what was changing. In fact, men were often resistant to certain kinds of changes, and were determined to reassert and maintain control over women. Some men were upset by behavioural changes in women, particularly the perception that women were exercising more power at home, which they felt was behind women's frequent acts of disobedience and inclination to argue, which caused tension in marriages. Unlike women, men were united in defending the gender division of labour at home. They also felt that they would be able to reassert their authority upon returning to Zimbabwe. Some differences among the men I spoke to were evident, mainly in terms of focus, emphasis, and language, rather than in terms of fundamental beliefs. Married men strongly resisted what they perceived as an attempt by their wives to switch domestic roles. They generally scoffed at the idea of gender equality, dismissing it as "foreign and destructive." But their dwindling power due to contracting economic fortunes reduced their ability to prevent change. Sometimes this forced them into conflict, with which they often dealt through strategic negotiation and accommodation.[22] The bottom line in these struggles was that their migration to South Africa, usually in the company of employment-seeking women, undercut their main source of power – their ability to provide for their families.

When I asked Zimbabwean men living in South Africa what they thought were some of the key changes that had taken place in their associations with women, particularly women from Zimbabwe, they talked about changes in at least five main areas. The most important of these was women's alleged disobedience to husbands, and increasing disrespect for men in general. The entry of women into waged employment, which was readily associated by the men I spoke

[22] Diana Jeater, "Masculinity, Marriage, and the Bible: New Pentecostalist Masculinities in Zimbabwe," in *Masculinities Under Neoliberalism*, edited by Andrea Cornwall, Frank G. Karioris and Nancy Lindisfarne (London: Zed Books, 2016), 165-182.

to with their greed for money, was also highlighted as the second important area of change. Men used the colloquial phrase *vakadzi vava kuhassler too much* ("women are now hassling a great deal") to describe women's participation in the waged economy. Men also spoke disapprovingly of what they perceived to be women's immorality, which they said was leading women into promiscuity, infidelity, drinking and smoking, and negligence of domestic roles. The men I interviewed usually presented these behavioural changes as new, but I understood that these changes were not new and Zimbabwean women had always done these things. Men wanted me to believe they were new in order to justify their own resistance. Admittedly, some of the things they spoke about were taking place more quickly and on a greater scale than might have been the case in Zimbabwe. This was because of a new environment that did not feature most of the controls imposed by extended family and kinship and social ties to which the women would have been subject at home. In reality, the changes were a continuation of the ongoing restructuring of gender relations that had begun some time ago in Zimbabwe itself. The difference was that the dispersal of people within and outside of Zimbabwe had incited new dynamics and sped up the pace of change. Another difference was the occurrence of the post-independence economic crisis, its impact on livelihoods, and what men chose to emphasize in their discourses of changes.

Both married men in general and unmarried men of the working class believed that women were greedier in the wake of the economic crisis and migration to South Africa than they had been before. Andrew and Monya, who were both married and in their forties, were among those who expressed this point quite emphatically when they said, *"Mazuva ano* v*akadzi vava kuda mari* too much," which means that "women's appetite for money is too high nowadays." Like most Zimbabweans I interviewed in South Africa, both Andrew and Monya had post-

secondary educations. They had worked as general labourers in the manufacturing industry in Zimbabwe for many years. Originally from Mhondoro, Andrew had lived with his parents in Harare since he was a child. He had a residential plot in Chitungwiza, on which he was building a house painstakingly. He was also a professional sculptor who had made several trips to Europe, Canada, and the United States. He made these trips in the 1990s to exhibit his artifacts, before moving to South Africa with his pregnant wife in 2001. He claimed to have a good understanding of Western culture, which he felt had had a negative influence on Africans. Andrew said the problem with Africans was their interest in copying the ways of white people, thinking that their own ways were backward, which was the same sentiment Auntie Maduve had expressed. He lamented the fact that some women smoked cigarettes, for example, and he felt that it was a result of Western influences. What is important to note here is that both Auntie Maduve and Andrew tended to overemphasize the origins of some migrants' changed behaviour as Western, when they could have arisen from both outside influences and internal social dynamics, such as people's desire for positive changes or greater personal freedom.

Men with a rural background were more likely to defend male authority over women, and to ridicule women's desire to become financially independent when they moved to South Africa. This can be gleaned from the words of Monya, who, like Andrew, had a rural background but had worked in Harare briefly before moving to South Africa in 2004. His wife and children were still in rural Zimbabwe, and Monya sent them money, furniture, and groceries when he was able to do so. In South Africa, Monya lived next to two young and unmarried women, also from Zimbabwe, who constantly ridiculed him when he did his laundry, cooked, or cleaned his room. They asked him why he did not live with his wife, who would have done

these things for him. Monya also claimed that the two women expected him to date them and provide them with money. The nature of his interaction with the two women was one of the reasons why he believed that women were more interested in getting money than in anything else.

The idea that one of the main changes in Zimbabwean migrant women was their greater interest in money, fashion, and other markers of affluence also found expression in my interviews with Murowa, Teekay, and Deezert. The three of them were married with children and were in their late thirties. They too, had rural upbringings, were well-educated, and had spent some time working in various urban environments in Zimbabwe. They used the words *"kukara mari,"* when they spoke about migrant women's behaviour. This again expressed the idea that women were greedy for money, except that *"kukara mari"* is a more emphatic term than *kuda mari*.[23] Either way, men strongly believed that women women's love of money was too much. It also showed how some men did not believe that women had genuine needs that required them to find ways to generate income. Among these three men, only Deezert lived with his wife in South Africa. The wives of the other two were in Zimbabwe, but they too, agreed that migrant Zimbabwean women in South Africa were more materialistic. The men complained that their wives, still in Zimbabwe, usually called them and pestered them for money, furniture, and groceries. Teekay said, "Our wives think that we have easy access to money because we are in South Africa. If they knew how much we suffer, they would not bother us this much, but would have more sympathy for us."

Men's conceptions of gender roles were mainly based on their fear of the rapid increase in the number of women seeking employment, which gave them stiff competition for the few jobs

[23] Interview with Murowa, Teekay, and Deezert, Johannesburg, October 22, 2010.

available. As noted above, more migrant women in South Africa are active in the urban economy than is the case in Zimbabwe. Apart from those in formal employment, most Zimbabweans in South Africa have joined the ranks of informal traders, although statistics are difficult to come by. While women seem to dominate the informal sector, men are also joining the sector in larger numbers because of dwindling formal employment chances. Over half of the women I interviewed were informal traders. These women, who included Mai (a title for mother of) Brian, Mai Bee, Mai Fadzi, and Mai Farai, lived in single rented rooms and shared toilets with other tenants in their dwellings. Although their husbands were also employed, in the construction and security industries, their combined household incomes were less than R10,000 per month. Some of the people in this bracket were well-educated, and from urban backgrounds. This broad category included qualified teachers, nurses, soldiers, and former members of the police force, all of whom had been civil servants in Zimbabwe. These were some of the people most severely affected by the deskilling that took place as a result of migration out of Zimbabwe. There was a significant overlap in the sectors forming the working class, which also included domestic workers like Loveness, Nyenge, and Joyce. They too were well-educated, spoke fluent English, and had been formally employed in Zimbabwe, but worked as maids in South Africa. Social backgrounds and incomes had the most important bearing on their own experiences and perceptions of gender roles.

A person's age did not seem to make a major difference in whether he or she was money-driven and whether he or she perceived other people to be money-driven. Young, unmarried millennial men agreed with married men that Zimbabwean women's love for money rose after their migration to South Africa. A young man named Mazanhi said, *"Vakadzi vava kutsvaga mari nedemo,"* which means "women are now searching for money with an axe" – that is, by

whatever means they can. Another young unmarried man put it more bluntly when he said, "Women are now gold-diggers."[24] The perception that women were interested in money was thus not limited to older or married men; it was also found among bachelors. The only difference lay in why men felt the way they did. Mature married men were targeted for financial favours by unscrupulous women, while younger men found it increasingly difficult to fulfill certain socio-financial roles, like treating young women on dates or paying bride-prices. As I expected, young and unmarried men in their teens complained that younger girls were becoming more assertive in asking for cash, clothes, food, and electrical goods like trendy cell phones and airtime.

Young men's comments about women's interest in money revealed that they had also taken notice of the rise in women's employment. Men in general also noticed how more women were taking part in informal economic activities such as hawking, cross-border trading, prostitution and "dealing," which could mean any activity, usually illegal to make money. Their comments were an expression of a social "truth," but they were also prompted by their apprehension about employed women, as they represented more competition for limited economic opportunities. I asked men to tell me about migrant Zimbabwean women in South Africa and how they and the men around them perceived that their behaviour had changed compared to when they were in Zimbabwe. The men I spoke with said women's zeal for money had risen following their migration to South Africa. Despite what they said, I found the men to whom I spoke not entirely persuasive in their assertions about why women were more materialistic than they had been. Their comments on women's behaviour showed that they expected women to have experienced the effects of the economic crisis differently. Their

[24] Group interview with Mazanhi and others, Johannesburg, October 23, 2010.

comments revealed men's limited appreciation of the impact of the economic crisis on women, given the context of rising material needs and declining incomes.

Men's comments about women becoming more materialistic were closely tied to yet another perception: that it was becoming more common for married women to engage in extramarital affairs. Male interviewees felt that young girls were more likely to have affairs with both married and unmarried people, as long as those people would give them money. Some of the men who made these points, like Deezert and Teekay, admitted that prostitution and adultery were also common in Zimbabwe. However, according to them, what was different in South Africa was that women sometimes engaged in immoral behaviour with the knowledge of husbands who were often unable to restrain them.[25] They added that migrant women from Zimbabwe who were having extramarital affairs were copying this habit from their local counterparts. This sounded like an overstatement to me, because even in Zimbabwe cases of marital infidelity were on the rise. It seemed that people's inability to meet basic needs due to a bad economy was in some cases forcing them to compromise their morals and ethics. The subject of sexual morality dominated some of my discussions of gender with Zimbabweans in South Africa. Ironically, married women believed that things like excessive drinking, smoking, prostitution and extra-marital affairs were more common among men than among women. Yet Joyce, who said her husband had been foolish to allow her to live alone in South Africa, hints in these words that she might engage in extramarital affairs, because her husband had let her migrate and live on her own. She was also afraid that her husband was having adulterous affairs in Zimbabwe while she was in South Africa. In these debates it was difficult to try to

[25] Interview with Deezert and Teekay, Johannesburg, December 12, 2010

figure out who was stating facts – but in fact, most of what people expressed was largely perception.

Zimbabwean migrant men also alleged that migrant women from Zimbabwe were becoming more disobedient to their husbands and to men in general. This perception came through quite clearly in the words of Danai. He was a married Zimbabwean migrant in his late forties, who lived with his wife and four children in a crowded area of Johannesburg. In his contribution to the topic of gender, Danai said, *"Kuno kuSouth Africa vakadzi havachatereri varume. Havachaita zvavaiita kumusha. Ukavaudza kuti, 'Ita chakati,' havaiti. Vanoita madiro."* ("Over here in South Africa, wives disobey husbands. They no longer behave the way they did in Zimbabwe. If you tell them to do something, they don't obey, but do as they please.")[26] The view that married women no longer obeyed their husbands was quite common. Both Danai and his friend Monya drew a link between women's migration and disloyalty. This view was pronounced among working-class and low-income Zimbabwean men, and was prompted by increased instances of domestic feuds, arising from how families allocated scarce resources.

Religious beliefs also contributed to men's perception that women were disobedient. Some men drew from the Bible and from African cultural norms to support the argument that migrant women were becoming more powerful and thus disobedient. Monya argued that migrant women in South Africa felt their role was to supervise their husbands. He blamed the Constitution of South Africa, which, in his view, gave women too much power, which "confused" them. Monya was referring to the Bill of Rights, which criminalizes various forms of discrimination on the grounds of gender, sex, pregnancy, and marital status. Although

[26] Interview with Danai and Monya, Johannesburg, December 4, 2010.

Monya alluded to legal protections for women as one of the things behind women's disobedience, I confirmed that not all women were inclined to take advantage of the law. The secondary literature also shows that women in South Africa continue to be victims of rape, domestic violence, and other discriminatory social and economic practices, in spite of the law. This shows the gap between the constitutional and legal instruments of the state, and real changes in social attitudes and practices that affect women's emancipation.[27] Monya said it was not right for men to beat up women, but he also said men had the "right" to do so, when other methods of imposing domestic peace failed. He also said that Zimbabwean men in South Africa could easily separate from disloyal wives, as there were plenty of other women waiting for a chance to prove their loyalty.[28] Men usually found it easy to consider divorcing wives perceived to be errant, while the women to whom I spoke found it more difficult to think of doing so.

Zimbabwean men with strong religious beliefs also scoffed at women who drank alcohol, and at those who wore tight-fitting skirts, jeans, and tight-fitting clothing. One of these men to whom I spoke was named Madzibaba Reggie. He was a self-styled prophet of the Johani Masowe apostolic sect. He used his sermons to chastise women who drank and wore clothes that he felt drove men to sin.[29] Nevertheless, at least two men, namely Zivai and Danai, defended some of the aspects of women's changed social behaviour. They mentioned that women's emigration removed them from the restraining influence of parents. They also admitted that women's desperation for jobs and income forced them to engage in sex for

[27] Mark Hunter, *Love in the Time of AIDS: Inequality, Gender, and Rights in South Africa* (Bloomington, Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2010), 158; Albie Sachs, "Judges and Gender: The Constitutional Rights of Women in a Post-Apartheid South Africa," *Agenda* 7(1990): 1–11.
[28] Interview with Danai and Monya, Johannesburg, December 4, 2010.
[29] Interview with Madzibaba Reggie, Johannesburg, December 2011.

money as a short-term survival measure.[30] They still felt that such survival tactics could become habitual and harmful in the long term.

The payment of *roora* (bride price) contributed to men's perceptions that they were entitled to exercise power over women. This matter has also been explored in some of the secondary literature on gender and African customs.[31] The influence of bride price on gender roles in migrant communities was an underlying code that influenced the views of the men to whom I spoke. For instance, Monya said, *"Mukadzi wakaroogwa unofanira kuva pasi pemurume wake."* ("A woman who had bride price paid for must obey her husband.")[32] In Shona custom, a man's payment of money, livestock, and other obligations to his wife's parents and family as bride price encouraged him to think him was entitled to control his wife. Jackie's husband, whom I also interviewed and Teekay, both drew from these norms when they said a woman had to be under the control of her husband, "no matter how educated or well-paid she is."[33] Because of such indigenous customs, men were often against the idea of women earning more money than their husbands. They felt this opened doors for wives to wrest power from and challenge their husbands.

Zimbabwean men affirmed that their migration to South Africa had brought far-reaching changes in their associations with women. However, rather than dwelling on how migration had affected the men themselves, the men to whom I spoke talked mostly about behavioural

[30] Interview with Andrew, Zivai, Monya and Deezert in Johannesburg, December 4, 2010.
[31] Jane L. Parpart, "Gender, Patriarchy, and Development in Africa: The Zimbabwean Case" (Michigan: Women in International Development, Michigan State University, Working Paper No. 254, November 1995, p.9, http://gencen.isp.msu.edu/documents/Working Papers/WP254.pdf, accessed on October 8, 2013.
[32] Interview with Danai and Monya, Johannesburg, December 4, 2010
[33] Interview with Teekay, Johannesburg, August 2010, Interview with Menzis, Sandton Johannesburg, October 14, 2010

changes in Zimbabwean women who had also migrated. It was as if they were saying, "Look at us. We have not changed at all. We are still the same. It's the women who have changed." This intrigued me and prompted me to think about why they talked mostly about women, when it was obvious that they themselves were changing as well. I concluded that men were having a difficult time coming to terms with their own impoverishment in Zimbabwe and subsequent displacement. The fact that men talked about changes in gender roles by referencing women may have been a symptom of how traumatized they were. Another reason was that the sudden migration of women in large numbers, which was something of an anomaly, bewildered men, and talking about how women had changed was a way of expressing their uneasiness. Women's daring participation in public spheres conventionally believed to be reserved for men destabilized men's sense of control. For men to admit openly that their own roles were changing would have meant admitting that they were losing some of their power to women, and this would have stirred feelings of shame. Dwelling on the changes they noticed in women was an effort to maintain a measure of control.

Most of the men's narratives I heard revolved around the idea that *vakadzi havachaterera* (women are no longer obedient). They told numerous stories, drawn from their personal experiences, to support their argument that women had become more powerful and wayward. Their narratives revealed what they saw as their loss of control over women. However, these men still regarded this loss as temporary. They thought it was simply their residence in a foreign country that had worsened such changes, and that they would regain their former authority upon returning to Zimbabwe. The historical record, however, reveals that such changes in women's roles and status were already underway in Zimbabwe going back to the colonial period and earlier.

Looking at women's sense of empowerment from being in South Africa, it becomes evident that a struggle for power and control was one of the features that marked the interactions of men and women from Zimbabwe in South Africa. This was why both men and women had a strong feeling of change, which, however, existed more in their discourses than in practice. The ways people understood these changes differed, but some common patterns were evident. Marked differences in understanding existed between bachelors and married men, and between married men living with their spouses and those whose spouses were in Zimbabwe or in other parts of the world.

Well-educated men and women often went beyond their initial statements to me and gave more detailed reasons for the changes they described. They linked some of the changes in gender roles and norms to the adverse effects of Zimbabwe's collapsed economy, which wiped out much formal employment for both men and women, and in doing so, made life more difficult for women and children. They also drew links among economic collapse, the exodus from Zimbabwe, and the entry of more women into waged labour. Working-class men who lived in rented accommodation and belonged in the low-income bracket appreciated the entry of more women into waged employment. They understood that women could not wait for men, as was the case when Zimbabwe's economy was more stable, because of the effects of high levels of unemployment. Men who felt that their wives pestered them with demands for money were revealing their own inability to provide for their families sufficiently, yet also complained of the sense of independence that led women to earn their own money. Their perception that women had a limited understanding of the challenges men faced in the search for income was not accurate; women and children are usually the first to be affected by low income levels and poverty, and women's decisions to leave Zimbabwe and to look for work

elsewhere showed their understanding of the economic crisis and how to alleviate it. The discourses around change revealed more about increasing tension between spouses over low incomes and falling standards of living than it did about women's alleged power and the diminishing power of men.

When men felt that their power had been challenged, they were also alluding to how the law in South Africa restrained them from abusing women. Working-class men like Deezert and Teekay said they took seriously women's threats to press charges against them for abuse. However, they still refuted the idea that women had become more powerful than men.[34] Married men and women were thus still grappling with the changing terrain of gender, particularly with the effects of women's entry into waged employment in larger numbers, women's access to legal protections, and the rise in domestic tension and instability in marriages.

[34] Interview with Deezert and Teekay, Johannesburg, December 12, 2010.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I explored how men and women expressed their understanding of gender roles and norms, following their departure from Zimbabwe and residence in South Africa. The women with whom I spoke professed to have experienced much change in their lives. They mentioned that the economic and social crisis in Zimbabwe had forced them to leave the country and to be more active participants in the urban economy. This altered their relations with men, as it reduced their former financial dependence on men. Women felt that joining the workforce had empowered them, but they admitted an increase in their duties and minimal capacity to contest gender inequality overall. Women's views were diverse, and they tended to follow lines of education and income, but even within the same class, differences in perception abounded. It was evident that women were making use of the context of crisis to leverage their aspirations for greater autonomy and pursuit of personal goals. The framework of class is useful in understanding their diverse and paradoxical experiences in the sense that those from upper- and middle-class backgrounds made some significant gains, although they still struggled with structures, while those of the lower classes suffered major reverses.

Men admitted that their conceptions of gender roles were changing. I discovered that they had a strong fear of competition from women who were increasingly getting into the workforce, as this disrupted their traditional expectations. Blue-collar men expressed the most hostility, but professionals were also apprehensive about competitive women. I observed that women who were doing better professionally derided the pride and self-esteem of working-class and younger men. As I expected, men's attitudes showed resistance to change, and they felt a strong need to maintain superiority over women. In my view, most married men were

perplexed by the reality of having migrated with their wives. Their confidence and ideas of success, such as the ability to provide, were thrown into flux. It was not surprising that they viewed ambitious and powerful women with discomfort. They admitted that such women undermined their sense of virility. As a result, men fought to defend patriarchal values, which accorded them privileges in the home. Despite how both men and women described their experiences, I also felt that their sense of change was exaggerated. It discounted the fact that gender roles had been changing historically, and that fundamental patriarchal structures and public attitudes remained largely the same.

Chapter 7

How Zimbabweans Living in South Africa Imagined their Futures

Vignette:

> Our lives in South Africa are very unsettled. South Africans continue to say we are *makwerekwere* (babblers), no matter how long we have lived in their midst. We live in constant fear, because we are foreigners. At the same time, our plans to return home, to Zimbabwe, are not very clear because there are many problems there. We are between a rock and a hard place. We have no real option, except to wait and see. *–Mutatiwa, a Zimbabwean migrant in Johannesburg, November 2010.*

Zimbabweans living in South Africa betrayed a deep level of uncertainty in their thoughts and actions about the future. I asked them about their career goals, life plans, and also about whether they planned to live in South Africa much longer or go back to Zimbabwe. Their responses were tentative in most cases. They were unsure about what to do or what would happen next. In my search for the causes of this uncertainty, I discovered several intersecting factors. Mutatiwa alluded to some of these reasons in the quotation above. He captured how people were unsure of their present and future conditions because most of them lived precariously. People said they lived in South Africa because that seemed to offer a set of advantages, but they also spoke of serious drawbacks, which rattled them. This is why more than half of them mentioned the option of returning to Zimbabwe, citing their insecurity in South Africa. However, this option also looked unlikely because Zimbabwe has remained unstable and its economy in crisis. Although people mentioned that they wanted to return to Zimbabwe, they did not know when. This lack of certainty in how people talked about their future plans revealed their inability to take full control of their circumstances.

My final chapter focuses on the ideas of the future held by Zimbabweans living in South Africa. Some of the most important ideas they shared with me were about progress and what it meant to them. One of the most powerful ideas they raised with reference to progress was the idea of "a new life." Within their discussions about progress and a new life were specific action plans they grappled with: whether to stay in South Africa, to return to Zimbabwe, or to live transnationally. I explore these ideas here to understand people's notions of economic and political crisis, survival, career paths, and family. I also examine these ideas to get a better understanding of how people came to terms with leaving Zimbabwe and living abroad. An investigation of how people imagined and talked about the future is vital to this dissertation for at least three main reasons. First, people spoke at length about their future plans in their tales of migration. This showed that their focus was not on the past alone, but that they were concerned about the present and future. An examination of their future plans also provides a way to recap the themes addressed earlier, such as why they left, and their living conditions abroad.

I discovered that people's thoughts about living abroad, and their prospects of returning home, were a major battlefield on which they sought to grasp what it meant to live abroad. This psychological struggle is even more necessary to ravel, considering that the exit of most people from Zimbabwe was not voluntary. Examining how they talked about their future sheds more light on their understanding of political, economic, and social changes in both South Africa and Zimbabwe. Finally, my focus on migrants' plans introduces another dimension to the academic literature, which has focused mostly on migration as a survival strategy without emphasizing how people tend to move beyond survival and focus on moving on. Available studies on migrants' plans include the work of France Maphosa, whose focus was on how

people have been going back and forth between their countries of residence and Zimbabwe.[1] Both the future plans of migrants and their return migration still need further scholarly exploration.

My arguments derive from formal interviews with twenty Zimbabweans. I drew from the testimonies of Mutatiwa, DJ Fresh, Sarah, John, Joseph, Deezert, Murowa, Nyenge, Chikozho, Elliot, Mai Rwizi, Sarah, Callen, Miriam, and Gertrude. Eleven of them lived in Johannesburg, and four lived in other parts of South Africa. Mutatiwa was in his early fifties, DJ Fresh in his mid-twenties, and both Joseph and Deezert were in their late thirties. This sample represents the main age groups of people who moved to South Africa in the 2000s. I also drew from additional interviews in Zimbabwe conducted with people who had returned from South Africa. These people were Sandra, Naboth, Norest, Dan, and Enias, who are included in the sample of twenty. Drawing from the stories of both men and women enabled me to compare their views along gender lines, in addition to considering other factors like marital status, age, and educational and professional qualifications. I also drew from the secondary literature, particularly from the survey carried out by the Southern African Migration Project (SAMP) in 2007.[2] The survey provided some insights into the cyclic nature of cross-border movement in southern Africa. It also asked Zimbabweans what they thought about their chances of returning to live in Zimbabwe. However, as a quantitative instrument, the survey did not allow migrants to express themselves fully because it gave them a limited range of options to choose from. Therefore, while I complement some of that survey's findings, my use of open-ended interviews allows me to go beyond it, in order to uncover the complexities in people's ideas.

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[1] France Maphosa, "Transnationalism and Undocumented Migration Between Rural Zimbabwe and South Africa," in Crush and Tevera, *Zimbabwe's Exodus*, 346–58.
[2] Makina, "Zimbabwe in Johannesburg," 239.

I organized the chapter into three main sections. In the first section, I explore people's ideas of progress and a "new" life. My emphasis is on how they sought to raise their standards of living by satisfying their consumption tastes. I argue that people's urgent plans included living a better life, and that competition from peers played an important role in how they imagined this life. In the second section, the focus is on how people were divided about returning to Zimbabwe, staying in South Africa, or going back and forth. In the third and final section, I discuss some of the barriers they identified to their plans to return to Zimbabwe. The overall argument of the chapter is that people considered their sojourn in South Africa to be a temporary one, and most of them said they still hoped to return to Zimbabwe. However, the lack of a durable political settlement in Zimbabwe, limited economic opportunities, and the unavailability of basic social services dampened their prospects of returning, leaving them in limbo. Their talk about the future was an expression of the struggle between their ambitions and the practical realities that opposed those ambitions.

Ideas of progress and a "new" life

Zimbabweans living in South Africa aspired to have what they called *vupenyu vutsva,* which means "a new life." Despite leaving Zimbabwe under difficult circumstances, and living on the margins in another country, they continued to talk about progress, and to nurture dreams of a better life. Although these people always had nurtured ideas about personal development and raising their standards of living, moving to South Africa rekindled their hopes because, unlike in Zimbabwe, the economy functioned and opportunities for upward mobility were available. We get a better idea of this by looking at the words of a male migrant named Mutatiwa, who lived in Crown Mines. He introduced the concept of a "new" life and gave a strong description of what it meant when I asked him for this thoughts about the future.

> My objective is to save money and buy certain commodities I need. I want to buy solar panels, batteries, and to build a zinc-roofed house, which is what other people are doing. But after buying these things, I may be shocked to discover that my neighbour, who is working in Pretoria, just bought better things than mine. This will force me into buying more things, in order to look better than him. That is why you see our lives are about making South Africans and the Chinese rich.

Mutatiwa's words touched on some of the themes raised in the preceding chapters. He identified some of the push factors behind people's departure from Zimbabwe, and some of the pull factors that drew them to South Africa. He also raised the matter of the usually grim living and working conditions of migrants, thereby capturing much about the social lives of Zimbabweans in South Africa. In addition, Mutatiwa also spoke about how migrants sought to uplift their lives, which involved raising their incomes in order to acquire fashionable consumer goods. His narrative dovetailed with those of other married migrants like Teekay, Monya, Modest, and Mai Bee. They too, believed that their presence in South Africa offered an opportunity to raise their standards of living. They also defined a "new" life as the ability to own luxurious homes and automobiles, and to have access to electronic gadgets like television sets, digital media players, and expensive cell phones.

The lives of migrants abroad were also defined by strong ideas about progress and material possessions, some of them stirred by competition and social expectations. Living in a country in which consumption was an important part of everyday life, migrants also felt pressured to acquire material goods. The quest for possessions was evident among people of all social classes, some of whom were scared to return to Zimbabwe in case they would fail to maintain the lifestyle they had in South Africa.[3] People living abroad were often worried that they would

[3] Interview with Cullen, Johannesburg, November 16, 2010.

not be able to show evidence of higher living standards to their compatriots who stayed in Zimbabwe, and to those who had gone to other countries. Both mature and younger migrants aspired to present an image of success to their counterparts in Zimbabwe.[4] They wanted people who had stayed in Zimbabwe to adore them, thinking that they lived well in South Africa. Younger people sought to cultivate an image of success in several ways. One of the ways women did this was by buying and wearing make-up when they went back to Zimbabwe. They also had the most fashionable clothes, shoes, watches, cell phones, and other trendy items. This forced some of them to work long hours in order to make extra income to feed the lifestyle they wanted to display.[5] The latest fashion, which they called simply "labels," was what distinguished those who went to South Africa from those who stayed in Zimbabwe. It also demarcated the line between those who were gainfully employed in South Africa and those still trapped in the cycle of poverty.

The prevalence of expensive consumer tastes was not limited to migrants, but was also an ingrained feature of South Africans. This confirms that migration can be a key driver of consumption and vice versa. In his analysis of consumer culture in the West, Thorstein Veblen identified social pressure as one of the factors that fuels the quest for material goods.[6] Veblen argued that sometimes consumers buy goods to keep up with others, and to prop up their self-esteem and self-respect. This phenomenon was evident in how migrants like Mutatiwa conceived of a "new life." Let us look at another excerpt from my interview with him, in which he expressed these ideas more strongly.

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[4] Interview with Jackie, Sandton, Johannesburg, October 14, 2010.
[5] Interview with Sarah, Brixton, Johannesburg, November 13, 2008.
[6] Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class: An Economic Study of Institutions,* edited with an introduction by Martha Banta (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 26-27, 111-114.

> The desire to buy a bed and a TV, and to build a zinc-roofed house, is widespread among us. I can say that was the main reason many Zimbabweans came to South Africa, to get those things. We are very worried that people will laugh at us if we return to Zimbabwe without things like a TV. It is not nice for our kids to watch the TV at the neighbour's house. People will scoff at you if you fail to build a zinc-roofed house. Those who stayed behind, and made money from farming, will be ahead of you, with two asbestos sheets for a house. How will you justify your presence in South Africa if you fail to acquire these things?

Migrants like Mutatiwa expressed a strong desire for commodities. From what they said, it was apparent that people were often responding to the power of commodities. They were showing that the production and distribution of goods shaped people's lifestyles and consumption tastes. The recent advent of cheap Chinese goods on the African markets has also stimulated the consumption tastes of migrants. As we have seen, some of them have defined a new life in terms of their ability to access consumer goods coming in from China and elsewhere because of their relative affordability. The list of goods the Zimbabwean migrants to whom I spoke bought in South Africa included power generators, solar panels and batteries, modern entertainment units (television sets and radios), cell phones, fridges, beds, sofas, chairs, and clothes. Furniture and food items topped the list of things Zimbabwean customers coveted, according to Abdullah and Jim, who were managers at Jumbo Cash and Carry Wholesalers.[7] Abdullah and Jim pointed out that the biggest spenders among their customers were from Zimbabwe. Their spending habits also encouraged those who were still in Zimbabwe to venture to South Africa. Although the people I interviewed wanted a higher standard of living, however, most of their expectations proved difficult to meet. This was the case for low-income people like Mai Rwizi, who was finding it difficult to meet her goals, and was becoming frustrated.

[7] Interview with Muhammad Abdullah and Jim, Johannesburg, November 26, 2010.

Migrants from a rural background, like Chikozho, had strong ideas about starting a new life. They had a slightly different understanding of what a new life meant. Chikozho planned to build up a herd of cattle and own a farm in Zimbabwe. His dream of owning a farm was spurred on by the promise offered by the land reform program in Zimbabwe, and by the bleak nature of his life in South Africa. However, he was still uncertain about this dream because he was outside Zimbabwe and did not know how to apply for a farm. People with rural backgrounds wanted to buy solar panels, batteries, grinding mills, and building materials for homes. They also wanted to save money for livestock in Zimbabwe. Migrants from urban backgrounds bought power generators and household furniture, indicating the problems with power supply in Zimbabwe. The quest for automobiles was common among all classes, with both men and women expressing a strong desire to drive a vehicle back to Zimbabwe.[8] Some of my informants planned to start retail businesses, although they did not have business plans yet.

As well as satisfying their tastes for consumption, Zimbabweans living in South Africa also wanted to venture into business. The case of a young Zimbabwean security guard named Elliot exemplified this quest. Elliot was one of those who expressed this desire strongly. His inspiration to do this came from within himself and from other successful entrepreneurs he interacted with. Elliot spoke about his dream to bring the Silicon Valley to Africa.[9]

> I want to buy things like computers, and to build a computer manufacturing company in Zimbabwe. I want to learn a new trade, so that I can be a qualified tradesperson. I do not have a profession of my own at the moment. But I am getting more ambitious as I get older. I would like to get training and become a tradesman in the computer business. Money is the only problem. Besides, I have a wife and two kids to look after.

[8] Group interview with Murowa, Teekay, and Deezert, Johannesburg, October 22, 2010.
[9] Group interview with Elliot, Fresh, Mutatiwa, Deezert and Brix, Johannesburg, October 16, 2010.

Elliot represented migrants with whom I spoke who yearned to put entrepreneurship at the centre of their quest for a new life. His future plans departed from the views of several other migrants, who aspired to become employees, rather than being employers in their own right. Despite his humble beginnings and current poverty, Elliot viewed himself as an owner of a large company, employing other people. His ideas led me think about the role of local entrepreneurship in Africa's development. As economist Joseph Schumpeter pointed out, an entrepreneurial spirit like Elliot's is key to the economic and social development of any capitalist society.[10] Other Africanist scholars have also argued that business-mindedness, personal savings, and local investment are important factors for economic and social development in Africa.[11] They have also argued that institutional factors, such as government policies and political stability, are critical for private enterprise.[12] This body of work is relevant to the ongoing discussion about the future plans of Zimbabwean migrants in South Africa. It highlights some of the conditions that affect people like Elliot. As we have seen in his story, apart from business-mindedness, there is also a need for education and training, as well as economic and political stability, in order for people like Elliot to realize their dreams. What I found to be particularly attractive about Elliot's way of thinking was that he had a great vision. Although he was cognizant of the setbacks, his vision was a burning desire. I was able to encourage him, and share some of the action steps I have learned from the work of celebrated American author Napoleon Hill.[13]

[10] Joseph Schumpeter*, Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 131–2.
[11] David S. Fick, *Entrepreneurship in Africa: A Study of Successes* (Connecticut: Praeger, 2002), xi, xii.
[12] Moky Makura, *Africa's Greatest Entrepreneurs* (Johannesburg: Penguin 2009).
[13] Napoleon Hill, *Think and Grow Rich* (Scarborough: Prentice-Hall, 1966).

It is vital to underline the fact that the Zimbabweans living in South Africa to whom I spoke were full of hope, despite their marginal economic and social status. They nurtured hopes and dreams of a brighter future. Migrants like Mutatiwa and Elliot expressed the views of other migrants when they spoke about how they planned to raise their living standards. More importantly, I realized that their main priority had shifted from the imperatives of basic survival to ideas of personal development and material progress, although they were cognizant of some of the hurdles in their path. In the next section, I explore another vital dimension in how people imagined the future. This dimension centred on what they said about the options of going back to Zimbabwe, staying in South Africa, or living in-between.

To return to Zimbabwe or stay in South Africa

One of the key topics Zimbabweans living in South Africa talked about was whether they would go back to Zimbabwe at some point in the future, stay in South Africa for a while longer, or settle down permanently in South Africa. When people spoke about their future plans, going back to Zimbabwe was the most popular option. Of the twenty people of whom I asked this question, fifteen said they wanted to return to Zimbabwe rather than live in South Africa for the rest of their lives. My findings complement the results of a SAMP survey done among Zimbabweans living in Johannesburg in 2007.[14] Although the results of the SAMP survey and my fieldwork are similar in some respects, I offer details that are not evident in the survey. By making use of open-ended interviews, I was able to uncover some of the main reasons behind people's desire to return to and live in Zimbabwe. More importantly, I was also able to go beyond what people said and unmask the feelings of deep uncertainty with which they were grappling with as they pondered the future. My analysis reveals that people

[14] Daniel Makina, "Zimbabwe in Johannesburg," 239.

were usually too idealistic, drawing from emotions rather than logic most of the time. There was a big difference between what they said and what they were actually prepared to do.

In 2007, the majority of surveyed Zimbabweans living in South Africa expressed a strong desire to return to and live in Zimbabwe. This was surprising given that even more people in Zimbabwe were scrambling to leave, as the economic, social, and political situation was getting worse. Those who were already out may have harboured the desire to go back because of their frustration with life's prospects where they were. The SAMP survey revealed that thirty-two percent of 4,654 Zimbabweans living in South Africa said they would opt to return to Zimbabwe and set up a business. Twenty-one percent hoped to stay in South Africa, but set up a business in Zimbabwe. Seventeen percent said they would go back to Zimbabwe and find gainful employment. Eleven percent opted to return to Zimbabwe to help in the reconstruction of society. Seven percent hoped to stay in South Africa, but go back to Zimbabwe to retire. Six percent wanted to return to Zimbabwe and settle. Another six percent wanted to stay in South Africa more permanently. The survey showed that the *total* percentage of migrants who said they wanted to return to Zimbabwe at some point was quite high, at seventy-three percent. These people said they would like to pursue a range of options upon their return. It is likely that the twenty-one percent who said they wished to stay in South Africa and run a business in Zimbabwe chose this option because they were uncertain of what to do. They were unsure of the nature of political, social, and economic change occurring in Zimbabwe. The same applies to those who said they simply wanted to return to Zimbabwe. Their responses were also dependent on how they understood the nature of political, economic, and social conditions in Zimbabwe. I explore these dynamics in greater detail in the next section.

My fieldwork suggested that many people in South Africa were still interested in returning to Zimbabwe, three years after the SAMP survey. Five people I spoke with on this subject were, in fact, already back in Zimbabwe, but I did not include their views in the chapter. They were more "circular migrants" than people of fixed abode, and I wanted the sentiments of people who were still living in South Africa. Nineteen out of the twenty people I asked about going back to Zimbabwe said they were interested, but they went on to qualify their level of interest by citing the conditions that would determine the timing. Four of them said that they would return to Zimbabwe and visit South Africa often, as circular migrants. Three people said that in the future, if things were to change for the better in Zimbabwe, they would consider South Africa as their workplace and Zimbabwe as their home. Nine people expressed their desire to return to Zimbabwe permanently, without much equivocation or contradiction in their statements. The majority of those in this final category were women like Sarah, Nyenge, and Sandra.

Why did an overwhelming majority of people express an interest in returning to Zimbabwe, particularly when we consider the fact that things were not looking good for the country? Several reasons came up when people talked about this, perhaps the most obvious being the fact that people had a strong and enduring idea of home. Nine people cited the need to be reunited with family as the main reason for desiring to return to Zimbabwe. Sarah, a migrant woman who lived in Brixton, echoed the sentiment of other women, such as Mai Bee, when she said she wanted to return to Zimbabwe so that she could be reunited with her young children.[15] The need to reunite with families was an important factor for those saying they wanted to return, especially young women. This underlined the negative impact of migration

[15] Interview with Sarah, Brixton, Johannesburg, December 4, 2008.

on families. Married men and women lamented their separation from spouses and children; six women said this was "the main factor" in their desire to return to Zimbabwe, while two men said they were concerned about the welfare of their spouses and children. From these numbers, it was easy to see that women were more attached to the idea of going back to Zimbabwe because of family ties. Meanwhile, fewer men may have nursed the hope of returning because they had pinned their hopes on sponsoring their families, or being able to send them money and food. I was not able to get any statistical data to confirm this, but people also said men were more likely to find local women to marry or live with, which would reduce their inclination to return to Zimbabwe.

People who expressed their wish to return to Zimbabwe were under the impression that the crisis they had escaped would be over by the time they returned. Many among them believed that things would soon return to normal, even when the reality on the ground indicated otherwise. A man named Zivai expressed both the temporary nature of his stay in South Africa and his wish to return to Zimbabwe by saying, *"Kuno takangovuya kuzovanda zhara nenhamo zviri kumusha, asi kana izvozvo zvapera tinodzokera."* ("We came here to evade hunger and poverty at home, but we will return when these hardships are over.")[16] Zivai and others like him felt attached to the idea of returning for a number of reasons; however, their understanding of the problems in Zimbabwe and their projections about how long it would take to rebuild Zimbabwe's economy were wrong. For the crisis in Zimbabwe kept grinding on and on, making their initial thoughts untenable. This is not to take away their right to dream, as the crisis in Zimbabwe has confounded many analysts. It is simply a way of saying that factors

[16] Interview with Zivai, Johannesburg, November 13, 2010.

over which people did not have control lay behind the difference between what people said they wanted to do and what they actually ended up doing.

Cultural and nationalistic feelings influenced migrants to express their desire to return to Zimbabwe. When migrants spoke about returning to Zimbabwe, they used the words "*kumusha/ekhaya,"* which mean "home." By *home* they meant the place where someone was "originally from," which usually meant the place where a person was born and raised, or where his or her family was. Their choice to return home stemmed from deep-seated sentiments of belonging to a particular physical place. These notions were sometimes mediated through an attachment to parents and family left behind in Zimbabwe. People said their parents usually asked them to return, while those who had not migrated with their spouses and children felt the need to reunite with them. Sometimes family members in Zimbabwe assured migrants that conditions in Zimbabwe had improved. People's hopes of returning to Zimbabwe were raised by the formation of the government of national unity in 2009. This was the case for Tonde, who was in his mid-twenties and worked as a general labourer in South Africa.[17] He went back to Zimbabwe when his parents put pressure on him to return. They told him that things were normal and they did not want him to die in a foreign country.

Many Zimbabweans also wanted to return home simply because they loved their country. People like Wilbert believed that Zimbabwe was "better" than South Africa.[18] Having been mugged several times, Wilbert detested the high rate of crime in South Africa, including murder, rape, carjackings, and fraud. Wilbert's views were well-founded, considering that

[17] Interview with Tonde, Johannesburg, November 13, 2010.
[18] Informal conversation with Wilbert, University of Johannesburg, November 26, 2008.

around fifty murders are committed in South Africa each day. More than sixty-five thousand rapes are also committed each year. According to a government-commissioned study by the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, South Africa has exceptionally high levels of (violent) crime.[19] For example, in the year 2000, the total number of crimes recorded in South Africa was 7,997.06 per 100,000 inhabitants; for Zimbabwe, the total was 2,786.93 per 100,000 inhabitants.[20] It was common to hear Zimbabwean migrants say that Zimbabwe was safer than South Africa. The recurrence of xenophobic attacks also sharpened feelings of social insecurity among Zimbabweans. The attacks of 2008, for example, contributed to at least 700 Zimbabweans signing up to be repatriated to Zimbabwe with South Africa government assistance.[21] This was a small figure compared to the total number of Zimbabweans in South Africa. However, it showed that the fear of xenophobic attacks greatly influenced how migrants thought about their stay in South Africa and about the future. Although people said they were interested in going back to Zimbabwe, this does not mean they would actually do so. I was able to discern this from the list of obstacles they admitted stood between their ideas what was likely to occur. I take a closer look at some of these obstacles in the next section.

Obstacles in the path of returning to Zimbabwe

A wide range of obstacles stood in the way of many Zimbabweans' stated goal of going back to Zimbabwe. The people I interviewed and those I spoke with informally were hesitant about returning, and said that they would do so only if things went back to normal. I then asked them questions to clarify what "normal" would look like to them. More than half of the

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[19] Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, "Why Does South Africa Have Such High Rates of Violent Crime?," (Johannesburg, 2009), 3–4.
[20] United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *Seventh United Nations Survey of Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems*, *covering the period 1998–2000*, accessed July 3, 2014, http://www.unodc.org/pdf/crime/seventh_survey/7sv.pdf.
[21] "Displaced Zimbabweans Concerned about South Africa Integration Plans," *reliefweb*, accessed June 24, 2011, http://reliefweb.int/node/269903.

potential returnees said they would go back if more job opportunities existed. It was not surprising to me that they would mention the economy as the key factor hindering their return. After a decade of contraction, Zimbabwe's economy stabilized and grew at an average annual rate of 7.5 percent for a period of less than three years, between 2009 and 2012.[22] Thereafter, the economy contracted, with the average annual growth rate dropping to four percent in 2014. An external debt of ten billion dollars, the continued closure of major industries, informalization, and a business environment marked by policy inconsistency contributed to further contraction. Although the wish of many was to return to Zimbabwe, people were thus practical enough to know that they were better off staying away until the economy turned around. Those working in Zimbabwe were doing so on a small scale. Most of what they did involved the provision of consumer goods to family members in Zimbabwe, and strategic investments in homes and furniture.[23]

People who did not have business interests and property in Zimbabwe were less likely to return to the country than those who had. People shuddered at the idea of returning to Zimbabwe before they purchased or built a home in Zimbabwe The thought of going back to rent from someone discouraged them, although most of them lived as tenants in South Africa. This was evident from the way people prioritized home ownership in their plans to return to Zimbabwe. I also noticed that their desire to build or buy a house went beyond the need for shelter. They were invoking a sense of success and ownership. Unfortunately, income levels, planning skills, and health were some of the things that prevented them from realizing the goal of having their own homes in Zimbabwe. Also, some of them faced difficulties when they tried to buy houses

[22] International Monetary Fund (IMF), *Zimbabwe: Staff Monitored Program*, IMF Country Report, No13/193 (Washington DC: IMF, 2013), 9.
[23] Interview with Elliot, November 10, 2010.

in Zimbabwe. Some of them asked relatives to help them out, only to discover that those relatives were untrustworthy. This was the case for a young man named Murowa, who was sending money and building materials to Zimbabwe. [24] He had asked his younger brothers to supervise the building of a home. However, instead of doing this, his brothers used the money for their personal needs and sold the building materials. They lied to him that his home was complete, sending him photos of someone else's house. He was shocked and devastated when he returned to Zimbabwe and found the truth.

The fear of political violence and instability was another key factor that discouraged people from returning to Zimbabwe. I met people like Joe, who despised the idea that anyone would return to Zimbabwe.[25] Joe said the problems that drove him out in the first place were still fresh in his mind. He said he was comfortable in South Africa. He did not foresee an amicable political settlement and economic recovery in Zimbabwe. He remained firmly opposed to the idea of returning, even after the formation of the unity government in 2008. Although the unity government eased political tensions between the MDC and ZANU PF, and the economy showed signs of recovery and growth under its tenure, this did not inspire confidence in people like Joe. Their pessimism showed that some people had lost faith in Zimbabwean politics altogether, and particularly in the possibility of a political transition. Most of those who cited political factors as a hindrance to their return were MDC supporters. Some of them had been victims of violence in previous years. They said they would return only if their party won election.[26] Some people, of course, may have used political factors as an excuse, when they were really hesitant to return to Zimbabwe because of economic failure in South Africa.

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[24] Interview with Murowa, Johannesburg, September 4, 2010.
[25] Joe, email communication with the author, October 13, 2012.
[26] Interview with Mr. Chikozho, Johannesburg, November 23, 2010.

Migrants expressed their anger at the lack of political transition in Zimbabwe by attacking President Mugabe. They held him responsible for the political, economic, and social hardships that compelled them to migrate to foreign countries. A man who identified himself as MuSecurity, meaning "the security guard" was quite blunt. He said, "*Ndinodzokera kuZimbabwe kana Mugabe afa.*" (I'll return to Zimbabwe after Mugabe is dead.)[27] What his words indicate is that some people assumed that Mugabe's departure from the presidency would resolve the country's challenges. MuSecurity invoked one of the most talked-about topics among Zimbabweans, which is the future of Zimbabwe after Mugabe. I met people who thought things would get better after Mugabe, and others who thought things could get worse.[28] What these sentiments showed was the central role President Mugabe has played in Zimbabwean politics. However, the fact that people associated his exit with the return of peace and prosperity to Zimbabwe, and with their own return home, revealed their disregard for the institutional factors that undergirded his rule. Although the president has played a central role, his party and the undemocratic political culture that have developed since independence will continue to influence the nature of Zimbabwean politics in the future.

Migrants with professional skills and gainful employment in different sectors of the South African economy were also among those who were opposed to, or hesitant and undecided about, returning to Zimbabwe, compared to low-income earners. This was because their chances of being integrated in the host society were higher. They had better levels of job security, higher incomes, and some of them owned property and businesses in South Africa.[29] People with business interests, such as Jackie, and mid-level managers like Joe, said they were

[27] Interview with MuSecurity, Central Methodist Church, Johannesburg, November 23, 2008.
[28] Informal group discussion with Nyade, Tonde, Bee, and Yellow, Crown Mines, November 10, 2010.
[29] Daniel Makina, "Zimbabwe in Johannesburg," 233–9.

comfortable working and living in South Africa.[30] They said South Africa had vast opportunities for upward mobility, and they chose to visit Zimbabwe on holidays and for special events.[31] What their status and sentiments tell us is that the choice to stay in South Africa or to return to Zimbabwe did not depend on the conditions in Zimbabwe alone, although these were vital. The choice also depended on one's employment status and lifestyle in South Africa. Low-income earners from Zimbabwe, who were largely marginalized and struggled to be absorbed into the middle-class ranks of South Africa, looked at the idea of returning to Zimbabwe in a more favourable light than those with gainful employment. As their hopes were not being realized early enough in South Africa, they were getting more frustrated by their deskilling and dehumanization. They believed that their futures still lay in Zimbabwe, if only things would get better there.[32]

South Africa's immigration policies had an influence on how Zimbabwean migrants thought about the future, particularly their sentiments about returning to Zimbabwe. For example, in 2010, the government of South Africa altered conditions for the entry of people from Zimbabwe. Its "special dispensation project" gave Zimbabweans a chance to apply for residence and work permits that would be valid for four years.[33] These measures enabled more Zimbabweans to work legally in South Africa. At the same time, the government of South Africa also began a campaign to recruit 50,000 skilled workers from Zimbabwe annually. This showed South Africa's eagerness to take advantage of the labour of skilled Zimbabweans, as the government screening process favoured skilled people over unskilled. Zimbabweans

[30] Interview with Jackie, Sandton, Johannesburg, October 14, 2010.
[31] Enias, Facebook communication with the author, July 22, 2013.
[32] Interview with Andrew, Crown Mines, Johannesburg, 15 November 2010.
[33] Department of Home Affairs, Government of South Africa, "Presentation on the Documentation of Zimbabweans Project (DZP)," Pretoria, Government of South Africa, 2014.

welcomed these measures and sought to take advantage of them.[34] This relative formalization of the stay of Zimbabweans in South Africa affected how they planned their future roles there. These measures, however, still revealed that the South African government regarded the presence of Zimbabweans in their country as temporary. Unskilled migrants like Tonde, Yellow, and Mavhaire did not appreciate the importance of these measures to their plans for the future.[35]

Conclusion

In this chapter, I explored the short-term future plans of Zimbabwean migrants in South Africa. I drew from two key sources of information: the 2007 SAMP survey, which measured the probability of return migration among Zimbabweans in Johannesburg, and my interviews and informal conversations with twenty migrants, conducted between 2008 and 2010. I argued that the future plans of Zimbabwean migrants were marked by their quest for a new life. By a "new life" they meant economic activities able to raise their living standards as workers and consumers. Many migrants anticipated a new life by upgrading their educational and professional skills in South Africa. They were keen to contribute to economic and social reconstruction in Zimbabwe. To this end, they hinged their future plans on the probability of returning to Zimbabwe.

My findings are in agreement with those of the SAMP survey, which showed that more than three-quarters of migrants viewed return migration to Zimbabwe favourably, although they mentioned a set of impediments. They made reference to poor job prospects in Zimbabwe, and to various inconveniences, such as the absence of reliable electrical power for domestic

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[34] CoRMSA and FMSP, "Regularizing Zimbabwean Migration to South Africa," Migration Policy Brief (Johannesburg: CoRMSA, May 2009, 3.

[35] Interview with Tonde, Yellow, and Mavhaire, Johannesburg, October 22, 2010.

and industrial activities. They also spoke about the possibility of violence and further political instability. These ideas showed that Zimbabweans were frustrated at the lack of economic recovery in Zimbabwe, as well as the lack of a political transition. Overall, Zimbabweans were uncertain about their futures. This forced them to adopt a wait-and-see strategy, as the words of Mutatiwa intimated at the start of the chapter. They pinned their hopes for the moment on living in South Africa and making regular visits to Zimbabwe. This lifestyle shows that they had joined the ranks of transnational migrants, whose ideas of home are anchored in their countries of origin, but who live elsewhere because their chances of better incomes and living standards are higher.

Chapter 8

Conclusion

In this dissertation, I examined the unprecedented departure of millions of citizens from Zimbabwe and their migration to South Africa in the 2000s. My primary aims were to explain the major factors driving mass exodus out of the country and, more importantly, to understand what happened to migrants who left. Specifically, this dissertation foregrounds the working and living conditions of those who migrated to Zimbabwe's neighbour, South Africa. At its heart, this study is fundamentally about the everyday lived realities of displacement and migration in southern Africa. Beyond insights drawn from an extensive review and analysis of the published literature, this work draws on empirical evidence gathered during field research in South Africa, and on a critical analysis of the experiences, voices, and expressed perspectives of migrants themselves.

Several important and intertwined themes are evident from my research; which are highlighted in the main introduction and elaborated upon in the rest of the dissertation. In the second chapter, I draw on migrants' own experiences and accounts in order to more fully understand, from their perspectives, the motivating factors behind their departure from Zimbabwe. People's stories centered on how they were caught up in the political and economic drama of the moment and how they understood the changes first-hand. Migrants told me about their personal struggles to survive in a collapsed economy and in the midst of political violence and deep social chaos. These stories were real, vivid, and revealed some of the common themes among people of all social classes, but also some differences along gender and generational lines. They were often intensely personal and moving accounts explaining why men, women,

and young people felt compelled to uproot themselves and move from the familiar to a life of uncertainty.

My analysis of people's stories of departure revealed that the exodus out of Zimbabwe was an outcome of the complex and multifaceted political, economic and social crisis that occurred in Zimbabwe during the course of the 2000s. The roots of the crisis go deeper into Zimbabwe's past, but people mainly talked about what happened from the year 2000, when the government of Zimbabwe embarked on a violent and chaotic land reform program. This program led to the collapse of Zimbabwe's national economy because it was poorly planned, and coincided with a protracted struggle for power between Zimbabwe's main political parties: ZANU PF and the MDC. The political conflict itself was marked by the strengthening of the repressive arm of the state and violence against leaders and supporters of the MDC, which ended up affecting ordinary people. Both the land reform program and the struggle for power led to the isolation of the government of Zimbabwe by Western countries and donor agencies. This worsened the collapse of Zimbabwe's economy and compounded the suffering of ordinary Zimbabweans, who responded to the crisis by leaving the country in unprecedented numbers. Those who left went to live as economic and political migrants and refugees in other countries in southern Africa and beyond. The majority went to South Africa.

Throughout the dissertation, accounts of people's resiliency and of the factors that influenced their determination to get out of Zimbabwe, are foregrounded. I did this by focusing on what the migrants said about their journeys from Zimbabwe to South Africa. Their personal experiences of travel in search of refuge also revealed the hardships and risks of leaving Zimbabwe. Perhaps not surprisingly, many, if not most of their tales concerned encountering

an array of obstacles and overcoming them. This was only a part of the story. My research and interviews also revealed that a significant number of people retreated and simply failed in their bid to leave. As well, this study also highlights the fact that some people encountered opportunities and not just obstacles. Individually and collectively, all the people's accounts showed how migrants were often keen to weave a narrative of triumph, even in the face of disappointment and uncertainty, which means that people are less likely to criticize themselves for making certain decisions. This was important to capture, because it complements the academic and human rights literature, which usually focuses on the grim conditions encountered by migrants.

The diverse experiences of Zimbabweans in their search for jobs are explored in Chapter 4. Here, I showed the opportunities but also the frustrations and disappointments that many, although by no means all, of the migrants went through when they faced the reality of joblessness despite having high educational and professional skills. Some of the stories I analyzed were from highly educated former professionals in Zimbabwe. In South Africa, they found themselves unemployed, underemployed in the formal sector, or doing menial work just to make ends meet. However, some people claimed to have improved their lives and felt that they were on the path of success. Others explained that their precarious conditions were leading in the direction of poverty and social marginalization. While it is tempting to dismiss them as victims, their stories of survival highlighted their agency and determination but, also, an optimism that positive change was possible in another country. It was important for the migrants to think and feel that way because that is how they were able to sustain hope. Their stories illustrate the diversity of people's experiences, itself an indication that migrants came from the whole cross-section of Zimbabwe's population. Although there were patterns in what

people said based on things like class, gender, educational levels, and when they moved out of Zimbabwe, my interest in the stories of individuals further reveals that people understand the realities of life differently.

My focus shifted in Chapter 5 to an analysis of the new social conditions of Zimbabweans displaced in South Africa. Some migrants were relatively successful in their efforts to adjust to a new social environment. The relatively easy migrant adjustment for some was mainly due to two reasons: first, because of cultural similarities and second, because of social networks at home and in South Africa. These individuals were able to maintain networks with people in Zimbabwe who gave them moral support, as well as to forge new networks within South Africa through living arrangements, marriages, and friendships. Having noted these positive aspects, it was important for me to uncover the persistence of social insecurity and the sense of social dislocation in these people's testimonies. This dissertation engages these accounts, which captured migrant's fears, including fear of crime and, similar to many foreigners in South Africa, of xenophobia, and their continued unequal treatment as outsiders. This means that while the exodus of Zimbabweans proves that migration is a major survival strategy and a potential avenue for personal material advancement, people regard it as a less desirable way of life than living and working in their own country. My analysis shows that class and privilege matter insofar as these conclusions do not apply in the same way to the growing number of educated and professional individuals, such as business people, sports stars, academics, and intellectuals. These social elites have a better chance of being integrated into the mainstream of South African society.

If Chapter 5 helped to clarify how class matters, then Chapter 6 shifted focus to the many ways in which gender influenced the experiences of migrants. In this section, I explored how the exodus of Zimbabweans to South Africa influenced changing conceptions of gender. Both a review of the dominant scholarship on southern Africa, and my interviews in particular, showed that the increased participation of women in income-generating activities altered how they related to males, whose traditional basis of authority had already been severely undermined by a decade-long trend of economic decline in Zimbabwe. Women with better education, formal jobs, and secure sources of income felt more empowered and benefitted from being in another environment more than their less-educated counterparts. In addition to exploring relationship stability despite change, my research also explored the disruptive nature of relocation, especially in the reproductive and domestic realms. This confirms the effects of change in general; because when it happens, especially when it happens abruptly, some groups of people will benefit from the new, and other groups of people will lose their privileges when the status quo is disrupted.

While many men appreciated the economic contribution of women, the research also showed that they felt undermined or "emasculated" by economically independent and powerful women. In my analysis, I teased out the contradictions in women's belief that migration had helped them move to achieve greater levels of gender equality. My empirical evidence suggested that some of their gains were strictly personal and tenuous, being the result of people's perceptions rather than being real. Greater resistance and social violence also co-existed with these gains, which means social change does not occur seamlessly, but in a disruptive manner, mainly due to struggles between different social groups.

In the final substantive chapter of the dissertation, I focused on how relocated Zimbabweans contemplated the future. I showed how most migrants, especially low-income people, still looked at the idea of returning to Zimbabwe in a favorable light. This was because of ongoing social marginalization in South Africa, socially, and also on account of exclusionary state policies and practices. My conclusion was that the persistence of political, economic, and social problems in Zimbabwe blocked people's plans to return to Zimbabwe. As a result, these migrants live in limbo, with deeply uncertain ideas of the future. They were people waiting for something to happen, but not knowing exactly what will occur or when. Many considered Zimbabwe as home and South Africa as a temporary place of work, but the very ideas of home and workplace were not stable and continued to be reconfigured on a daily basis. This means the level of control people had over their lives and what happened around them was usually minimal; although they have a certain level of agency, they still work within larger social structures that permit or limit what they can do and how far they can go.

Undoubtedly, many ambiguities are evident in the stories of Zimbabweans moving to South Africa, and in the living conditions of migrants once they were there. What we see in many, although by no means all accounts is that migrants of diverse class, gender and age backgrounds took action when circumstances required them to do so. They took these initiatives to ensure their own survival and to help their families improve their standards of living. My evidence led me to conclude that people made the decision to move out of Zimbabwe in the 2000s because their very existence was under threat. This exodus was driven primarily by personal imperatives to survive, which also ended up ensuring the survival of those left behind, including parents, siblings and the extended family. On the whole, migration to the South African economic environment allowed migrants to move beyond survival, as

they started to nurture more important aims around material progress in life. One of their main goals was to improve livelihoods by taking a part in activities that generated employment, income, and personal well-being. Some people sought to alleviate their situation by seeking opportunities for education and social mobility or finding someone to love and marry. The very fact that they took up residence in a different environment was important for the restoration of hope. This sense of hope, although intangible, was vital. People sustained their hope in life by moving somewhere else, rather than by staying in their homeland of Zimbabwe, which was experiencing further decline. This is why their stories leaned more towards positive sentiment than their real life material conditions actually suggested. This means migrants thought beyond what brought them to South Africa in the first place: survival, and that they had survived and were at different stages of post-survival life.

The stubborn persistence of poverty and marginalization, and the prevalence of thoughts of self-doubt and regret, made the contradictions in their lives ever present. People expressed remorse that their lives were not as comfortable as they had hoped or wanted. They conceded that they encountered multiple challenges on a daily basis. Some of the difficulties were of a short-term nature, such as getting laid off, being broke, and losing a mobile phone to robbers, while others were long term, such as not being able to get permanent residency status and living with the fear of being deported. The continuing contraction in Zimbabwe meant there were limited and ever declining opportunities back home, compounded by the continued exodus of people from Zimbabwe, prevented migrants in South Africa from having a clearer picture of what the future held; they were in a kind of limbo. As well, the exclusionary immigration policies of recipient governments in southern Africa and the specter of xenophobia in South Africa left many people fearful and insecure. Yet, when we look at both

sides of the coin, we can also see that some people were incrementally moving more towards greater integration into their new reality but they did not consciously recognize, or were not yet prepared to acknowledge, it. My conclusions are particularly salient for the poor, working class and socially marginalized. The experiences and living standards of Zimbabweans with higher levels of economic resources, education, and skills were less difficult, but nonetheless, unsettling. The ways in which people grappled with the ideas of integration and transnationalism, and how their ideas of returning to Zimbabwe kept fading with the passage of time, are also important dimensions for further research.

Whither Zimbabwe?

The end to a piece of work such as this usually consists of a summary and afterthoughts. However, the nature of my topic makes this option difficult for at least two main reasons. First of all, the Zimbabwean crisis, the departure of people, and their residence abroad are relatively recent events; as such they are still too fresh in our memories to allow the distance necessary for concrete conclusions, beyond preliminary ones. Secondly, the dust has not settled down, because new and important events are still unfolding in Zimbabwe on a daily basis. This makes it necessary to sketch in this postscript the implications of both this study and the more recent events in Zimbabwe on the broader literature of collapsed states, migration, development, and human agency. More importantly, I offer some of my ideas about how the population of Zimbabweans living abroad can participate more fully in the future reconstruction of Zimbabwe, which is my next area of research within the field of migration and modern diaspora studies.

The Zimbabwean case has demonstrated emphatically that mass-scale migration is one of the key ways people will respond with when states collapse. When vulnerable states face collapse, it is to be expected that people will drift away, as we have seen recently in Syria. Measures to prevent collapse are necessary because the cost of cleaning up is usually higher than the cost of prevention. The exodus from Zimbabwe in the 2000s had a number of negative outcomes, including strained political relations within the Southern African Development Community member states. However, given the lack of effective intervention, it had positive effects, because the diffusion of people prevented Zimbabwe from being engulfed in a potential civil war. Had people not left the country in hundreds of thousands per year, pressure over scarce resources like food and water could have precipitated deep levels of social strife and chaos. Migration was important as a survival strategy for those who left and for those who stayed in Zimbabwe, who became dependent on remittances from those abroad for their upkeep. The need to escape from vulnerable and collapsed states has complicated our understanding of the causes of migration. Rather than focusing on conventional economistic causes of migration which were prominent from the 1950s to the 1970s, or on social factors which came to the fore in the 1980s and 1990s, the Zimbabwean case illustrates that state collapse, even without a civil war, is a much more potent causal factor of mass scale migration within a region.

When we look at the case of Zimbabwe, what we see are multiple causes of state collapse, both structural and man-made. One of the factors that precipitated collapse was the often violent and chaotic fast-track land reform program launched by the government of Zimbabwe in the year 2000. The land reform program originated in the historical context of rising levels of rural and urban poverty and structural economic inequalities stretching back into the past, which were made worse by structural adjustment programs. These structural conditions of

rural landlessness and poverty still exist in several African countries, particularly in countries with a history of colonial land alienation like South Africa. These countries face the possibility of restlessness and potential collapse unless the issues of poverty are solved. The international community responded to the Zimbabwean case with a strategy of containment, which was achieved by imposing "targeted" sanctions on President Mugabe's government and his inner circle.[36] However, South Africa's failure to deal effectively with the issue of landlessness and poverty, and the growing power of the landless people's movement, and occasional incidents of social strife are reminders of its vulnerability. The weakening on the South African currency in the middle of 2015 was a sign pointing to an uncertain future. Economic decline and strife in South Africa would mean greater levels of instability in the whole of southern and central Africa.

The exodus from Zimbabwe suggests that human mobility will intensify in the future and patterns will become more diversified in southern Africa as a whole. This is why scholars have described southern Africa as "a region on the move."[37] New patterns of migration have indicated that domestic and regional borders will become more porous as local economies come under pressure. Although domestic and regional movement are more pronounced within states in southern Africa, extensive research by the SAMP on migration in southern Africa has shown that more people are heading to far-off destinations.[38] What this means is that international migration patterns will continue to see more people moving from the global

[36] *Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act of 2001*, S494, (Washington DC: United States Congress, December 2001)
[37] Jonathan Crush, Sally Peberdy, and Vincent Williams, "International Migration and Good Governance in the Southern African Region, SAMP Migration Policy Brief No. 17, 2006.
[38] Crush, *Heading North.*

south to the global north, because states that are vulnerable to political and economic collapse are in the non-Western parts of the world.

Focusing more narrowly on the lives of Zimbabweans in South Africa, I have shown that their existence was marked by the co-existence of betterment and continued marginalization. The essence of betterment arose from the fact that they made a conscious choice to remove themselves from a dangerous environment. While the chances of accumulating wealth remained slim for the majority, they were able to satisfy basic physiological, safety, and social needs. Residing in another country in which something positive was happening also gave them hope, although, as we have seen in the previous chapter, they became permanent candidates of living in the diaspora as transnational citizens. The lives of Zimbabweans in South Africa point more in the direction of permanent settlement and integration despite the fact that people continued to nurse vague hopes of returning home. This is to be expected from people transitioning from a circumscribed to a more open-ended existence.

Meanwhile, political events in Zimbabwe from 2010 to 2015 affirm the conclusions of scholars like Horace Campbell, Brian Raftopolous, Patrick Bond and Masimba Manyanya.[39] These scholars have drawn attention to the exhaustion of the nationalist revolutionary path of development enshrined in Zimbabwe in 1980. Despite showing signs of recovery during the government of national unity between 2010 and 2013, Zimbabwe's economy sank back after ZANU PF won the general elections in 2013. The government's economic blueprint, named ZimAsset, has failed to stem the tide of decline. ZANU PF also split at the end of 2015, when

[39] Horace Campbell, *Reclaiming Zimbabwe,* Brian Raftopoulos, "The State in Crisis"; Patrick Bond and Masimba Manyanya, *Zimbabwe's Plunge*.

Joyce Mujuru, the then Vice President, was sacked on allegations of plotting to topple President Mugabe. Mujuru and other disgruntled members of the revolutionary party went on to form their own political party, Zimbabwe People First (ZPF). The split of ZANU PF was mainly a result of President Mugabe's advanced age and the lack of a plan to succeed him. More vitally, the decay indicated the fact that the nationalistic ethos had run its course and the country's political leadership did not have a viable alternative. Mujuru came in with a promise to break away from the authoritarian tendencies of ZANU PF. However, this development does not inspire confidence for a truly democratic transition because ideologically, her party, the ZPF, still draws from the nationalist mantra and is mainly built upon her liberation war credentials.

The political, economic, and social developments in Zimbabwe from the year 2000 to 2015 point towards the need for a genuine democratic political transition. What is also apparent is that a post-Mugabe ZANU PF is more likely to continue promoting a nationalist path of development, which, as we have seen, was already out of steam by the year 2000. What remains of the old model is a patronage system with which members of the party have access to the feeding trough without a feasible ideology or programs for national development. Zimbabwe's short-term prospects look even bleaker because of the divided nature of the opposition movement, which is split into several parties and leaders. What this scenario means from an academic point of view is that scholars are more likely to remain engaged with how the search for a political transition played out. Ongoing delays in a political transition will see more people leaving Zimbabwe and not coming back. Academic focus is likely to remain on local dynamics and more scholars are embracing new research agendas focusing on the subtleties of migrant adjustment to life in the diaspora and how transnational citizens are contributing to better

livelihoods in their home countries. The focus on the cultural migrant adjustment of those living abroad and their political, economic, and social ties with the country of origin remains my academic research agenda, although my focus will also spill over to populations living in the West.

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