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The impact of Zimbabwe's 'crisis' on three transnational families situated in Zimbabwe, South Africa and the United Kingdom.

by

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<u>ABSTRACT</u>

This thesis examines the impact of national crisis in Zimbabwe at the start of the millennium on three families from different ethnic groups and backgrounds, exploring how they situated themselves within the broad political and historic context. The use of linked life stories offers an inter-generational perspective, which crosses gender and geographic borders and encompasses personal, family and historical time. By viewing 'crisis' through the prism of the extended family, I argue that individual responses are shaped by a family's 'culture', in other words its history, myths and values, and by a person's role and status within the family, which is in turn determined by gender, age and generation. This will, I hope, add a new dimension to transnational family studies while contributing to more recent work on 'crisis migration'. It shows 'crisis', not as a specific set of events bounded by history and geography, but as a multi-faceted, dispersed and evolving experience with profound consequences for the lives of individuals and even, perhaps, the future of the extended family.

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THE IMPACT OF ZIMBABWE'S 'CRISIS' ON THREE TRANSNATIONAL FAMILIES SITUATED IN ZIMBABWE, SOUTH AFRICA AND THE UNITED KINGDOM

Jennifer Mary Cuffe

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DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP

I, JENNIFER MARY CUFFE

declare that this thesis and the work presented in it are my own and has been generated by me as the result of my own original research.

THE IMPACT OF ZIMBABWE'S 'CRISIS' ON THREE TRANSNATIONAL FAMILIES SITUATED IN ZIMBABWE, SOUTH AFRICA AND THE UNITED KINGDOM

I confirm that:

1. This work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this University;

2. Where any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated;

3. Where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed;

4. Where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work;

5. I have acknowledged all main sources of help;

6. Where the thesis is based on work done by myself jointly with others, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself;

Signed: ....

Date: ....

Acknowledgements

Definitions and Abbreviations

CIO   Central Intelligence Organisation – Zimbabwe's national intelligence agency.

MDC   Movement for Democratic Change – a political party founded in 1999 in opposition to the ruling ZANU-PF party.

SWVG Southampton and Winchester Visitors' Group – a charity supporting asylum seekers and refugees in Southampton.

ZANU-PF Zimbabwe African National Union, Patriotic Front – the country's ruling party since independence in 1980, led by Robert Mugabe.

ZAPU   Zimbabwe African People's Union – a militant organisation and political party founded by Joshua Nkomo that fought for the national liberation of Zimbabwe between 1961 and 1980.

Chapter 1:   Introduction

1.1   Economic, social and political upheaval

Twenty years after independence in 1980, the nation state of Zimbabwe became synonymous with 'crisis', a word that was used with growing frequency over the next decade by international governments, NGOs, journalists and scholars, whether they were referring to the economic, political or humanitarian situation, the transfer of land previously owned by white farmers, the decline in agricultural production caused by drought, the cholera outbreak of 2008, the HIV/AIDS infection and mortality rate or the displacement and migration of citizens. In 1998, the world press covered stories of an economic crisis and the escalation of food prices leading to riots and civil unrest. In July 2001, the International Crisis Group (ICG) reported that the country was 'in a state of free fall' and was 'embroiled in 'the worst political and economic crisis' of its history as an independent state (International Crisis Group, 2001). In 2002 and 2008, presidential election campaigns were marred by intimidation and violence and by 2009 Human Rights Watch was saying that the 'political crisis' had led to 'an all-encompassing humanitarian crisis that has seen the almost total collapse in the delivery of basic government sanitation, health, and welfare services' (Kasambala, 2009). Writing about the 'exodus' of migrants across the border to South Africa and beyond, social scientists Jonathan Crush and Daniel Tevera used the subtitle 'Crisis, Migration, Survival' (2010c).

These events, which traumatised Zimbabwe at the turn of the century, have affected each and every family, whether black or white, rich or poor. By driving an unprecedented number of Zimbabweans to leave the country, they have irrevocably altered the shape of families and the nature of family life. The family itself has become a strategy for survival as members have supported each other financially and emotionally and laid migration trails for others to follow. Women have taken a leading role in migration, crossing borders to trade or using their skills to find employment outside Africa to provide for children and parents back home. Many Zimbabwean families have thus become transnational in that members are now spread far and wide, re-inventing ways of communicating and supporting each other.

In the world's media, political rhetoric and the reports of humanitarian organisations, the 'crisis' has been described in metaphors of chaos and lack of control – the economy was in *meltdown*, inflation *spiralled*, the Zimbabwean dollar *crashed*, migrants *fled* the country; its

consequence was measured in absolutes – the world's *lowest* life expectancy, *highest* inflation rate, *worst* epidemic of HIV/AIDS and the *biggest* influx of migrants across the South African border; while Zimbabweans themselves were generally portrayed as passive victims – *crippled, devastated, attacked* and *uprooted.*[1] The following study sets out to look beneath the superlatives to the experience of three extended families who lived through this period and whose lives were thrown off course as national events disrupted those things in the public realm necessary for survival, such as a stable currency, functioning public services and law and order, as well as the internal day-to-day life of the family itself.

Although these families share a common nationality and sense of belonging, their ethnicity, social status and migration history place them in different relationships with the dominant national culture. Two of the families identify themselves with different African ethnic groups, Shona[2] and Ndebele[3], while the third is a white family descended from colonial settlers. I have included cousins, aunts and uncles, great aunts and uncles as well as parents and siblings in the study, gathering life stories of between 5 and 17 members of each family now living in Zimbabwe, South Africa and the UK - my three research sites. Each family network shares a foundational story, values and aspirations, and can be considered as its own social field but should not be seen as a homogenous unit. Members take different roles and are accorded different status according to gender, generation, age and life-stage. In other words, the families are as complex and dynamic as the 'crisis' itself and, because of its ongoing and unresolved nature, they continue to re-shape themselves. Some family members have found work and established new homes, while others remain financially insecure and without legal status and the majority feel uncertain about the future. Even those who have been protected from the worst impacts of crisis have felt the shockwaves as other less fortunate family members have taken a more direct hit. There are those who had

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[1] A typical use of this kind of language can be found in an article on the Thomson Reuters News website, which starts: 'Zimbabwe is recovering from its worst humanitarian crisis since independence. Hit by drought, HIV/AIDS and economic meltdown, hunger and poverty are a daily reality for many'. The article uses words such as 'crippled' 'uprooted' 'fleeing' 'spiralled' and 'devastated'. THOMSON REUTERS NEWS 2010. Zimbabwe's crisis. *Thomson Reuters News Spotlight.* 1 Jan 2010 ed. UK: Thomson Reuters Foundation.

[2] Shona, the largest ethnic group in Zimbabwe, embraces a number of sub-groups such as the Karanga or Hole, the vaNyai and abeTshabi. See MAZARIRE, G. C. 2009. Reflections on Pre-Colonial Zimbabwe, c.850-1880s. *In:* RAFTOPOULOS, B. & MLAMBO, A. S. (eds.) *Becoming Zimbabwe: a history from the pre-colonial period to 2008.* Harare: Weaver Press.

[3] Ndebele is the term used to describe Zimbabwe's second largest group as well as the Kalanga people who have their own language but have allied themselves with Ndebele-speakers. See MSINDO, E. 2005. Language and Ethnicity in Matabeleland: Ndebele-Kalanga Relations in Southern Zimbabwe, 1930-1960. *The International Journal of African Historical Studies,* 38**,** 79-103.

to flee without warning because of their political activities or affiliations, and others who saw troubles ahead and used their resources to plan a well-ordered exit; but, whatever their individual circumstances, they tend to frame their experience in terms of the 'crisis' and its effects as problematic for the family.

The aim of this research is to explore the impact of these turbulent events through the life stories and family maps of my participants, identifying the resources and strategies they used to survive. My research questions thus fall into two categories. The first relates to their interpretation of 'crisis' and how it is affected by family status, individual roles in the family hierarchy, gender, generation and life-stage.The second is about the impact of 'crisis migration' and how family members renegotiate obligations and duties of care when they are separated by distance and experience.

My interest in the subject stems principally from my voluntary work with asylum seekers and my friendship with two Zimbabwean women, both Ndebele speakers, who came to the UK in the early years of 'crisis'. With admiration at their courage, I watched them struggle to gain legal status and establish some sort of 'home' for themselves and their children, while supporting ageing parents and others they left behind. Within my own 'white' extended family, there were relatives who also had to make a traumatic exit from the country after losing land and livelihood. Despite the chasm of history and culture that separated these individuals, I realized that they had a common sense of loss and longing. It seemed that their chief resource in times of trouble was the family itself, yet at the same time the family was changing shape before their eyes.

1.2   Family focus

I use the word 'family' in the sense that my participants used it, as a network of consanguineal and affinal relationships. More importantly, it is a community of *belonging* with a canon of myths and memories, beliefs and values accumulated over time, signified through rituals and language, practised and reaffirmed through face-to-face contact and the reciprocal exchange of gifts and favours. It is not a bounded entity, but a dynamic network of relationships that is constantly changing - 'a social construct, a conceptual entity, a moral order, and a set of real social and cultural practices' (Grillo, 2007, p.19).

There are two principal reasons for looking at 'crisis' through this family lens. First and foremost, it reflects the communitarian nature of Zimbabwean culture, in which personal

identity is bound up with the extended family, traditionally 'the central and single most important warp in the weave of Zimbabwean life' (Kavenagh, 2014, Loc.2571). 'Self' is construed not as an autonomous entity but as part of a social network, in a relationship of interdependence with other members of the group (Coetzee, 1998, Markus and Kitayama, 1991, Mpofu, 1994, Mbiti, 1969, Triandis et al., 1988). As Mbiti puts it, 'The individual can only say: "I am, because we are; and since we are, therefore I am"' (1969, p.108). This is particularly true of the Shona and Ndebele participants in this study, who claim the extended family as part of their 'African' culture, emphasizing its size and closeness and taking interdependence for granted. For white participants too, family is symbolically important because it ties them to the land, confirming their status as Zimbabweans. To have a 19th century settler on the family tree is proof of belonging and nationhood. Secondly, as numerous scholars have shown, the decision to leave home and country is rarely made without reference to the wider family; indeed, it is often a family project involving the exchange of money, information and contacts. The field of transnational studies has produced a wealth of research on the lives of migrant families and the ways in which they maintain ties of attachment and duty across borders (Baldassar, 2008, Baldassar et al., 2007, Baldassar and Merla, 2014, Boehm, 2012, Levitt, 2001, 2006, Olwig, 2007). These qualitative family studies offer a greater depth of focus than cohort studies for they show that the same act of displacement or uprooting affects the group as a whole but is experienced differently depending on gender, age and generation. However, whereas most work in this field concentrates on the nuclear family of grandparents, parents and children, focussing mainly on 'economic migrants' in receiving countries, this study looks beyond the 'household' unit and covers three different locations. Furthermore, the framework of 'crisis' and continuing insecurity throws new light on transnational experience, highlighting the importance of the extended family network as a safety net, albeit one that is fragile. Through multiple 'crises', the family members in this study pool resources and give each other emotional and practical support. Thus, their choices, actions and sense of moral worth have to be viewed within the context of their significant others.

1.3   Linked lives – the use of narrative

I have chosen to ask participants for their life stories rather than an account of 'crisis' in particular. Each narrative can stand alone as a personal account of a life framed by a particularly turbulent period of Zimbabwe's history but it is only when linked to the stories of other family members, illuminating and reflecting each other 'like the gems in a necklace'

(Bertaux and Delcroix, 2000, p.74) that it reveals a richer, more nuanced picture. An analysis of each family's narratives for cross-references, comparisons and contrasts, reveals the dynamic nature of ties that bind them together and which have been constantly re-shaped and re-interpreted. Within a life narrative, the subject looks back at past events from the light of the present and in anticipation of the future (Bruner, 1990, Eastmond, 2007, Mishler, 2006). Participant recollections were coloured by experience of the here-and-now as well as personal history, so that, for instance, the older person who had lived through colonial times, the war of liberation and its aftermath, had very different memories and expectations from his/her so-called 'born-free'[4] grandchild. Here I stray into the territory of a social historian like Tamara Hareven (1978), who has studied the development of families and suggests that part of the scholarly task is to investigate the interaction between three time frames - the historical setting, the individual's life-course, and that of the family itself.

 Karen Fog Olwig (2007) uses a similar approach in her multi-sited study of three Caribbean transnational families, charting the influence of a family's social status, myths, values and aspirations on the migration paths of successive generations. However, unlike her research subjects, who exercised a degree of control over their migration journeys and viewed them from the perspective of settled lives, the Zimbabweans in my study were to a large extent swept along by events, with limited choices over timing and destination of travel, and told their life stories from a position of 'protracted uncertainty' (Horst and Grabska, 2015, p.6)[5] and flux. Story-telling is an important form of re-making in the aftermath of conflict or crisis, when families search for something meaningful in what otherwise appears chaotic and out of their control. It can thus be therapeutic and reconstitutive (Bruner, 1990, Eastmond, 2007), a way of 'sustaining a sense of agency in the face of disempowering circumstances' (Jackson, 2013, p.34). On the other hand, there are some stories that are just too painful to tell and it is important to listen for silence whether in gaps in the narrative, evasions or discrepancies (Jackson, 2013, Ochs and Capps, 1996).

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[4] 'Born-free' is a term commonly applied to and by Zimbabweans born after the country gained its independence from Britain in 1980.

[5] Horst and Grabska suggest that uncertainty is the 'norm' for people displaced by conflict and I suggest the same can be said of those displaced by 'crisis'. 'Radical uncertainties' turn into 'protracted uncertainty' when the migrant finds him/herself in a state of temporal and spatial liminality - a condition of waiting and longing. Although such uncertainty is psychologically stressful, it can also be a positive force for innovation and transformation.

Chapter 1

In the face of Zimbabwe's 'crisis', individuals in general have not rushed forward to bear public witness and those who have shared their stories have done so under strict conditions of anonymity, perhaps out of fear of reprisal (Lewanka and Ndou, 2014, Orner and Holmes, 2011). In a political regime where opposition is punishable, silence has become a strategy of survival (Frankish and Bradbury, 2012) and a habit that persists across the generations (Bertaux and Thompson, 1997). Travelling around Zimbabwe I noticed a reluctance to speak about politics directly, if at all. People tended to talk in code about 'getting rid of the old guard' and 'when the old man dies', in reference to President Robert Mugabe. Significantly it was a Zimbabwean visitor from the UK who explained this reticence. While waiting with him for a bus in the Midlands area, where he had been staying with his parents, he said, 'People who speak out get killed and everyone is fearful. This week one or two people will have disappeared'. Glancing at the security guard on the other side of the waiting room, he added, 'You can't trust anyone. This security guard may be a government spy'. It is likely that some participants in my research felt more or less secure and removed from danger than others. It is therefore important to ask how the narrator's situation in place and time affects their interpretation of 'crisis'; for instance, will family members in Zimbabwe be less willing to entrust a researcher with their memories?

To answer these questions I have relied on the trust of key participants who have invited me into their homes, introduced me to other family members and, in some cases, afforded me the dubious status of messenger and 'go-between'. Being the recipient of 'insider knowledge' about the wider family raises a number of ethical concerns, which will be further explored in chapter 3. However, by viewing individuals in a family setting, this research offers insights which complement existing cohort studies on the impact of Zimbabwe's 'crisis', such as those that deal with undocumented migrants, mothers separated from their children, women left at home, HIV sufferers and orphans.[6]

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[6] See, for example, BLOCH, A. 2008a. Gaps in protection: undocumented Zimbabwean migrants in South Africa. *Migration Studies Working Paper Series,* 38, MORREIRA, S. 2010. Seeking Solidarity: Zimbabwean Undocumented Migrants in Cape Town, 2007. *Journal of Southern African Studies,* 36**,** 433-448, MOORHOUSE, L. & CUNNINGHAM, P. 2012. "We are Purified by Fire": The Complexification of Motherhood in the Context of Migration. *Journal of Intercultural Studies,* 33**,** 493-508, CHERENI, A. 2015b. 'You become two in one': Women's representations of responsibility and emotional vulnerability in Zimbabwean father-away families. *International Social Work,* 13, O' BRIEN, S. & BROOM, A. 2013. Gender, culture and changing attitudes: experiences of HIV in Zimbabwe. *Culture, Health & Sexuality: An international journal for research, intervention and care,* 15**,** 583 - 597, ROALKVAM, S. 2005. The children left to stand alone. *African Journal of Aids Research,* 4**,** 211 - 218, FRANCIS-CHIZORORO, M. 2010. Growing up Without Parents: Socialisation and Gender Relations in

1.4   Meaning of 'crisis'

The central term 'crisis' has become a cliché in modern dialogue and needs some explanation in the context of this study. Derived from the Greek *krisis* meaning *decision*, it suggests a point of imminent change either for better or worse (see Oxford English Dictionary) and is usually associated with traumatic events and points of no return. Tracing the history of the concept, Koselleck (Koselleck and Richter, 2006) lays out four possible interpretations:- a chain of events culminating in the need for decisive action, a turning point after which the human condition will be forever changed, a situation that endangers the continuing existence of an individual or entity and a transitional phase necessitated by prior developments. Thus he embraces both one-off life-changing events and sequences of events which have a cumulative impact, offering an appropriate framework for viewing the historic period of this study. Some Zimbabweans, such as the victims of politically-motivated violence, experienced 'crisis' as sudden and traumatic whereas others experienced it as the gradual disruption of the social fabric and prolonged hardship. In either case, they faced crucial decisions and their life-trajectories were significantly altered.

Throughout this study, inverted commas indicate the multi-faceted and contested meaning of the term 'crisis' which I use in three ways. The first, as I have already suggested, is to describe external, social events that either singly or cumulatively led to turning points in the lives of individuals. The second, theoretical use of the term is drawn from a comparitively recent body of scholarship which seeks to categorise migrants in a new way. Political theorists and scholars of international relations refer to 'crisis migration' when explaining the mass displacement of people caught up in complex modern emergencies, whether these are caused by inter-ethnic conflict, environmental change, so-called 'natural' disasters or the failure of states (Betts, 2014, Crisp, 2012, Martin et al., 2013, McAdam, 2014, Van Hear, 2012, Zetter, 2007, Zetter, 2015)[7]. Although scholars have long emphasised the complex mix of motivations that lead to cross-border movement, policy makers and politicians in receiving countries like Britain and South Africa still insist on a rigid polarization of 'voluntary' and 'involuntary', labelling Zimbabweans, for instance, as either 'economic migrants' or 'refugees' and threatening deportation to those who claim asylum but are

Orphaned-Child-Headed Households in Rural Zimbabwe. *Journal of Southern African Studies,* 36**,** 711-727.

[7] For a fuller explanation of 'crisis migration', see Chapter 2.2.4.

refused. By resisting these categories and emphasising what Van Hear calls 'an axis ranging from "choice" or "more options" at one end to "little choice" or "few options" at the other' (1998, p.42), theorists of 'crisis migration' argue for reform of international and national systems of humanitarian protection. The label 'crisis migrant' fits many of the family members in my study who fled Zimbabwe in order to survive but had to fight for legal protection.

My third use of the term 'crisis' relates to the personal and pyschological impact of macro forces and public events for, as Vigh points out, 'social crises lead to personal or existential ones, as people have to work on regaining their possibilities and positions within their social environments' (2008, p.13). In this situation, people find themselves unable to act:

> Whereas social crisis relates to dynamics within political, economical and social processes, personal crisis is associated with a state of being, defined by the experience of an aggravated limitation of agency, a truncation of horizons and opacity of futures and possibilities.

> (Vigh, 2008, p. 13)

Disruption of the social fabric and sudden alteration of one's state of being is likely to undermine what Giddens refers to as 'ontological security' or trust in 'the constancy of the surrounding social and material environments of action' and the continuity of one's self-identity (1991, p.92). In looking at the Zimbabwean case, however, I do not assume that everyone has suffered in equal measure; indeed, for some, political and economic turmoil may have provided an opportunity for advancement or to break from old ties. A question that is fundamental to this study is why some are more vulnerable than others. At what point, and why, does 'crisis' at a social and political level threaten individuals' sense of self? In other words, I am interested in the tipping points which accumulate to cause a breakdown in everyday coping mechanisms. Thus, within the narratives, I look for key moments, or 'epiphanies' which are transformative in that they lead subjects to reconstruct the meaning of past experiences and re-position themselves in relation to others (Denzin, 1989, 2001, Mishler, 2006). These are redolent of the 'tipping points' identified by McAdam in relation to 'crisis migration' – socio-economic, environmental, political or psychological 'stressors' that accumulate until they eventually 'tip someone over the edge' (2014, p.10). Implicit here and in many migration studies is the suggestion that migration itself is the defining moment of rupture, when a person leaves the known world and falls into an abyss of uncertainty. Indeed, for some participants this may be the case, but crossing borders is often one of a number of coping mechanisms and may be repeated many times. Some

participants have made multiple migration journeys, zig-zagging across neighbouring countries or going back and forth to Zimbabwe in a continuing process during which they encounter fresh problems and undergo new transformations. if migration is seen in the context of personal and family history, it takes its place among a number of life-changing moments or 'turning points' when the 'crisis' out there becomes a 'crisis' within.

As I suggested at the start of this chapter, 'crisis' has become shorthand for a nexus of economic, political and social events in Zimbabwe at the start of the millenium and thus figures in the titles of an expanding body of articles and books on the subject (Crush and Tevera, 2010a, Mbiba, 2010, Mbiba, 2012b, McGregor, 2008a, McGregor, 2010c, Muzondidya, 2009, Muzondidya, 2010b, Pasura, 2010a, Pasura, 2014 and others). It tends to be used in reference to a discrete period in history, starting around 1997 when the Zimbabwean dollar crashed and lasting until the establishment of the Government of National Unity in 2010[8], but how legitimate is this approach? The political turmoil and economic collapse of this period certainly fits the description of a complex emergency and has resulted in an unprecedented wave of migration. However, can we talk about a distinct period of 'crisis' with a beginning and end, or are these events part of a continuum dating from colonisation or the liberation struggle, the latest de-stablising phase in a series of overlapping emergencies? The description of 'crisis' highlights the exceptional nature of circumstances which have turned Zimbabwe from the 'breadbasket' of Africa to virtually a failed state. However, for many Zimbabweans, who have grown used to 'crisis', 'the extraordinary has become ordinary' (Morreira and Hayakawa, 2015, p3). As Vigh argues, 'crisis' is not necessarily a temporary abnormality but may become 'endemic rather than episodic'(2008, p.7).

In summary, my concern in this study is not to establish a historically accurate record of a national 'crisis' but to explore how three families from different ethnic groups and backgrounds situated themselves within the broad political and historic context of Zimbabwe. The use of linked life stories offers an inter-generational perspective, which crosses gender and geographic borders and encompasses personal, family and historical time. By viewing 'crisis' through the prism of the extended family, I argue that individual responses are shaped by a family's 'culture', in other words its history, myths and values, and by a person's role and status within the family, which is in turn determined by gender,

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[8] See Appendix A for a timeline of Zimbabwe's 'crisis'.

age and generation as well as economic status. This will, I hope, add a new dimension to transnational family studies while contributing to more recent work on 'crisis migration'. It shows 'crisis', not as a specific set of events bounded by history and geography, but as a multi-faceted, dispersed and evolving experience with profound consequences for the lives of individuals and even, perhaps, the future of the extended family.

1.5   Structure of thesis

The empirical research for this thesis is underpinned by theories of migration and transnationalism and Chapter 2 draws on a wide range of sources, principally from the fields of anthropology, sociology and human geography. In the first section I look at the recent exodus of Zimbabweans across national borders in the context of preceding and contemporary patterns of migration. I argue that it is best described as 'crisis migration' in that it is motivated by the need for survival yet does not comfortably fit existing migration categories. The second part looks at the importance of the extended family in Zimbabwean culture and draws on studies of transnational families to suggest ways in which the family network may be re-formed as a result of 'crisis'. Chapter 3 explains why I have chosen to base my research on life stories and ethnography as well as asking participants to draw family maps. I reflect on my own position as a 'white' British woman researching the experience of 'black' and 'white' African families, and on the methodological challenges of family research. I also rehearse some of the ethical dilemmas that arise from dealing with memories that are still raw and issues that remain unresolved. Chapters 4 -6 present an analysis of the participants' life stories and family maps, taking each family in turn, backed up by my own observations in the three research sites. In Chapter 7, I discuss points of comparison and contrast that illuminate the family's role in determining individual responses to 'crisis'. The final chapter argues that, as 'crisis' migrants, most participants fall between two stools – deprived of the choices available to 'economic' migrants and forced to move for survival, yet denied the protection accorded to refugees from war and persecution.

Chapter 2:   Literature Review

2.1   Introduction

Within a period of ten years, it is estimated that Zimbabwe lost almost a quarter of its population as people of working age flocked to the border, looking for a means of survival. A distinguishing feature of the period that started in the late 1990s with economic collapse and continued throughout the next decade was the mass exodus of men and women to almost every corner of the globe – an unprecedented haemorrhage of skills and manpower that contributed to the sense of a national 'crisis'. As well as transforming Zimbabwean society it had a significant impact on the two principal receiving countries, South Africa and the UK. The Department of Home Affairs in South Africa was overwhelmed by applications for asylum, while concerns that Zimbabweans were 'taking' the jobs of South Africans contributed to a wave of xenophobia. In Britain, members of the former Commonwealth[9] country arrived at a time of growing public antipathy to asylum seekers and stricter immigration rules. Over the past 15 years, Zimbabweans in both countries have become embedded in the warp and weft of society, establishing social networks, faith groups and distribution centres for Zimbabwean produce. Most families have maintained contact thanks to an expanding transport network between South Africa and Zimbabwe, cheaper air travel and the use of mobile phones and electronic media. Thus, without seeking to do so, they have become 'transnational', creating what Bhabha calls 'hybrid' identities (Bhabha, 2004, p. 218) and re-shaping family life.

In researching the impact of 'crisis' on extended families, I have therefore focused on theories of transnational migration, drawing on work from a number of academic disciplines, principally anthropology and sociology but also human geography, social history and politics. Much of the existing literature is Northern-centric and concentrates on populations of settled immigrants who are predominantly classed as 'economic migrants', while focusing narrowly on the nuclear family to explore issues of gender and generation. The comparative lack of research on complex and dynamic emergencies and their impact on the wider family means that there are many questions that remain unanswered. All forms of migration have a transformative impact on families but recent events in Zimbabwe have caused patterns of migration that differ significantly from those of the colonial past and they affect families in different ways.

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[9] In December 2003, Zimbabwe withdrew from the Commonwealth following indefinite suspension.

Chapter 2

In the first section of this chapter, *Patterns of migration*, I set the current wave of migration from Zimbabwe in its historic context, showing that, although Zimbabwe has always been a country of both immigration and emigration, the beginning of the 21st century marked a substantive change in the migration pattern. I then examine the different terms that have been used to describe contemporary migrant communities, such as 'transnationals' and 'diaspora', and the various theories for recent migration flows, such as 'complex and dynamic migration' and 'crisis migration'. In looking at the Zimbabwean experience, I have chosen to use the term 'crisis migration' in the sense that its main purpose is survival in the face of a threat to life or livelihood. Despite this, most Zimbabweans are denied adequate humanitarian protection under international and national laws because they are neither 'refugees' nor 'economic migrants'.

The second section, *A family perspective,* explores notions of the 'African' extended family as a receptacle for cultural and moral values and looks at the way events at a macro level have impacted Zimbabwean households from colonial times to the present day. Transnational studies, which present migration as a family project, illustrate ways in which migrant families renegotiate ties and continue to support each other materially and emotionally, highlighting the gendered nature of obligations as well as the negative consequences for those who find themselves unable to fulfill them.

2.2   Patterns of migration

Figure 1 Political map of Zimbabwe[10]

With the arrival of white, mainly British colonialists from the 1890s till the middle of the 20th century, and their exploitation of Africa's human and natural resources, the territory marked out as Rhodesia became a country of both immigration and emigration. To make way for the inflow of white settlers, people were evicted from their homelands[11] forcing many men to work in white-owned commercial farms or mines, often across the border in South Africa. In parts of Zimbabwe, such as Matabeleland in the south-west, cross-border migration became almost a rite of passage

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[10] See http://www.ezilon.com/maps/africa/zimbabwe-maps.html.
[11] Evictions greatly increased after World War 2 when the British government promised Rhodesian farms to demobilised soldiers. Around 85,000 black families, almost 30 percent of the black population, were moved from their homes. See MLAMBO, A. S. 2009. From the Second World War to UDI, 1940-1965. *In:* RAFTAPOULOS, B. & MLAMBO, A. S. (eds.) *Becoming Zimbabwe: A history from the pre-colonial period to 2008.* Harare & Johannesburg: Weaver Press.

for young Ndebele men. By going to the mines they were able to pay their colonial tax requirements in Rhodesia and save money for *lobola* or bride-wealth (Mlambo, 2010).

A further wave of migration followed the 1965 Unilateral Declaration of Independence, when Rhodesia's white minority led by Ian Smith broke away from Britain, leading to armed conflict between Rhodesian forces and two nationalist factions – the Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army and the Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army (1972 -1978).[12] Many white settlers fled to Britain or across the border to South Africa, where apartheid was still in force, while 'freedom fighters'[13] took refuge in Mozambique and Zambia, with a small minority choosing the UK (Mtisi et al., 2009, Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009). After independence in 1980, white Zimbabweans left the country en masse heading mainly for Britain or other 'settler' countries like Canada, Australia and New Zealand, reducing the total white population to less than one percent (Hughes, 2010).

Turmoil and movement continued in the early 1980s when the ruling party, Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF), brought in the notorious North Korean-trained 5th Brigade to purge so-called 'dissidents' who had supported Joshua Nkomo's rival Zimbabwean African People's Union (ZAPU).   Known as the Gukurahundi, the Shona word for 'early rain which washes away the chaff before the spring rains', the brutal campaign was ostensibly to root out Mugabe's opponents in the predominantly Ndebele provinces of Midlands and Matabeleland, but was targeted at civilians and fighters alike, leading to accusations of ethnic cleansing.[14] It led to a deep-seated sense of grievance that has never been resolved (Muzondidya, 2009, Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009). As in colonial times, the main destination for migrants was South Africa where educated Zimbabweans were recruited to work in hospitals, banks and schools while the less skilled were employed on farms or as domestic labour (Adepoju, 2003).

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[12] Zimbabwe's African National Liberation Army (ZANLA), was the military wing of Robert Mugabe's Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) and was predominantly Shona. Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA) was the military wing of Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) led by Joshua Nkomo, which was predominantly Ndebele.

[13] Terms for fighters are politically laden so that, for instance, black Zimbabweans talk of 'freedom fighters' while white Zimbabweans refer to 'terrorists' or 'terrs'.

[14] For an account of this period, see ALEXANDER, J., MCGREGOR, J. & RANGER, T. 2000. *Violence & Memory: One hundred Years in the 'Dark Forests' of Matabeleland,* Oxford, James Currey, CATHOLIC COMMISSION FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE IN ZIMBABWE & LEGAL RESOURCES FOUNDATION (ZIMBABWE) 2007. *Gukurahundi in Zimbabwe: A report on the disturbances in Matabeleland and the Midlands 1980-1988,* Johannesburg, South Africa, Jacana.

The current phase of migration, starting with the onset of economic crisis at the end of the 1990s and accelerated by the government's land reforms in 2000, is substantively different both in nature and scale. In addition to the collapse of a functioning state and politically-instigated violence, the first eight years of the millennium saw drought, cholera outbreaks and one of the world's worst epidemics of HIV/AIDS (Chiumbu and Musemwa, 2012, Musemwa, 2012, O' Brien and Broom, 2013, Orner and Holmes, 2011, Raftopoulos, 2009). The most sizeable Zimbabwean populations are in South Africa, Botswana and the UK but migrants are scattered across the globe, leading to a drain in resources in Zimbabwe that has 'serious implications for future economic growth and development' (Crush and Tevera, 2010a, p.128). By 2003, 51% of Zimbabwean-trained doctors and 25% of its nurses were working abroad (Chikanda, 2010), as were many teachers and social workers. Two surveys conducted by the Southern African Migration Programme in 2001 and 2005 implied the trend was set to continue, showing 'extraordinary levels of emigration potential that were significantly higher than in any other country surveyed' (Crush and Tevera, 2010a). Another feature of current migration is its feminisation (Adepoju, 2010, Crush and Tevera, 2010b), a trend that is particularly marked in the UK where Zimbabwean migration is a 'female-led process' (Mbiba, 2012a). Zimbabwean women engage in cross-border trade, residing in South Africa where they sell Zimbabwean handmade crafts and traditional wares, but making frequent trips 'home' to visit families and sell South African produce; while the transport network between the two countries tends to be operated by men (Lefko-Everett, 2010, Muzondidya, 2008).

The number of Zimbabwean asylum seekers arriving in South Africa peaked in 2008 after a violent election campaign, accounting for one quarter of the world's total asylum seekers that year (Betts, 2013b) and leading to a backlash with displays of xenophobia and frequent outbreaks of violence (Kriger, 2010, Muzondidya, 2010a). Many of the 1.5 million or so Zimbabweans currently living in South Africa do so illegally. The number living in the UK has been put at around 500,000 but estimates vary widely. As Bloch (2010) shows, the majority give more than one reason for migrating, citing both the economic and political situation in Zimbabwe. Some boasted they were practising a kind of 'reverse colonization', a back to front version of the migration trail taken by white missionaries and settlers a century earlier (Pasura, 2010a).

2.2.1   Migrants as 'transnationals'

Mass exodus from Zimbabwe has coincided with a global revolution in telecommunications, compressing time and distance, that enable migrants to create new social fields (familial, economic, social, organizational, religious and political) linking countries of origin and settlement (Schiller et al., 1995). Thus families re-group in what scholars have called a 'transnational social

space' (Faist, 2000, Kivisto, 2003, Portes, 2001, Schiller et al., 1992),[15] maintaining 'relatively stable, lasting and dense sets of ties reaching beyond and across the borders of sovereign states' (Faist, 2004, p.3). The flexibility of this exchange alters the meaning of migration and re-migration, which can no longer be understood as 'definite, irrevocable and irreversible decisions' (Faist, 2000, p.191). Instead, migrants move back and forth in a circular flow to maximise their opportunities. Similarly my participants regard migration as an on-going process rather than a once and for all journey, although the nature of the 'crisis' limits their opportunities for movement.

On the other hand, there is evidence that for some groups of migrants there are barriers to circular movement and cross-border activity. In their study of Bosnian and Eritrean refugees, Al-Ali, Black and Koser (2001a, 2001b) found that some expressed an unwillingness to take part in transnational activities because they could not identify with the general political culture of their home countries. Even though the war was over, Muslim Bosnians (Bosniaks) in particular were reluctant to return because they had negative feelings about the country and feared discrimination as a minority. A further reason for avoiding transnational activities is insecurity in the host country. Although it is sometimes presumed by policy makers that integration and transnational activism are incompatible, Hammond (2013) uses the example of Somalis in the UK to argue that lack of legal status in the host country reduces capacity for transnational engagement. She concludes that greater levels of integration may even be a pre-requisite for this type of activity.

By taking a 'transnational' turn, migration scholars have restored agency to those who were often viewed en masse as the object of macro-political forces, pushed or pulled across national borders, and has broadened the focus to include those who stay as well as those who leave their 'home' country. The few studies of 'crisis stayers' in Zimbabwe tend to problematise their situation, focussing on women left to raise children, for instance, orphans or children separated from their parents (Chereni, 2015b, Kawawe, 2008, Kufakurinani et al., 2014, Roalkvam, 2005). However, my own research suggests that some family members in Zimbabwe see themselves as beneficiaries in a cross border exchange of favours. In this they resemble the 'transnational villagers' in 'Miraflores' in the Dominican Republic (Levitt, 2001) whose lives have been transformed by migration even though they remain relatively immobile. Emphasising that transnationalism is a two-way process, Levitt argues that migrants and non-migrants become increasingly inter-dependent. Although relatives who stay behind are the weaker partners, migrants in the US need

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[15] I return to the concept of transnational space in the next section of this chapter.

them to raise their children, manage their affairs in the village, and serve as the yardstick against which to measure their enhanced status:

> By redistributing power, status, and decision making within the household, migrants and non- migrants ensure their continued commitment to each other.

(Levitt, 2001, p.89)

Similarly, the transformation of some high density neighbourhoods in Zimbabwe is made manifest by rows of satellite dishes, cars with UK number plates and shelves full of South African produce. This does not mean, however, that the residents identify themselves as transnational. Indeed, it is not a term readily recognized even by Zimbabweans living in the global North. Although scholars tend to give it a positive spin, the families in my study prefer to see themselves as part of a 'diaspora', a word that is perhaps better able to convey their sense of loss.

2.2.2 Diasporas

Traditionally *diaspora,* a Greek word for 'scattering', was used for groups of people dispersed from their homeland by a traumatic event, notably Jews, Armenians and African slaves. This use of the term was redolent of deracination, exile and a yearning for home (Baumann, 2010) but, where many scholars dwell on myths of homeland and return, Clifford (1994) emphasises the importance of diaspora as a focus of political identification, a form of solidarity and a way of dwelling in a community away from home while expressing one's difference. Cohen (2008) further suggests that it has lost its strong connection with victimhood and up-rooting and is used to build a sense of solidarity which can be creative and productive:

> Diasporas thus foster self-help, a family or collective project and a risk-minimalisation strategy that transcends national borders.

(Cohen, 2008, p.149)

Taking a historic look at the African diaspora, with particular reference to Ghanaians, Akyeampong sees it as an important socio-economic resource, 'a space to remake one's self, even to overcome the social liabilities of birth' (2000, p.187). Koser (2003a, 2003b) uses the Eritreans as a case study to distinguish between earlier waves of migration and what he calls 'new African diasporas', which are pluralist in that they combine students, professionals, asylum seekers and 'clandestine' migrants. He suggests that for these communities 'diaspora' is a popular term because it has fewer negative connotations than 'immigrants' or 'asylum seekers' yet links them to original victim diasporas (2003b). Zimbabweans displaced by 'crisis' and dispersed across the world are similarly described as a 'new diaspora' (Crush and Tevera, 2010a, Mbiba, 2012b, McGregor, 2010c, Pasura, 2012). They are part of what Zeleza (2005) describes as the 'third wave'

of contemporary African diaspora resulting from the era of structural adjustment, just as earlier diasporas were propelled first by colonisation and then decolonisation. The internal and external relations of this 'third wave' are mediated by the inscriptions of gender, generation, class, political ideology and religion but what differentiates them from previous generations is that they have to negotiate relations with the 'historic diaspora' and with countries of trans-migration as well as the country of origin.

> The revolution in telecommunications and travel . . . offers contemporary diasporas, unlike the historic diasporas, unprecedented opportunities to be transnational and transcultural, to be people of multiple worlds and focalities, perpetually translocated, physically and culturally, between several countries or several continents.

> (Zeleza, 2005, p.56)

Thus we can see that 'diaspora' has become synonymous with 'transnational'. As Sökefeld (2006) points out, it can be used objectively as a description of a body or movement or people, or subjectively to indicate 'a group identity or imagination of a community'. Favouring the latter, he argues:

> Migrants do not necessarily form a diaspora but they may *become* a diaspora by developing a new imagination of community, even many years after the migration took place.

> (Sökefeld, 2006, p.267)

The question that interests Sökefeld is how these imagined communities are politically mobilised, and he suggests that kinship ties can be important mobilising structures, framing ideas of belonging that endorse a broader notion of national identity. I find this approach more useful than that of Pasura (2012, 2014) who uses diaspora in its descriptive sense to encompass all Zimbabweans in the UK, identifying four diasporan types: 'core', 'epistemic', 'dormant' and 'silent'. 'Core' diasporas are those involved in social, cultural, political and economic activities of their homeland; 'epistemic' diasporas are academics, intellectuals and 'cyberspace activists' engaging in sustained cross-border debates and discussions; 'dormant' diasporas are involved in intermittent activities and 'silent' diasporas are those who have 'fully assimilated, integrated or creolized in destination countries' and do not emphasise connection to the homeland (2014, p.21). Although Pasura describes the Zimbabwean diaspora as fractured, in that its members have arrived at different periods, by different routes and with different motives, he says 'it can be classified as having a "solid" idea of homeland', although this may fade with subsequent generations' (2012, p.158). However, in the context of my research, his reference to 'a solid idea', like Cohen's definition of the diaspora as having 'a collective memory and myth about the

homeland' (2008), is problematic. Among my participants there are strongly felt divisions and tensions between white and black, Ndebele and Shona. Although they are orientated to a 'homeland', preserving a distinctive identity vis-à-vis the host society, their relationship to the country Zimbabwe and to each other varies according to race, ethnicity and political viewpoint. Similarly, the relationship with the host country may be more or less 'troubled' depending on individual circumstances. A close-up focus highlights the weakness of what Brubaker (2005, 2006) calls 'groupism' - the attribution of mind and agency to a collection of individuals.

Brubaker helpfully suggests that diaspora should be seen, not as an entity, but as 'an idiom, a stance, a claim', 'a way of formulating the identities and loyalties of a population' (2005, p.12). Furthermore, it is important to note who is making the claim:

> Those who do the formulating may themselves be part of the population in question; or they may be speaking in the name of the putative homeland state.

> (Brubaker, 2005, p.12)

In the case of Zimbabwe, the ruling party has alternately blamed the diaspora for deserting or betraying the homeland and appealed for its votes.[16] McGregor (2010c) argues that diasporic identities are shaped by the politics of receiving countries and unfolding events back home. She cites the examples of exiled journalists and broadcasters who have set up news sites abroad to provide alternatives to state-dominated media, political activists who have established branches of the MDC (Movement for Democratic Change) to fight the government, non-partisan groups lobbying for change in the homeland and other grass-roots organisations supporting asylum seekers in host countries. She says churches, burial associations and family occasions have particular meaning for migrants who face social exclusion, restrictive immigration rules and insecurity as to their legal status:

> The mutual support provided by diaspora associational life is important partly because it can provide not only material and practical help, but also connections and a sense of belonging where status is judged within a different frame of reference and not in terms of work in Britain and legal relations to the British state, providing spaces where 'you can feel at home a little bit', and where 'people know where you come from and don't look on you as low'.

> (McGregor, 2010c, p.137)

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[16] An online journal report on President Robert Mugabe's appeal to the diaspora to help re-build Zimbabwe points to former remarks by the President in which he effectively labelled them traitors for 'allegedly supporting the opposition which he claimed to be in the pay of western imperialists'. See NEW ZIMBABWE 2015. Zimbabwe: Mugabe Appeals for Diaspora Support to Re-build Zimbabwe. *allAfrica.* UK: New Zimbabwe.

Similarly migrants in my study drew comfort from mixing socially and at church with other Zimbabweans and collecting funds for weddings and home burials. By claiming a common diasporan identity, they build a sense of solidarity. However, as McGregor notes, some reject the label because it implies a protracted separation from home and thus ambivalence about the reality of return. She also argues that Zimbabweans often use it with connotations of elitism, implying a gulf between those who have prospered abroad and others who have suffered at home.

2.2.3   Complex and dynamic migration

Public rhetoric and international law maintain the rigid division between voluntary and involuntary migration, despite the growing body of scholarship that suggests migration is dynamic and complex. As civil war, ethnic conflict, environmental degradation and economic inequality take their toll, scholars have sought new labels for this type of 'mixed migration', describing it as rooted in 'complex emergencies' and 'situations of complex instability' which lead to protracted exile (Adepoju, 2010, Castles et al., 2014, King and Mai, 2013, Zetter, 1999). To explain the recent increase in movement from sub-Saharan Africa, Adepoju joins Zeleza in pointing to economic structural adjustment policies imposed by the International Monetary Fund and World Bank which failed to stimulate industry and trade yet reduced middle-class employment in the health, education and administrative sectors. As a consequence, he argues, African migration patterns are distinct from other world regions in their 'increasing feminisation, the diversification of migration destinations, the transformation of labour flows into commercial migration and the emigration of skilled health and other professionals' (Adepoju, 2010, p.9).

Far from a one-way journey ending in acculturation in a new country, the reality of most contemporary migrations is more complex. Van Hear (1998) goes a long way towards resolving the problematic dichotomy between force and choice by disaggregating movement into component parts – 'outward', 'inward', 'return, 'onward' and 'staying put' - demonstrating that each involves a sliding scale of choice and coercion. The distinction between ability, desire and need to move is further explored by Black and Collyer (2014) who add the category of being 'trapped' in the country of origin or somewhere along the migration journey. Then there are 'anticipatory refugees' who see trouble coming and plan for their departure in an orderly way (Doná and Berry, 1999) and migrants who move on from countries of first asylum either motivated by 'the imperative of flight from violence' or by 'the hope of building a better life elsewhere' (Castles et al., 2014, p.57).

Two ethnographic studies in particular illustrate the multi-layered, multi-causal nature of the forces behind migration and resonate with the Zimbabwean experience. The first is an ethnographic study on Mozambique's civil war (1977 – 1992) in which Lubkemann (2004, 2008) argues that forced migration is too often viewed in ahistorical terms, yet wartime migratory patterns are strongly related to pre-war socio-economic conditions and migration strategies. He also identifies a category of 'socially empowering forced migration' (2008, p.456), which generates new opportunities, strategies for diversifying risks and renegotiated gender roles. For instance, Mozambican men developed a strategy of 'transnational polygyny', starting new families in South Africa while maintaining ties with families back home. Furthermore, he gives us a useful reminder that 'displacement' is not the inevitable product of movement under crisis conditions, invariably associated with loss of one kind or another. Many Mozambican women, children, conscripted young men and the elderly were 'forcibly immobilised', in other words unable to move. Lubkemann suggests that the starting point for analysis of 'crisis' should be an examination of coping strategies and social, economic and political effects, rather than a 'type' of migrant, whether voluntary or forced, a view that concurs with my own approach. The second is Lindley's research on Somalia's civil war (2010) which focusses on the structural shifts that caused people who were used to living with insecurity on a daily basis to finally leave Mogadishu after 1991, contributing to a crescendo of displacement. Precipitating factors included the devastation of people's human capabilities and resources, the loss of physical and financial resources and a deterioration of socio-political protection. A further complication, applicable to other recent 'crisis' scenarios, was that many people turned to human traffickers for escape, taking a multiplicity of migration routes to unlikely destinations. Since only a few qualified as refugees under the 1951 Geneva Convention,[17] they found themselves in 'legally confusing and insecure situations' which made it harder to adjust to their host communities than previous generations of migrants (de Montclos, 2003).

There is similar confusion about the status of Zimbabwean migrants who cannot be easily categorised as 'voluntary' or 'involuntary', since their flight is not just for betterment but for survival and is often prompted by political as well as economic events. Some of those who had options to start with have since seen their choices dwindle. For instance, in the period leading up

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[17] According to the UN 1951 Convention, a refugee is 'a person who, owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable to, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country'. The Convention sets out the basic principle that refugees should not be returned to their countries of origin (non-refoulement). See UNITED NATIONS 1951. Convention and Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees. *In:* UNHCR (ed.). Geneva: UNHCR.

to Zimbabwe's economic collapse several thousand qualified teachers and nurses obtained visas allowing them to work in the UK but later, as crisis took hold, had to seek asylum or go underground when their visas ran out (McGregor, 2008a, 2010a, 2010b, Pasura, 2012). Conversely, political activists and members of minority ethnic groups viewed as 'opponents' of the Government left in haste, yet some were later granted asylum elsewhere enabling them to work and settle. The hostility of the Zimbabwean Government to migrants in the UK, the former colonial oppressor and now 'enemy', means that some Zimbabweans who planned to return have found themselves unable to do so for fear of reprisal by the government, while others have no passport or simply cannot afford the flight home.

Although scholars talk about the skills and enterprise of Zimbabweans now living in the UK and South Africa (Bloch, 2008b, 2010, Mbiba, 2011, 2012a, McGregor, 2008a, 2010b), there is an ever-expanding body of evidence showing the problems arising from insecurity (Betts, 2014, Bloch, 2008a, 2010, Kriger, 2010, McGregor, 2010c, Mortensen, 2012, Pasura, 2010a, 2012). Migrants have met with an increasingly politicised and fractured debate about immigration control (Zetter, 2007). With the erection of razor-wire fences and an emphasis on traffickers, they have been criminalised, described as 'illegals' (Mountz and Hiemstra, 2014), and there is little distinction in the public discourse of receiving countries between those fleeing oppressive regimes, tribal conflict or grinding poverty. Zimbabweans who entered South Africa illegally struggled to regularise their legal status once inside the country, making them liable to detention and removal and vulnerable to exploitation (Bloch, 2008a, Kriger, 2010, Makina, 2010, Polzer, 2008, Ponthieu and Derderian, 2013, Shannon, 2010). Meanwhile, new UK visa requirements meant some Zimbabweans entered on false passports while others went underground, living and working without legal documents (Bloch, 2008b, 2010, Mbiba, 2011, 2012a, McGregor, 2008a, 2010b, 2010a, Pasura, 2012). Lack of legal access to the marketplace, the erosion of skills and a 'hierarchical systems of rights that differentially exclude certain categories of migrants' has reduced their capacity to send home remittances (Bloch, 2006, p.83).

2.2.4   Crisis migration

Scholars like Betts working in the field of international relations and migration have become increasingly concerned about the inadequacy of international and national laws in protecting the victims of complex emergencies (Betts, 2013b, 2014, Crisp, 2012, King and Mai, 2013, Martin et al., 2014, McAdam, 2014, O'Neill, 2010, Polzer, 2008, Ponthieu and Derderian, 2013, Zetter, 2007, 1999, 2015). Using the example of Zimbabweans in South Africa, Congolese in Angola and Tanzania, and Somalis in Kenya and Yemen, Betts suggests that OAU (Organisation of African Unity) and EU (European Union) rules that were designed to protect people from human rights

violations by expanding the definition of 'refugee'are seldom applied in practice,[18] and that the EU directive 'mainly serves to ensure that people facing extreme forms of inhuman or degrading treatment are not forcibly returned, rather than expanding protection to a broader category of people' (2013, p.14). He develops the notion of 'crisis' or 'survival' migration to argue that what ultimately determines whether factors such as environmental change and food insecurity necessitate cross-border movement is the quality of governance in a country; in other words, the state's ability or willingness to provide basic rights to its citizens. Yet, while there is relative legal precision relating to people fleeing persecution, there is legal imprecision relating to people fleeing deprivations. As a consequence, it is politics rather than law that determines what happens to them, making them dependent on the interests of elites within the host state government (Betts, 2013b, p.43).

The term 'crisis migration' has thus entered the scholastic vocabulary to cover a broad range of humanitarian 'crises' from sudden acute events such as conflict to so-called natural disasters or slow-onset processes; in other words, 'situations in which there is a widespread threat to life, physical safety, health, or basic subsistence that is beyond the coping capacity of individuals and the communities in which they reside' (Martin et al., 2013, p.123). Introducing the notion of 'tipping points', McAdam (2014) emphasises structural factors such as poverty and poor governance that turn hazardous events into crises. For individuals affected, there is a point when the cumulative impact of stressors – whether socio-economic, environmental, political or psychological – 'tip them over the edge' so that moving away is preferable to staying put.

> When conceptualized in this way, 'crisis migration' implies acute pressure on the person or group that moves, rather than necessarily indicating the presence of an extreme or sudden event.
>
> (McAdam, 2014, p.10)

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[18] There are different national and regional interpretations of the term 'refugee', principally the 1969 OAU Convention on Refugee Problems in Africa which incorporates people fleeing 'external aggression, occupation, foreign domination or events seriously disturbing public order'; and the 1984 Cartagena Declaration for Latin America which includes those 'fleeing generalised violence, foreign aggression, internal conflicts, massive violation of human rights or other circumstances which have seriously disturbed public order'. The 2004 EU Asylum Qualification Directive provides subsidiary protection to people fleeing 'serious harm'. This consists of death penalty or execution; torture or inhuman or degrading treatment; punishment of an applicant in the country of origin; or serious and individual threat to a civilian's life or person by reason of indiscriminate violence in situations of international or internal armed conflict. See BETTS, A. 2013b. *Survival Migration: Failed governance and the crisis of displacement,* Ithaca, Cornell University Press.

This theory of 'crisis migration' offers a convincing explanation for multiple responses to 'crisis' and is therefore a useful framework for a discussion of the Zimbabwean experience. However, the emphasis on migration as the pivotal moment of crisis needs to be interrogated. By setting 'crisis' in the context of a life and family story I will show that the migration journey can be one of any number of potentially life-changing moments.

2.2.5   Conclusion

A period of political and economic crisis in Zimbabwe has led to migration on an unprecedented scale, causing people to scatter across the globe taking whatever route is available and contributing to the sense of a national emergency. The vast majority have gone to South Africa or other neighbouring countries but a significant proportion headed for Britain, the former colonial power. Transport routes and relatively cheap telecommunications enable many Zimbabweans to engage in cross-border relationships and activities, though the extent of their 'transnationalism' depends on age, education and social and legal status. Those who have settled abroad tend to identify themselves as part of a diaspora, a term often applied by politicians in Zimbabwe who seek their support.[19]

Unlike previous waves of Zimbabwean migration, which principally involved men of working age, many of today's migrants are women. Movements are complex and dynamic so do not fit easily into categories of voluntary or involuntary but are a mixture of force and choice. Some people anticipated disaster and planned ahead, while others left hurriedly without much forethought. Yet another group of people chose to stay or were forcibly immobilised and remained in Zimbabwe throughout the worst years of political and economic upheaval. In receiving countries like South Africa and the UK, some Zimbabweans have had an advantage over other immigrants because of language and education. On the other hand, the rigid application of asylum policies has forced many into irregular circumstances, causing hardship and prolonged insecurity. Because of the collapse of a functioning state and political and economic insecurity in Zimbabwe, most migrants fit into the recently developed category of 'survival' or 'crisis' migrant and this is the framework I have chosen for my research. There have been different 'tipping points' precipitating their exodus, which I will examine in detail when analysing participants' narratives. Although

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[19] Such calls for support can misfire. For instance, in June 2009, soon after being appointed Prime Minister of Zimbabwe's Government of National Unity, the MDC leader Morgan Tsvangirai was booed and heckled at a meeting in Westminister Cathedral, London when he called on the diaspora to 'come home'. His audience clearly disagreed with his claim that there was now 'peace and stability' in Zimbabwe. See MBIBA, B. 2012b. Zimbabwean Diaspora Politics in Britain: insights from the Cathedral moment 2009. *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics,* 50**,** 226 - 252.

theories of 'crisis migration' stem from a concern with political rights, my focus is in the way a particular set of political and economic events has impacted on families, causing a continuing ripple of consequences and I suggest it is the nature of the *'crisis'* which frames their migratory experience.

2.3   A family perspective

Although there is a rapidly expanding body of literature on the Zimbabwean 'crisis' years, families are rarely treated as an object of study in themselves but are glimpsed obliquely in household or cohort studies with references, for instance, to the importance of migrant remittances, the impact of HIV/AIDS or the separation of mothers from their children.[20] Taking the theme of 'crisis migration' I will explore notions of family and how migration alters the delicate balance of relationships which then have to be re-negotiated in a new 'transnational' space. Since the family is largely a social and cultural construct (Bourdieu, 1992, 1993, Finch and Mason, 1991, 1993, Grillo, 2008, Gubrium and Holstein, 1990, 1999, Thompson, 2005), I have searched the literature for studies by African scholars which might shed light on the internal dynamics of family and the way it is 'performed' through daily routines and family rituals. I am particularly interested in the moral dimension or what Pierre Bourdieu describes as the specific logic of kinship relations, 'the experience and language of duty and feeling' (Bourdieu, 1992.p.159), and also its cultural importance as a means of passing on values and social codes to subsequent generations.

If there is a deficit of research on the impact of complex emergencies, it is compensated by the richness of material on migrant families, fuelled by a growing interest in 'transnationalism'. Within this literature, migration is shown to be a family affair, supported by and for the family network. Although its most evident impact is the fracturing of the extended family, the degree of distress and disruption in the lives of individual family members depends to a large extent on the cause of migration and its outcome and, thus, studies of 'forced' migration present a different picture to those of 'economic', or 'voluntary' migration. The former, often conducted in refugee and IDP (internally displaced people) camps, tend to portray family fracturing as traumatic (Ager, 1999, Doná and Berry, 1999, Eastmond, 2007, Gill et al., 2011, Lindley, 2010, Smit and Rugunanan, 2015). In contrast, recent work on transnationalism presents a more positive view. Foregrounding

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[20] See, for example BLOCH, A. 2006. Emigration from Zimbabwe: Migrant Perspectives. *Social Policy & Administration,* 40**,** 67-87, BLOCH, A. 2008b. Zimbabweans in Britain: Transnational Activities and Capabilities. *Journal of Ethnic & Migration Studies,* 34**,** 287-305, ROALKVAM, S. 2005. The children left to stand alone. *African Journal of Aids Research,* 4**,** 211 - 218, ROBSON, E. 2000. Invisible carers: young people in Zimbabwe's home-based healthcare. *Area,* 32**,** 59-69. MADZIVA, R. & ZONTINI, E. 2012. Transnational mothering and forced migration: Understanding the experiences of Zimbabwean mothers in the UK. *European Journal of Women's Studies,* 19**,** 428-443.

the *agency* of migrants, scholars emphasise the financial and emotional support that family members give each other and their ability to maintain cross-border lines of communication.[21] Family solidarity is a source of social capital for people who might otherwise feel displaced and isolated in alien environments:

> Flexible extended family networks have long been used … to provide access to resources. By stretching, reconfiguring, and activating these networks across national boundaries, families are able to maximize the utilisation of labour and resources in multiple settings and survive within situations of economic uncertainty and subordination.
>
> (Schiller et al., 1995, p.54).

Transnational studies tend to focus on settled immigrant communities with well-established patterns of behaviour. What is more, the 'transnational family' is often narrowly interpreted as the nuclear family model of parents and children rather than the vast array of blood-kin who can make up the extended family network. In this study I will ask whether the experience of Zimbabwean families affected by 'crisis' is substantially different to other established migrant groups.

2.3.1   The 'African' family

In both academic and popular discourse, the 'African family', by which authors mean the 'black' African family, is often singled out as having particular moral and cultural significance (Goulbourne and Solomos, 2003, Kankonde, 2010, Ncube et al., 1997, Summerfield, 1999). Comparisons are made between the Western nuclear family and the African extended family, where there is little distinction between siblings and cousins, for instance nor, in some cases, between dead ancestors and the living. In his study of Congolese migrants in South Africa, Kankonde (2010) describes 'familial belonging' as one of the most important features of African societies. A series of newspaper articles on Ndebele family life, published in Zimbabwe, portrays a 'traditional' homestead shared by grandparents, aunts and uncles, siblings and cousins, where a father's word is law, women are mothers and home-makers and children are respectful and obedient (Southern Eye, 2013b, Southern Eye, 2013a, Southern Eye, 2014). The anonymous

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[21] See, for example: BALDASSAR, L. 2008. Debating Culture across Distance: Transnational Families and the Obligation to Care. *In:* GRILLO, R. (ed.) *Family in Question: Immigrant and Ethnic Minorities in Multicultural Europe.* Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, CHAMBERLAIN, M. A. L., S. 2004. Transnational families: memories and narratives. *Global Networks,* 4**,** 227 - 241, GARDENER, K. 2002. *Age, Narrative and Migration: The life course and life histories of Bengali elders in London,* Oxford, Berg, GARDNER, K. & GRILLO, R. 2002. Transnational households and ritual: an overview. *Global Networks,* 2**,** 179, GOULBOURNE, H., REYNOLDS, T., SOLOMOS, J. & ZONTINI, E. 2011. *Transnational Families: Ethnicities, identities and social capital,* Abingdon, Routledge, LEVITT, P. 2001. *The Transnational Villagers,* Berkeley and Los Angeles, California, University of California Press.

author claims that this is 'deeper, more diverse and far richer' than the English or European family (Southern Eye, 2013b). As a South African academic who spent 30 years in Zimbabwe, Kavenagh (2014) says that the extended family commands an allegiance and commitment 'far more profound than the motherland itself' (Loc. 2579) and is 'probably the driving force of human behavior in Zimbabwe today' (Loc.2582). In less hyperbolic terms, McGregor argues that Zimbabwean families are centrally important in both material and moral terms because they imply 'not only practical networks of support, dependence, and obligation, but also moral value, lineage, status and belonging' (2008 p. 596). All these representations echo Robert Putnam's positivist theories about social networks – the ''thick ties' based on trust which are conduits for information and improve health and psychological well-being (Putnam, 2001). However, they are not exclusively positive, for relying solely on kinship ties may lead to the 'exclusion of outsiders, excess claims on group members, restrictions on individual freedoms, and downward levelling norms' (Portes, 1998, p.15).

In times of 'crisis', the family is often shown to help buttress individuals against the winds of misfortune. In her study of Kenyan widows, Cattell (2003) describes it as the most basic and reliable support system that Africans have in the face of widespread poverty and unsettling conditions such as war and HIV/AIDS. Describing an earlier period of national trauma, the struggle for independence, Summerfield says its effects were particularly disastrous in a community where maintaining harmonious relations was generally assigned more significance than an individual's own thoughts and aspirations:

> Perhaps the primary psychic Impact of war is destruction of their social, economic and cultural worlds, ones which define their identity, roles and values.
>
> (Summerfield, 1999, p.118)

 Likewise, participants in my study regard the family as a safety net in the face of economic, social and political turmoil, albeit one that has been put under strain.

2.3.2   Changing patterns of Zimbabwean family life

If recent events have altered the intimate structures of the extended family, this is nothing new. A historic look at family practices in Zimbabwe reveals the effect of structural changes at a macro level. For this we must rely on a handful of ethnographers writing predominantly in a colonial setting followed by a few, predominantly white, post-colonial historians and sociologists (Bourdillon, 1976, Child, 1968, Holleman, 1952, Hughes, 1956, Mathis, 2011, Ncube et al., 1997, Ranger, 1995, Stead, 1946, Schapera, 1953, Werbner, 1991). By the time Bourdillon published his classic ethnography of the Shona people in 1975, the traditional family structures he described

were already in flux. Since independence, political and economic developments such as land re-distribution, urbanization, and a growing reliance on the informal economy have altered the structure of households and, to some extent, divided the extended family. Women have taken a greater role in the workplace, shifting the balance of power. Successive waves of migration have altered arrangements, with duties of care for the old and young parcelled out to those relatives equipped to fulfil them. The so-called 'African family' is often described in terms of its 'fluidity' (Ncube et al., 1997, Young and Ansell, 2003). This is related to a long history of internal and external migration, implying an ebb and flow - a smooth and almost imperceptible transition as circumstances alter and people adjust. In Zimbabwe's case, a series of seismic public events have caused dissonance and disruption in the private family realm.

A longitudinal study by Richard Werbner (1991) provides a rare glimpse of the quarrels and rivalries of a Kalanga[22] family in Matabeland, and the devastation caused by the war of independence (1976-80) and the ensuing period of political score-settling known as Gukurahundi. This is of particular relevance because it is based on life stories of people who shared the same ethnicity and location and experienced the same traumatic events as a family in my study (see Chapter 5). By the time of the anthropologist's second field trip in 1989 the family had suffered extreme brutality at the hands of both soldiers and guerilla fighters and was fragmented. Some younger women had gone to work in the town of Bulawayo, where they had married men from other countries or ethnic groups, while those who stayed in the rural area were increasingly reliant on remittances. Monogamy had become the norm, a phenomenon his participants ascribed to the introduction of compulsory education and high cost of school fees. The study also highlights the deep rift between the Ndebele-speakers of Matabeleland and the Shona-dominated faction which shared the liberation struggle . Werbner says violence perpetrated by their own state after independence had cast the significance of their suffering during the war in doubt, terrorising them as the 'dehumanised enemy within'. As a consequence, survivors 'bore the lasting marks of collective punishment and terror on their bodies and in their memories':

> Whether it would ever become possible for them to look forward to the future without a sharp regard for that danger remained an open question.

> (Werbner, 1991, p.173)

The evidence of my own research suggests that the most recent period of turmoil and conflict in Zimbabwe has re-awakened memories and kept danger in sharp focus.

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[22] Kalanga is a sub-group of Zimbabwe's Ndebele people.

One of the most comprehensive accounts of the contemporary Zimbabwean family, looking at the two major ethnic groups as well as white Zimbabweans, is the result of work by the Women and Law African Research Project in Zimbabwe (Ncube et al., 1997). The authors counter an idealized view of the cohesive African family, ruled usually by a patriarch, with a picture of amoeba-like families that change shape to suit prevailing circumstances. They find no significant difference between Shona and Ndebele families, nor, more surprisingly, between these and white families. Most people in their study regard kinship and marriage as the key determinants of 'family' and describe a web of interdependent relationships. In both urban and rural areas, family arrangements are principally influenced by economic circumstances.

> It is not that the extended family has collapsed or disintegrated but that as members of extended families have been physically and geographically displaced or separated, the manner in which the extended family manifests itself and functions has fundamentally changed.

(Ncube et al., 1997, p.17)

According to this study, nuclear families are nuclear only in terms of economic residence, shouldering obligations that embrace a variety of kin relations. In rural areas, 'composite' families of three or more generations share living space. There are also 'commuter' families, where one half of a partnership, usually the man, lives and works away from home leaving his wife to manage day-to-day affairs and 'repository' families, which shelter one or more relatives. Most families fall into this last category at some time or another (1997, pp.83-88). Other scholars note a rise in the number of nuclear families and a decline in formal marriages, a fall in the birth-rate, increased economic independence for women and more woman-led households, with a corresponding crisis of masculinity; and more older people living alone or supporting grandchildren (Alden, 2007, Cattell, 2003, Jacobs, 1996, Kawawe, 2008, Mathis, 2011, O' Brien and Broom, 2013, Roalkvam, 2005). Feminist scholars and writers highlight the prevailing patriarchalism of Zimbabwean culture, where it is acceptable for men to be promiscuous and women are expected to clean, cook and look after the children (Makoni, 2013). In other ways, however, women's experience is not dissimilar to women in more affluent countries. They are economically active, many are single parents, and those in the middle generation have fewer children than their parents.

There has been a recent surge of interest in the experience of 'white' as opposed to 'black' Africans (Alexander, 2004, Armbruster, 2008, Armbruster, 2010, Chennells, 2005, Conway and Leonard, 2014, Crapanzano, 1985, Gressier, 2015, Hughes, 2010, Pilossof, 2012, Steyn and Conway, 2010). Crapanzano (1985) describes a white rural community in apartheid-era South Africa, who cling together re-living myths of frontiersmanship and waiting for everything to change – a picture which resonates with the narratives of the white Zimbabweans in my study,

some of whom remain similarly suspended as if on the edge of a precipice. Focussing on the British in South Africa, Conway and Leonard (2014, pp.96-97) identify their 'very particular from of whiteness', arguing that they continue to inscribe their nationality on their surroundings, furnishing houses and designing gardens in a distinctively 'English style'.[23] Gressier (2015) brings issues of emplacement and belonging to the fore in her account of a white community in Botswana who pride themselves on bush craft, using practical skills and knowledge of the environment to claim an authentic national identity; while, in the Zimbabwean context, Hughes (2010) suggests that attachment to the landscape is a substitute for attachment to the nation state and its people. Pilossof's interest (2012) is the Zimbabwean farming community and the impact of the government's land acquistion policy introduced in 2000, issues that preoccupy my research participants. For a family perspective, however, we must turn to the autobiographical works of Fuller and Godwin in which isolated nuclear families confront an existential threat during Zimbabwe's independence struggle and the 'farm invasions' (Fuller, 2002, Godwin, 2007, Godwin, 1996).[24] These complement scholarly preoccupation with identity and attachment while foregrounding the psychological impact of displacement.

2.3.3 The impact of 'crisis'

One aspect of the 'crisis' that had an immediate and profound impact on families was the prevalence of HIV/AIDS. Zimbabwe has one of highest epidemic rates in the world and the Zimbabwean Senate estimates that 1.6 million children have lost one or both parents.[25] Other events that have contributed to alterations in households include the land acquisition policy, which uprooted many black farmworkers, and the destruction of informal businesses and dwellings in urban areas in 2005. In each case, the resulting migratory moves are presented as largely problematic for the family, however important they may be to its economic survival.

Many scholars focus on health and economics, foregrounding specific groups such as HIV sufferers, women, older people, children and orphans, who are generally portrayed as passive victims (Francis-Chizororo, 2010, Robson, 2000, van Blerk and Ansell, 2006). Those writing from a

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[23] Like many white Zimbabweans, the family in my study (see Chapter 6) has British ancestry.

[24] "Invasions" is the term commonly used by white Zimbabweans when referring to the government land acquisition policy and the occupation of farms by war veterans. Thus they position themselves as rightful owners whose land is unlawfully seized.

[25] See NKATAZO, L. 2011. *Zimbabwe has 1.6m Aid orphans: Senate* [Online]. UK: New Zimbabwe Media Ltd. Available: http://www.newzimbabwe.com/news-4803-Zimbabwe+has+1,6m+Aids+orphans+Senate/news.aspx [Accessed 1 Aug 2016].

feminist perspective suggest that women have born the brunt of the 'crisis'. Kawawe (2008), for example, portrays Zimbabwean women as victims of a patriarchal society which views them as commodities exchanged for an increasingly inflated bride-price or *lobola*, robbed of their identity because they live with their husband's family, and subject to abuse. Focussing on widows, Cattell (2003) reports that, since they are unlikely to own land, their wellbeing largely depends on in-laws who may send them back to the matrilineal home. Furthermore, the high prevalence of AIDS-related deaths leaves many caring for grandchildren on scant resources (Cattell, 2003). In contrast, other authors foreground women's agency, noting the importance of their role in both rural and urban economies where they support the family by farming or engage in informal economic activity (Mathis, 2011). At the same time they are also portrayed as taking more control in the domestic sphere although, in a society that regards unmarried adults as 'children', their autonomy tends to be linked to their status as wives and hence there is a powerful incentive to get married (Hindin, 2002).

In an attempt to hear the voices of <u>men</u>, Alden (2007) turns to contemporary fiction. She argues that social and economic changes since Independence have challenged their role as bread-winners and heads of family leading to paralysis and fear which too often turns into violence. Uncertainty about the meaning of masculinity is further explored in a study of Zimbabwean experiences of HIV (O' Brien and Broom, 2013). The authors use the notion of 'dented manhood' to explore the way men compensate through oppressive attitudes to women, such as violence and risky behaviour. While it is common for men to have an informal relationship, known as a 'small house', away from the marital home, women who have other partners or who stray outside the domestic realm are seen as 'unrespectable'(Pasura, 2014). Affluence and education help shape masculinities. The Zimbabwean middle-class ideal is modelled on marital status and respectability rather than sexual prowess (Bolt, 2010).

Perhaps the greatest cause of change in Zimbabwean family structures is not so much 'crisis' itself as 'crisis migration', the exodus in just over a decade of almost a quarter of the population. Opinions about the effect this has had on families are mixed, with some scholars looking at the plight of undocumented migrants who struggle to fulfil their family obligations while others concentrate on the lives of professionals and their children or the way migrants continue to support relatives across borders. On the other hand, the general conclusion is that migration, even at a time of emergency, is a family project and family is an important safety net. Studies of Zimbabwean migrants in South Africa show its pivotal role in their decision to migrate, the route they take and the process of settling down and finding work or accommodation (Muzondidya, 2008, 2010a, Sibanda, 2010). Moreover, Sibanda says it is not just *living* relatives that are involved, citing the story of a migrant who first went to his parent's village to seek his ancestors'

approval through a ritual. There is an emphasis in the literature on the economic benefits of migration and the significance of cash remittances from the diaspora to relatives back home (Bloch, 2008a, 2008b, 2010, Maphosa, 2010). Indeed, at the height of the economic crisis in 2008, the Zimbabwean economy stayed afloat thanks to the flow of money, anti-retroviral drugs, fuel, groceries and even lorries and communal buses sent by Zimbabweans abroad (Pasura, 2014).

2.3.4   Transnational families

Thanks to technology, there is also a lively exchange of information across borders. Families keep contact by telephone, SMS and the internet (Bloch, 2008b); news and even photographs of a family event in Zimbabwe are quickly transmitted to distant relatives and in this way they can keep relationships alive by expressing their care and concern for each other. The informality and spontaneity of emails and mobile messaging give them an impression of shared space and time, despite geographic distance (Wilding, 2006). However, it would be wrong to suggest that they are all constantly wired-up to each other in this new transnational space. There are areas of Zimbabwe that remain incommunicado and cases where intermittent electricity supply or the absence of money to pay for it prevents regular contact. There are also migrants in more affluent countries who live in abject conditions because of their lack of legal status. With limited capacity to support relatives, they may withdraw from the family group (Kankonde, 2010, Mbiba, 2011, McGregor, 2008a, 2010a, 2010b, Worby, 2010). Nevertheless, despite evidence that disparity of wealth and resources makes reciprocity problematic, numerous studies show families find new ways of fulfilling mutual obligations and exchanging gifts. For instance, Mazzucato (2011) describes a cycle of reciprocity whereby Ghanaian families finance a journey in the hope of recompense once migrants have settled, then continue their support by looking after their children, taking care of property or business interests and obtaining documents they need to stay in the host country. Close family members also carry out more intimate tasks like praying for migrants who fall sick or negotiating lapsed marriage deals (Chinouya, 2010, Mazzucato, 2011).

My own study focusses on the moral significance of family duties and their role in establishing identity or reputation – 'the feeling of recognition and dignity as a human being' (Bertaux and Thompson, 1997, p.21). Although Zimbabwean migrant families have to re-negotiate those obligations, they remain central to notions of well-being and the status or self-worth of individual members (Bloch, 2008b, Kankonde, 2010, Magunha et al., 2009, Mazzucato, 2011, Wong, 2006). Rather than seeing migration as a point of discontinuity and disconnection, transnational studies have revealed ways in which migrants defy physical separation by maintaining ties across borders (Heath et al., 2011, Levitt, 2006, Schiller et al., 1995). These de-territorialised families occupy what Thomas Faist (2000, 2004) refers to as transnational spaces, 'relatively stable, lasting and

dense sets of ties reaching beyond and across the borders of sovereign states' (Faist, 2004, p.3). As well as *social* ties, which involve reciprocal personal transactions and communication, these spaces comprise *symbolic* ties, linking 'common meanings, memories, expectations for the future, and collective representations'. Transnational families, Faist argues, 'share a strong sense of belonging to a common home, seeing themselves as both an economic unit and a unit of solidarity'. Besides the main house, they keep 'a kind of shadow household in another country' (Faist, 2004, pp.4-8). In developing the concept of 'transnational social fields', Levitt and Schiller (2004) draw a distinction between 'ways of being' in a social field and 'ways of belonging'. The former refers to actual relations and practices whereas the latter implies a conscious identification with a particular group. Individuals may combine the two differently in specific contexts:

> If individuals engage in social relations and practices that cross borders as a regular feature of everyday life, then they exhibit a transnational way of being. When people explicitly recognize this and highlight the transnational elements of who they are, then they are also expressing a transnational way of belonging.
>
> (Levitt and Schiller, 2004, p.1011)

As a consquence of 'crisis', the Zimbabweans in my study were forced to practise family 'transnationally', celebrating birthdays and festivals in virtual space and caring for each other across borders, yet, perhaps because it was a space they occupied unwillingly, they rarely used transnationalism as a point of identification. Only occasionally and with some reluctance did they talk about the 'diaspora', as if implying a forced exclusion from their 'homeland'. In other words, for them transnationalism was more often a way of being rather than belonging.

The process of transnational migration involves a re-alignment of relationships and obligations. Bryceson and Vuorela (2002, p.12) define this as 'frontiering' to suggest its exploratory nature – 'the act of defining identities, differences and agreements about the appropriation of space or roles'. This is followed by a sifting process, or 'relativising', by which they select and strengthen ties with those family members they feel most attached to, while leaving others to wither away:

> Against a background of declining contact time or spatial proximity they thus create an imagined community with shared feelings and mutual obligations.
>
> (Bryceson and Vuorela, 2002, p.14).

Although I tend to agree with scholars who question whether the terms 'frontiering' and 'relativizing' add significantly to what others have described as 're-negotiation' (Goulbourne and Solomos, 2003, Heath et al., 2011), they do express the dynamic and creative nature of family re-formation under conditions of dispersal. This notion of mobility is also present in Baldassar and

Merla's use of 'circulation' to describe the 'reciprocal, multidirectional and asymmetrical exchange of care' within family networks (Baldassar and Merla, 2014, p.22).

Perhaps, however, there is no compensation for physical closeness. In the absence of immediate family, migrants search for new ties to make up for those that are lost. This is what Foner (1997) refers to as 'kin-group reconstruction', a strategy employed by the Vietnamese migrants in her study to cope with uncertainty and economic scarcity:

> 'They elevated distant kin to the position of closer relatives, placed more importance than they used to on kinship ties forged by marriage, and redefined non-kin with whom they had close "kinship-like ties" as kin, using kinship terms (like brother) to refer to them and their relations'
>
> (Foner, 1997, p. 964)

In the Zimbabwean context, Pasura (2014) argues that faith communities have helped compensate for the absence of kin, providing social and material assistance on family occasions like weddings and birth, anniversaries and graduation ceremonies. Like kin, they pass on cultural values to the next generation by providing 'a space to explain the benefits of maintaining African values in contrast to those of the host society' (2014, pp119-120). Indeed, many migrants in my study stressed the comfort they received from attending church.

2.3.5   Gendered family roles

In Zimbabwe, as in many other societies, 'kin-work', in other words, 'the conception, maintenance, and ritual celebration of cross-household kin ties' (Leonardo, 1987, p.442) tends to be seen as women's territory, affording them a status in the domestic arena they have traditionally lacked in other social fields (Baldassar and Baldock, 2000, Baldassar et al., 2007, Baldassar, 2008, Baldassar and Merla, 2014, Finch and Mason, 1993, Fouron and Schiller, 2001, Gubrium and Holstein, 1999, Mauss, 1990). This is not to say that men do none of the caring, but that each gender is culturally assigned specific roles. For instance, mothers are nurturers while fathers provide financial support (Dreby, 2006a) and men look after the business affairs of ageing relatives while women take care of health, also providing emotional support (Baldassar and Baldock, 2000, p.84). In her Caribbean study, Olwig (2012) suggests that there are two gendered narratives reflecting dominant social and moral values, though they are not exclusive to either gender. The 'masculine' narrative is dominated by the public sphere of individual social and economic achievements, in other words 'reputation', while the feminine narrative is about sustaining and maintaining social and economic obligations towards the family, associated with 'respectability'. Both are strongly influenced by European missionaries and educators and therefore resonate with the Zimbabwean colonial experience.

As feminist scholars have pointed out, gender cannot be treated outside the context of class, race and ethnicity. When looking at transnational relationships in the context of an individual's place in family, social and structural hierarchies or 'gendered geographies of power' (Mahler and Pessar, 2001, 2006),[26] many have focussed on poorer female migrants who left their children and elders behind to take on the same caring role for women in more affluent countries as part of a global care-chain (Ehrenreich and Hochschild, 2002, Parreñas, 2005). In her study of Fiipino women and children, Parreñas points out that the lack of cellular phone coverage in rural areas inhibits the kind of regular communication needed for fostering strong familial ties. She concludes that inequalities of gender, class and geography 'shape the quality of intimacy in transnational family life' (2005, p.318). Fewer scholars discuss the caring duties of men, professional women or 'crisis' migrants and refugees, with notable exceptions (Baldassar, 2008, Baldassar and Baldock, 2000, 2007, Baldassar and Merla, 2014, Dreby, 2006a, Madziva, 2010, Madziva and Zontini, 2012, McDuff, 2015, McGregor, 2008b, Wong, 2014, Zontini, 2010). They tend to fall into two camps – those who emphasise female empowerment through transnationalism and those who foreground its negative impacts on family structures.

McDuff (2015), an American sociologist, falls into the first camp, emphasising the growing confidence and autonomy of Zimbabwean women in her study, who live in the UK and South Africa. She argues that gendered 'kinkeeping' lies at the heart of female-led migration. In addition to their 'normative' obligations within home and family, women take increasing *financial* responsibility, caring for kin from a distance. This means, she says, that as well as their exposure to less restrictive gender norms, they are more likely to stay away from 'home' for long periods of time:

> Essentially women were willing to make personal sacrifices and endure hardships in order to help their families and communities.

> (McDuff, 2015, p.27).

In contrast to this 'Western' view, Zimbabwean and South African-based scholars are more inclined to dwell on the problematic aspects of migration and the strain it puts on familial ties. Looking at the impact on gender and family through 26 narratives of 'those left behind', Kufakurinani (2015, p.44) suggests negative consequences include 'compromising a healthy social

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[26] Starting from the assumption that construction of gender is an ongoing process, Mahler and Pessar have developed a model of gendered geographies of power in transnational spaces. This locates gender on spatial and social scales such as the body, the family and the state. People are given advantages and disadvantages according to their social location. The extent of their social agency is thus determined by their positioning within hierarchies of power operative within and across many terrains. See MAHLER, S. J. & PESSAR, P. R. 2001. Gendered Geographies of Power: Analyzing Gender Across Transnational Spaces. *Identities,* 7**,** 441-459.

development of children, family breakdowns, increased gender inequalities, emergence or intensification of family feuds and impoverishment'. These are strong assertions to make on the basis of a relatively small sample, albeit backed up by first hand and anecdotal evidence of marital infidelity, mistrust between relatives, exaggerated expectations and tensions about the distribution of remittances. Her conclusion that migration and the absence of face-to- face contact have in some instances perpetuated the breakdown of extended family values is equally dramatic, though partially confirmed by my own research.

Concentrating on women's role as cultural reproducers of the family, Moorhouse and Cunningham (2012, p.493) are similarly pessimistic, arguing that 'family fracturing' has negative consequences for both mothers and children. Interviews with Zimbabwean women living in South Africa reveal that they regard motherhood as one of the cornerstones of their identity but feel it has been altered by migration, perhaps irrevocably. They are subject to 'double-othering', first treated as outsiders because of their status as immigrants and then rejected by fellow immigrants because they are seen to have 'abandoned' their own children. A number of Zimbabwean studies emphasise the sense of shame and 'moral failure' that results from mothers being unable to support children financially (Madziva, 2010, Madziva and Zontini, 2012, Moorhouse and Cunningham, 2012).

Gender conflict is another potential consequence of migration (Chereni, 2015a, Dreby, 2009, McGregor, 2008b, Pasura, 2008, 2014, 2010b, Zontini, 2010). In the UK, where Zimbabwean women are more likely to be the dominant breadwinners, thus reversing the cultural 'norm', there has been an increase in marital disharmony and even divorce (Chereni, 2015a). In a study of migrant nurses and teachers, McGregor finds that without the domestic help and child-care they would expect at home, women struggled to juggle their commitments and complained when men refused to take a fair share (McGregor, 2008b). From his multi-sited fieldwork with members of the diaspora, Pasura concludes that there is a shift in the balance of power in these new nuclear households and a threat to 'hegemonic masculinity' (2008b, p.476). The resulting tension is exacerbated by the lack of proximate kinship ties, which are 'central to the production and reproduction of gendered ideologies in the homeland' (2008, p.12). Furthermore, the challenge to cultural ideals of manhood affects migrants' attitudes to return and settlement. Whereas men draw on myths and memories of the homeland in order to reproduce pre-migration gender norms, women prefer the here and now, choosing settlement over return.

2.3.6   Kinship ties: a mixed blessing?

For migrants who struggle to make ends meet in the host country, kinship ties may be a mixed blessing. Baldassar et al, who include 'forced' migrants from Afghanistan in an extensive study of transnational care-giving, argue that individual capacity may be impeded or facilitated by 'macro' structural factors such as visa restrictions and employment policies; 'meso' or community factors such as local support; and 'micro' personal factors such as finances, health and time and willingness to allocate these resources (2007, pp.204-5). As a result, some refugees cut off ties altogether.

> In cases where demands and obligations exceed capacity, a breakdown in networks can result as individuals attempt to shield themselves from obligations they cannot meet.
>
> (Baldassar, 2008, p.276).

In addition, prolonged separation may hinder parents' 'capacity to develop significant intimacy and mutual acquaintance from afar', risking 'mutual alienation' (Bonizzoni and Boccagni, 2014, p.82). Even in less extreme cases, 'crisis' migrants may simply find that the demands of everyday life exhaust all their resources. Al-Ali's study of Bosnian refugees in the UK and the Netherlands (2002) concluded that the nuclear family eventually took precedence over the extended family. Evidence from my own research raises questions about the sustainability of extended transnational family ties.

Although family bonds are widely regarded as a source of moral status, solidarity and social capital, there is evidence that for 'crisis migrants', who often find themselves in positions of disadvantage, they may become burdensome. In his study of undocumented Zimbabwean migrants in Johannesburg, Worby asks how they reconcile their family obligations with the material and psychological constraints imposed by their situation:

> What are the perceived ethical implications and consequences of not forwarding one's address or cellphone number, or of not replying to calls and letters? Of switching off your cellphone when you know a relative has arrived at the central bus terminal and is trying to reach you?
>
> (Worby, 2010, p.417)

The author suggests that, faced with extreme stigmatisation and socio-legal exclusion, a migrant is often forced to sever family ties and go into hiding. These are 'strategies of social *dis*connection . . . strategies that involve remaining socially out of sight, under the radar, incommunicado, or socially illegible, sometimes by refusing to be recognised at all' (2010, p.420). The aim is to avoid the embarrassment of failure to fulfil their obligations, referred to as 'the

burden of *ubuntu*'[27] and of being publically labelled as 'stingy'. A migrant who fails to send remittances, for instance, is called *umadliwa* or *umgewu*, which means 'eaten up' or 'devoured' implying that he has been 'devoured by pleasures', spending money on beer and women instead of sending it to his relatives (Maphosa, 2007, p.127).

Through the eyes of these less fortunate migrants we see the full moral force of family as both stronghold and stranglehold. According to Kankonde, for Congolese migrants failure to meet family obligations is tantamount to 'social death', in other words, to be 'socially without rights, utterly marginalised' (2010, p.231). Indeed, the ability to send remittances is such an important signifier of social status that migrants continue the practice even when they know money is misused or the receiver is better off than they are. Contesting a romanticised view of African family ties based on 'solidarity' and bonds of affection, Kankonde says they may be 'the outcome of family coercion rather than love and consensus' (p.239). Indeed, some migrants in my study felt overwhelmed by demands from relatives in Zimbabwe and disillusioned by what they perceived to be growing materialism. Kankonde goes further in suggesting that some families invoke supra-national powers to exert control, casting spells on members who fail to meet their obligations. The author quotes a Congolese curios vendor:

> 'If I do not send money to my family they can block my business. If they are not happy even God won't protect and bless me . . . What makes me believe something bad will happen to me? [Silence.] I have the example of my big brother. It's been one year now that he is sick at home. They warned, but he did not listen.'

> (Kankonde, 2010, p.239)

Exploring kinship among Cameroonians in German cities, Fleischer says they complain that, after putting pressure on them to migrate, relatives threaten them with witchcraft when they fail to fulfil family demands (2007). Van Dijk's interviews with Ghanaian migrants in the Netherlands indicate that they regard failure to make their fortune as a weakness in 'personal, spiritual and protective power', suspecting witchcraft from within the family — 'the domain of both primary attachment and primary fear'. They even regard family gifts with suspicion because they are

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[27] The author's valuable footnotes help set these ethical dilemmas into a cultural context signified by common words and phrases. For instance the concept of *Ubuntu* is 'a distinctively African sense of ethical obligation to render hospitality to kin and strangers alike, and to see one's own interests as being realized through the enhancement of the well-being of others'. Although this implies that blood-relations are not to be distinguished from non-kin, other sayings draw a clear line between the two. The Shona have a proverb which can be translated as: 'A relative is a relative, he cannot be compared to a foreigner'; and another which says: 'A relative is like a chief'.

'imbued with intentions, messages and obligations' (2002, p.180) – a view that was echoed by one of my participants.[28]

2.3.7   Imagining 'home'

The study of any migrant group raises questions about belonging. If home and family are linked in our imagination as a point of identification, what happens when the family is uprooted? Early migrant studies, focussing on assimilation and acculturation in the host community, stressed the nostaligic nature of 'homeland', a concept imbued with loss and longing. Although the advent of cheaper and faster travel and communication makes that dream more realisable, it does not therefore become <u>real </u>even for those who return since there is always a yawning chasm between the homeland of memory, thought and imagination and the place that now exists. While stressing its importance as a way of reinforcing ethnic identity and cultural values, a number of scholars describe this as 'a myth of belonging', highlighting differences between first generation migrants who at least have memories of the homeland, and their children for whom it is entirely imaginary (Chamberlain, 2004, Goulbourne et al., 2011, Olwig, 2007).

Transnational studies are full of metaphors of the 'in-between', neither here nor there or, as Boehm puts it, 'half there, half here' (2012, p.144). The Mexicans in her study of illegal migrants in the US characterise home as mobile and fractured, describing it along three axes - as nation, place and family:

> Transmigrants express home as nation and home as place, but especially home as family, underscoring how 'home' is imbued with contradictions, ambiguity, and ambivalence, and, above all, how kinship is intertwined with transnational life.

> (Boehm, 2012, p.51)

Suggesting that the ambiguity of home increases with time, Boehm concludes that locality itself may become less important: '. . . as migrants experience lives that are increasingly transnational, family often trumps nation and place in the construction of home' (2012, p.50). Many scholars assume that emotional ties to the geographic homeland will wither away as succeeding generations become increasingly hybridized. However, Olwig's (2007) longitudinal study of migrant Caribbean families suggests that place of origin remains an important site of identity and belonging for children and grandchildren. Whereas Boehm sets up a dichotomy between family and place, Olwig argues that it is the connection between the two which gives place its continuing

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[28] Dwana, the key participant in the Ndebele-speaking family (see Chapter 5) told me that she would rather receive a gift from a stranger than a family member, explaining that the relative's gift might contain a curse.

importance. Individuals relate differently to place of origin according to their unique life trajectories and social, economic and geographic circumstances, but all of them see *family* as a common point of identification. However far apart in time and space, they are bound together by a foundational story linking them with a common ancestral place of origin in the Caribbean. Moreover, this story is both backward and forward looking, embodying cultural and moral values that set a template for future generations. Thus, the younger members of a family whose tradition is to seek improvement are expected to do the same, driven by the unspoken threat of being regarded as peripheral, and therefore possibly excluded from the family network, if they fail.

The salience of home in migrant imagining seems irrefutable but what if that home is shattered by political and economic 'crisis' as in the case of Zimbabwe? How is it re-configured by those who have experienced it as a place where basic needs cannot be met or personal security is threatened? This potential ambiguity is vividly captured in the story of a Haitian migrant called Georges, who wakes up laughing after dreaming of Haiti – 'not the Haiti he had visited last summer, but the Haiti of his youth' (Fouron and Glick Schiller, 2006, p.168). Yet it turns out that this is not the 'real' Haiti of his youth, which was overshadowed by a ruthless dictatorship, but a place 'that never was'. Moreover, Georges' nostalgia persists even though this longed-for homeland is a location of ongoing experience and therefore resists romanticisation. It would of course be a different story and a different dream if Georges were to return permanently to Haiti. Might he then look back nostalgically to his temporary home in the United States?

The chasm between dream and reality is highlighted in the case of Zimbabwe's 'crisis' migrants, who left a nation on the verge of collapse. Ndlovu argues that although home connotes an interaction between place and social relationships or family and is usually represented as a site of peace and security, in reality it can be the opposite:

> . . . home can also disappoint, constrict, endanger, and indeed, kill. This ambiguity explains the varied conceptions of Zimbabwe as home as well as the motivations for leaving the country at a time when even deeply symbolic gestures such as the burial of one's umbilical cord at home do not have enough claim to stop Zimbabweans from leaving home.

> (Ndlovu, 2010, p.119)

Because of continuing social and economic problems in Zimbabwe, many migrants retain ambivalent notions of home. Although longing for return to the imagined place of origin, they express considerable uncertainty about the likelihood of this happening (McGregor, 2010c, 2013, Mortensen, 2012, Pasura, 2012, Pasura, 2014). However, there is evidence that nation remains a focus of identification even for those who have watched it implode into 'crisis'. Many migrants

invest in insurance schemes and burial associations, using informal networks and church fellowships to help repatriate the bodies of relatives (Mbiba, 2010, Pasura, 2014).[29] Some professionals in the UK leave their children in Zimbabwe or send them on regular visits 'home' preferring separation to the risk of contamination by the 'host' culture (McGregor, 2008b). Faced with racism, migrants in the UK may emphasise connections with the homeland in order to escape minority status. On the other hand, some of those in South Africa who face discrimination and xenophobia have sought new identities - 'reimagining, reinventing and reconstructing their family histories with the strategic goal of emphasising their historical connection to South Africa' (Muzondidya, 2010a, p.46).

2.4   Migrant children

A family focus on migration illuminates significant variation between the experiences of different generations, emphasizing the hybridity of children who adopt a mixture of their parents' culture and that of the receiving society. Once more most evidence is based on settled populations rather than those in flux, but it suggests that the motivation for identifying with family cultural background is both positive and negative. Children share their parents' attachment to an imagined 'homeland' but also react to discrimination and alienation in the host community (Levitt, 2006, Olwig, 2007). They may play down their 'otherness' in order to blend in with the majority or question aspects of their 'home' culture, leading to potential generational conflict. For instance, second generation Italian immigrants in Wessendorf's study (2008), living in a more 'individualistic community', were more critical of extended family ties than their parents, seeing their potential for oppression and control as well as care   Although some enjoyed the sense of 'embeddedness' that came with being part of an extended kin network on holidays back in Italy, others resented the constant round of visits and family obligations. Their attitudes varied with life-stage as they were exposed to different social milieux (Wessendorf, 2013). Coming from a similarly communitarian culture, it seems likely that Zimbabwean second generation migrants in the UK will also question aspects of family life and, indeed, my own research suggests this is the case.

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[29] Despite the cultural importance of attending burials, many migrants are prevented by the cost or lack of official papers. Furthermore, returning migrants may be considered 'traitors' by the state authorities and risk some form of punishment, especially if they worked in British police and security services, or have deserted from the Zimbabwean security services. See MBIBA, B. 2010. Burial at Home? Dealing with Death in the Diaspora and Harare. *In:* MCGREGOR, J. & PRIMORAC, R. (eds.) *Zimbabwe's New Diaspora: Displacement and the Cultural Politics of Survival.* New York & Oxford: Berghahn.

2.4.1 Conclusion

The rich body of transnational scholarship celebrates the resourcefulness and adaptability of families, who are forever inventing new ways of communicating and caring for each other despite physical distance. In a new transnational space they re-invent family roles and rituals and re-negotiate responsibilities. Modern technology keeps them in touch more than ever before. Phone calls are made, SMS messages and photographs sent at the click of a button, and money is transferred almost instantly online. In this regard, Zimbabwe's 'crisis' migrant families are no exception, and yet there are aspects of their experience that mark them out from other groups.

The collective focus of Zimbabwean culture means that we cannot see family as a nuclear unit but have to take into account the wider network of relationships. Within Ndebele and Shona culture, family duties and obligations have moral significance while, in white 'settler' culture, family is a site of belonging that links the individual to the land. A consequence of 'crisis' is that it has increased the family's inter-dependence while at the same time causing it to fracture. Although migrants and stayers continue to exchange material or spiritual gifts, family obligations may become burdensome or difficult to fulfil.

The pioneering role taken by so many women during the crisis has led to the separation of mothers and children with an obvious emotional cost to those involved. It has had a profound impact on gender roles, shifting the balance of power between men and women and leading to an increase in marital breakdown. Those women who enjoy greater freedom and economic power in the host country are more likely to prefer settlement than return, particularly if they have their children with them. However, both women and men want to preserve what they see as 'African' values and worry that children will be contaminated by the more individualistic culture of Northern societies. Anecdotally, there are early indications that such concerns may lead to inter-generational conflict but as yet there is no published research on the attitudes of Zimbabwean migrants' children.

In common with other transnational groups, the Zimbabweans I have spoken to in Britain and South Africa express a yearning for a lost homeland, made more acute by experiences of discrimination and racism, but continuing economic, social and political problems in Zimbabwe cast a long shadow. As a consequence, they may be less inclined to identify themselves with the nation and perhaps more likely to identify with an ancestral home. The implication is that family may increase in importance as a site of identification and belonging. Another feature that distinguishes these 'crisis' migrant families is that they are still in a state of flux, uncertain about the possibilities of return. Members with 'irregular' status in the receiving country, are particularly insecure and unable to plan for the future.

Within the last few years there has been an explosion of research on the Zimbabwean diaspora, much of it focussing on social or occupational groups such as professionals in the UK, undocumented migrants in South Africa or white farmers in Zimbabwe. However, less is known about the impact of crisis on family members who have been unable to leave Zimbabwe, children who have been separated from their parents, or grandparents left coping on their own. By viewing the crisis through the lens of three extended families, Shona, Ndebele and white Zimbabwean, I hope to address some of these gaps.

Chapter 3:   Methodology

3.1   Introduction

It seems entirely appropriate that this research should be rooted in the school of humanities in collaboration with the department of social sciences since it looks at the unique lives of individuals in their social context, an approach which Kenneth Plummer controversially describes as 'humanist sociology'[30] and which starts from the premise that the human being is an 'embodied, emotional, interactive self, striving for meaning in wider historically specific social worlds and an even wider universe' (Plummer, 2001, 2012, Stanley, 2013). My particular interest is how the self as part of a family group is affected by exceptional and potentially traumatic circumstances. In this I follow the footsteps of anthropologist Michael Jackson who draws on his work in conflict-torn Sierra Leone to raise existential questions about human responses to extreme difficulty[31]:

> My concern is to understand better how people deal with the vicissitudes of their existence, what resources they call upon, what changes they wreak …
>
> (Jackson, 2013, p.96)

Like Plummer and Jackson, I use narratives as the principal method of inquiry, focussing on three extended families of different social and ethnic backgrounds. To understand how they make sense of Zimbabwe's 'crisis' and family dispersal and situate themselves in a historic framework, I have gathered 34 'told' life stories and observed family interaction. Eighteen participants also drew 'family maps' illustrating the way their families had been re-shaped by 'crisis'.

3.2   Choosing participants

The first decision was how many families to include or whether to concentrate in greater depth on a single family, presenting a range of gender, age and generation but with greater narrative

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[30] Humanist is a contested term, since it implies a naïve and idealistic view of mankind and is often associated with a western, masculine and colonialist hegemony. To rescue it from scholarly oblivion, Plummer has come up with the term 'critical humanism', acknowledging that the human being is not a simple, self-actualising individual but an 'embedded, dialogic, contingent, embodied, universal self with a moral (and political character)'. See PLUMMER, K. 2001. Documents of Life 2 - An Invitation to a Critical Humanism. 2nd ed. London: Sage.

[31] Jackson describes anthropology as an experiment you conduct with yourself to test how much you can cross the experiential divide and understand people living in diffficult circumstances. See UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND, A. 2014. World101x: Full interview with Michael Jackson. *UQxWorld 101x Anthropology of Current World Issues.* YouTube.

coherence. Using existing contacts from my voluntary work with SWVG,[32] I conducted a pilot study with seven Zimbabweans who came to Southampton during the early 2000s, inviting them to tell me their life stories and draw family maps. These were either asylum seekers and refugees or their acquaintances. This pilot alerted me to significant differences between the related experiences of those who identified themselves as Shona, Ndebele or white Zimbabwean and led to the decision to include all three groups in my research. Shona dominance in Zimbabwean's ruling party gave its members a different perspective on public events from Ndebele speakers who were more overtly critical of the government. Similarly, experience was differentiated by race. Initally I saw national 'crisis' through the eyes of the majority black population, believing that privilege somehow disqualified the whites from a full share of suffering, but such preconceptions were challenged during the pilot study which included a white Zimbabwean. It also became clear that some participants were unwilling or unable to introduce me to other family members, adding an element of uncertainty in the selection procedure. Having established three key participants with family members in Zimbabwe, South Africa and the UK, I would have to rely on them to become gatekeepers, making the necessary approaches on my behalf. Fortunately, two people from the pilot study, whom I call Dwana and Diane, agreed to continue with me on the journey and I met the third, now renamed Fungai, through the British Zimbabwe Society. Every participant was given an information sheet and asked to sign a consent form which explained that they could pull out at any time (see Appendix B).

 I describe my initial contacts with the three key participants when introducing them individually in subsequent chapters. Enrolling other family members was a gradual process, sometimes achieved by direct introduction and a preliminary phone call or email message, sometimes requiring persuasion or relying on a chance meeting. Throughout my field trips I kept ethnographic notes which included physical descriptions and observations about the mood and tone of encounters as well as a record of conversations with both participants and people I met in passing. I spent six weeks in Zimbabwe and a fortnight in South Africa and all the narratives and maps were gathered between September 2014 and September 2015.

3.3   Fieldwork as relationship building

I believe that there is no more real or more realistic way of exploring communication in general than by focussing on the simultaneously practical and theoretical problems that emerge from the particular interaction between the investigator and the person being questioned. (Bourdieu, 1999, p.607)

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[32] Southampton and Winchester Visitors' Group, a charity which befriends and supports asylum seekers and refugees.

At the end of Bourdieu's remarkable collection of transcribed interviews with residents of a housing project, he invites researchers to consider the best conditions for conducting in-depth interviews, preferring to dwell on the relationship between questioner and questioned rather than the methodology of interviewing techniques. Following his lead, I want to discuss aspects of my interaction with the individuals that comprised my three research families because it is this, I believe, that determines the quality of material gathered. Building a rapport with the three key participants was made easier by our shared experience as women with grown-up children. Like me, Fungai and Dwana were engaged in educational studies, and Dwana, Diane and I lived in the same geographic area. This was a foundation for trust and growing intimacy but did not necessarily mean that other family members would welcome me with open arms and in each case I had to start afresh with every new participant. To mitigate the effect of 'cultural asymmetry' (Bourdieu, 1999, p.611) I was able to draw on my experience working with asylum seekers and my family connections to Zimbabwe. Bourdieu suggests that research is less intrusive and, by implication, more productive if the researcher is linked to the respondent by social proximity and familiarity. However, on the basis of 30 years' experience as a broadcast journalist, I suggest these are not essential prerequisites for setting someone at ease and establishing a respectful relationship, since it is usually possible for two human beings to find some common bond. Furthermore, there are occasions when an outsider's seemingly naïve question may lead the respondent to explain what he/she has previously taken for granted, prompting fresh insights. Having said this, I must admit that female participants in the study outnumbered males and, although this was not a deliberate strategy on my part, it may have reflected the fact that I achieved a better rapport with women. What is particularly important, however, as Bourdieu points out, is for the researcher to have an extensive knowledge of the subject, meaning in this case the facts of the Zimbabwean 'crisis' and its historic context as well as shared information about the family gleaned from conversations and earlier interviews. The more background information I gathered before pressing the record button and the longer I spent with participants, the closer I felt I was getting to the 'truth' of their lives, by which I mean a faithful account of their subjective experience.

The transnational nature of this project and the precarious circumstances of some participants presented challenges. Although key participants persuaded family members to take part, it was not possible to contact most of those in Zimbabwe before my arrival. Again, I had to establish an initial point of contact who then became the key to further introductions. This was a lengthy process and the distances travelled both in Zimbabwe and South Africa further reduced the amount of time I could spend with each participant. Most 'interviews' took place in the participant's home but some were on neutral territory, one was conducted in a workplace and

another took place during a car journey. On several occasions, the presence of other people altered the interview dynamic or imposed a time constraint. Moreover, the social and cultural gap between us was harder to bridge without the common denominator of life in the UK, particularly in the case of the Ndebele and Shona families. As a white British woman I was anxious to dissasociate myself from the racist attitudes of my colonial forefathers but conscious that I might be accorded an elevated status.[33] In contrast, I felt that some members of the white family expected me to share their viewpoint simply because we had the same skin colour. In neither case was it possible to close the cultural gap; the best I could hope for was to maintain a reflexive stance, keeping notes of every encounter. With Ndebele and Shona participants I chose not to have a translator because English is commonly spoken in Zimbabwe, but this put respondents at a disadvantage and some were less 'fluent' than others. As a result of these different conditions, life stories varied in duration from 36 minutes to several hours and those of family members in the UK are on the whole longer and richer than those of relatives in Zimbabwe or South Africa.

3.4   Ethical considerations

The surveillance activities of the Zimbabwean government, its labelling of Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) supporters as traitors and its sensitivity to any comment that could be considered critical made the need for confidentiality particularly acute and all participants were guaranteed anonymity. In addition it was important to reassure participants that information gleaned from their life stories and informal conversations would not be transmitted to other family members. Even with false names, however, the members of each family will almost inevitably be recognisable to each other and there is a risk this might cause rifts or hurt feelings. The reassurance offered in the university approved consent form satisfies institutional requirements but does it offer a false sense of security? Participants are told their contribution is voluntary and they can withdraw at any time but how realistic is this in practice? The formal request for a signature reinforces the researcher's symbolic power and it would take considerable determination and confidence to turn away someone who has been introduced by another family member, particularly when she has travelled a distance and now sits at your table. To minimise the exploitative nature of the research situation, I arranged preliminary meetings to explain the project and seek verbal agreement and, if there was any hesitation, I made it clear that there was no moral obligation to take part; indeed, I could understand the reason for saying no. Two people

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[33] Fanon's suggestion that people with black skins internalised the values of their white colonisers was confirmed by participants who told me they had been raised to think that white culture was superior to their own and that speaking English and having English names were marks of status. See FANON, F. 2008. *Black Skins, White Masks,* UK, Pluto Press.

gave a clear negative and a few others made themselves unavailable. A further complication was that key informants could close as well as open gates to the extended family. Their response to questions about certain individuals was either silence, a change of subject or news that they could not be contacted.

Some participants, particularly members of the Ndebele family, were vulnerable because of past trauma or the fragility of their present situation. When visiting them in Zimbabwe and South Africa, it was important not to draw public attention to my presence as a British researcher. I was also alert to non-verbal clues suggesting a reluctance to explore certain aspects of their experience and careful not to probe too deeply. Since people were often materially disadvantaged in comparison with me yet gave their time to take part in my research without enhancing their status or reputation, I felt they were entitled to something in return. Although I made it clear there were no financial rewards to be gained, I showed my gratitude by taking small gifts, buying meals or giving money for petrol. I also suggested that the information I gathered might be useful if they wanted to write their own family histories and that, if the whole family consented, I would make it available. I considered showing them a draft of this thesis before submitting it but decided this was too problematic. To expect everyone to read it and deal with their comments would delay submission beyond acceptable limits; on the other hand, presenting it only to key participants would introduce bias. This falls short of the spirit of collaboration which I would like to foster and I can only hope that, when they eventually read this thesis, they will not feel misrepresented.

In a family study of this sort, interaction between researcher and participant is particularly complex. I was heavily reliant on a central participant to unlock doors into private spaces, bearing the weight of that person's expectations and carrying unspoken messages from one family member to another. In this role of 'emissary' I navigated a network of long-established relationships as well as forging my own. Variously required to be sounding-board, witness and confidante, even treated by some younger participants as a 'wise elder', I was conscious that each new encounter was likely to be reported back to the source. I was often acutely aware of a contrast between the fulsome accounts of key participants in the UK and the more guarded narratives of those they contacted on my behalf, which raised questions about their motive. Was it an interest in my research, or politeness to a trusted relative? Not only does the issue of consent become problematic when bound up with family obligation and loyalty; so too does the issue of confidentiality. Although participants are anonymous they will easily be identified by their relatives so, in quoting from their narratives, some of which contain details that have not been widely shared, I risk causing hurt feelings or resentment.

Although my role was that of 'intimate' acquaintance rather than friend, extending cordiality without intensive intimacy (Plummer, 2001, pp209-210), the more family members I met along the way, the closer my connection and the more seemingly 'embedded' I became. However illusory, a sense of involvement in their lives brings an obligation which is greater than that of researcher to research 'subject' and invites a more sustained commitment. Furthermore, the intimacy of the process turns the researcher-participant role into something more than scholarly and objective, with implications that will outlive the research. In entering into these family networks, staying in people's homes and serving as a conduit for gifts and messages of good will, I was afforded a kind of honorary membership. As yet this is open-ended and I remain on the fringes of their transnational networks, linked up to some of them through mobile messaging and social media and concerned about their welfare.

3.5   Life stories

Although my focus is on a particular period of Zimbabwe's history and its impact on families, I asked participants to cover a wider range of experiences, seeking to understand how the meaning of 'crisis' was incorporated in a whole life trajectory. However, it would be misleading to claim that these were free-flowing autobiographies. As Crapanzano points out, the life history is 'the result of a complex self-constituting negotiation', the 'product (at least from the subject's point of view) of an arbitrary and peculiar demand from another' (1984, p.955-956). Since participants knew my research focus was on 'crisis' and 'family' they were likely to shape their stories accordingly.[34] Many responded by asking where they should start, to which I suggested the chronological beginning – birth and childhood, and to an extent I guided them through the narration by occasionally asking for clarification or elaboration. The few elderly participants, who were less practised in English, needed more directive questioning than others while the middle-generation tended to rush through the years of their childhood and teens and needed prompting to give more detail.

This kind of experience-centred narrative[35] is widely used by sociologists, social historians and anthropologists as well as psychologists to understand how identity is constructed and 'how

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[34] Psychologists use the term 'demand characteristics' to describe the way research subjects create a consistent and coherent story for the interviewer's benefit. See PLUMMER, K. 2001. Documents of Life 2 - An Invitation to a Critical Humanism. 2nd ed. London: Sage.

[35] Squire et al contrast this with event-centred narrative focussed on the spoken recounting of particular past events that happened to the narrator. However they suggest that the boundaries between them are porous and overlapping. See SQUIRE, C., ANDREWS, M. & TAMBOUKOU, M. 2008. Introduction: What is narrative research? In: ANDREWS, M., SQUIRE, C. & TAMBOUKOU, M. (eds.) Doing Narrative Research. London: Sage Publications.

personal lives traverse social change' (Squire et al., 2008, p.4). Denzin (1989, 2001), for instance, focusses on 'turning-point moments' or 'ephiphanies' which 'alter the fundamental meaning structure in a person's life' and are manifestations of his or her character (1989, p.70). However, rather than claiming narratives reflect some hidden and essential truth, post-structuralist scholars assume they are co-constructed accounts of experience which may change at another time or in a different setting. They reflect 'cultural values and norms, including assumptions about gender, race and class' and must be read in their cultural and social context (McAdams, 2001, p.101) and are often told and retold as a way of passing on this cultural heritage; for instance in the form of morality fables, success or atrocity tales (Coffey and Atkinson, 1996). The psychologist Bruner (1990), who describes us as 'homo narrans', argues that each culture uses narrative to endow its *canon*, in other words what is expectable and/or usual, with legitimacy and authority and to render departures from the norm comprehensible. Indeed, he suggests that a culture's viability depends on its capacity 'for resolving conflicts, for explicating differences and renegotiating communal meanings' (1990, p.47). It is therefore important to be aware of the story teller's intended audience. Squire, who gathered the narratives of South Africans living with HIV, suggests they were speaking to her and other potential hearers in 'the broader context of contemporary national contests over HIV issues and the continuing global history and politics of the pandemic' (2008, p.45). Similarly, I assume that the stories told by family members in my study must be understood in the context both of Zimbabwean history and politics and that of the countries where they now reside.

 The act of imposing a structure with beginning, middle and end has particular relevance for those suffering displacement or trauma (Fassin et al., 2008, Eastmond, 2007, Ghorashi, 2008, Jackson, 2013, Puvimanasinghe et al., 2015). Indeed some claim it has a therapeutic effect, allowing subjects to give coherence and meaning to events that are outside their control. Jackson (2013) draws on Hannah Arendt's notion that political violence reduces individuals to 'non-entities' to suggest that storytelling offers the opportunity for a reclamation of being. People who have suffered symbolic or material violence and have been silenced, or not heard, thus reclaim the power to speak and act. This 'social act' helps them negotiate the balance between the immediate sphere of family and community – 'where our words carry weight and our presence makes a difference' – and the wider world 'of which we know little and count for nothing' (p.112). However, as Jackson acknowledges, some experiences are too traumatic to put into words. Interviews with families in post-Soviet Russia led Bertaux and Thompson (1997) to view silence as a strategy for survival which is passed on through generations while Gheith (2007) draws on the experience of Gulag survivors to advocate the study of 'non-narrative memory'. Similarly, Frankish and Bradbury, who studied families subjected to violence under South African apartheid, note

that parents transmitted trauma through silence (2012). There are parallels here with Zimbabwe, where an oppressive state rules by fear. When listening to the life stories of my participants, it was therefore important to 'hear' the gaps, hestitations, false starts and inconsistencies. Indeed, as 'told' rather than 'written' narratives, performance was an important part of the process and participants were concerned to make their personal experiences 'tellable' (Ochs, 2006). As part of the audience, I was drawn into the story by the teller's voice intonation, sighs and laughter and non-verbal signals such as teeth-sucking and clicking, as well as rhetorical devices such as change of tense and exclamatory phrases or metaphors. In transcribing the narratives it was important to note these non-verbal cues to aid the analytical process.

3.6   Family maps

In arguing that anthropology relies on an overly linguistic model of culture, Maurice Bloch points to the vast body of knowledge that is 'fundamentally non-linguistic' and 'does not take a sentential logical form' (1991). Similarly, an interest in narrative and autobiography has developed from written texts to a variety of visual media from photograph albums and video diaries to posters and street signs. Although Zimbabwe's political context and the need for anonymity put many of these methods off limits, I wanted to find some form of visual means of understanding participants' experience of 'crisis migration'. I therefore asked them to draw family maps, expecting this would help situate them in the family field, throwing light on the nature of relationships that have become transnational. In other words, I was asking them to tell the story of migration in a non-verbal, non-linear way. This is similar to a technique used in participatory action research, where, for instance, villagers are asked to delineate the boundaries of their community and structure of households. Describing it as 'discursive mapping', Ainslie Yardley uses the metaphor of the London underground map, which does not reflect relative distances to scale but defines the city's boundaries and stations with 'all their iconic resonance and layered meaning' (2008, para.1.1.2.).

Family mapping is also a technique used by psychologists to help clients conceptualise the family. The client is asked to list family members, then place paper tokens indicating male or female according to how close or distant he feels the family member is to him and the process ends with an interview (Levin, 1993). My approach was less proscriptive in that I invited participants to draw the family in whatever way they wished and on most occasions mapping followed the recorded life-story. Presented with an A3 sheet of paper, pencils and crayons, most of them were unsure what to do and whom to include. I suggested they should write the names of people who were 'most important' to them, on the grounds that importance was subjective and could be interpreted materially or symbolically in terms of levels of support, emotional closeness, moral or

cultural influence and encompassed blood and affinal relatives as well as friends. I invited them to use colour to indicate strength of attachment, frequency of contact or geographic location. The next question some of them asked – 'Shall I draw the family as it is now or as it was before?' – was particularly significant because it indicated the realisation that a transformation had taken place. I asked them to draw it as they saw the family now, at the time of our meeting. There was a notable gender and age difference in participants' response to this task. As I first discovered in the pilot study, men were uncomfortable with the idea and reluctant to pick up a pencil. Some simply ignored my request to draw their family while others wrote a list of names. I was left wondering whether they were unused to any sort of visual representation or simply felt it was a childish exercise beneath their dignity. In a few cases where I felt the request would cause offence or embarrassment or through lack of time, I decided not to include the map as part of the research visit.

Another aim was to encourage an imaginative engagement with the project and I hoped it would produce a series of drawings that could be appreciated independently of the transcribed narrative. The result was a rich variety of styles (see Appendix C). One participant placed names in rectangular boxes joined by straight lines, another drew a swirling cluster of ballons, another a set of concentric circles. Some used colour to represent countries of residence, others to indicate closeness of ties, and a few preferred pencil to crayon. Throughout this process I recorded our discussion. Most indicated that blood relatives - particularly parents, siblings and children - were more important to them than others. Ndebele and Shona participants included a wider range of family members than those with European ancestry, focussing on adults and sometimes just putting a number to indicate their children. Divorced women and single parents tended to exclude their ex-partners' relatives. Migrants were more likely to include friends than those who stayed in Zimbabwe. As they drew their maps, they talked about when they last saw each other, how regularly they communicated and by what means, sometimes revealing points of contention in the process. Experience of interviewing has taught me that people talk more freely when engaged in a physical task, whether it is demonstrating a practical skill or simply walking down a street. Thus the act of mapping their family elicited insights that confirmed or in some cases contradicted their narrative, triangulating evidence or prompting further discussion. As well as its intrinsic value as a visual representation, family maps had the practical benefit of helping me work out who was who among a puzzling collection of names[36] and which family members had migrated to which countries. It provided a focus for more detailed discussion and drew out more spontaneous responses than a recorded life-story.

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[36] Ndebele and Shona speakers often have an English name as well as a name in their own language.

3.7   Analysing the data

Taking each family in turn, I used Express Scribe software[37] to listen to and transcribe life stories and conversations recorded during family mapping, conscious that the act of transcription was inevitably an interpretation and distortion of their 'language' (Bourdieu, 1999, Crapanzano, 1984, Plummer, 2001). I categorised family members in terms of generation, age, gender and migration journey in order to identify factors involved in decision-making during 'crisis'. In each family, there were people who stayed in Zimbabwe – 'stayers'; those who moved back and forth across national borders, whom I call 'zig-zag migrants'; those who travelled and stayed in a destination country, in other words 'one-way migrants'; and those who migrated but then returned, or 'returnees'. Some of these were dependents who moved with parents or a spouse, whom I call 'slip-stream migrants'. Although most migrants left Zimbabwe in the space of a few years, some planned their departure by arranging student or work visas while others left in haste seeking asylum. A further distinguishing category was therefore the date of their first migration journey and legal status in the country of destination. Since their recollection of events was likely to be coloured by current circumstances it was also important to note their country location and status at the time of our meeting (see Appendix D).

Content analysis was an organic process which evolved in the course of listening to recordings, examining maps and reading transcripts. I marked passages that dealt specifically with the two central themes of 'crisis' and 'family', noting linguistic commonalities and drawing up sub-categories. For instance under the heading 'crisis' I put 'economy', 'political violence', 'HIV/Aids', 'declining standards' and 'dispersal'; under the family heading I put 'family role', 'foundational story', 'values' and 'reciprocal ties', marking relevant passages in the transcripts and checking my ethnographic notes for non-verbal clues or remarks that had been made in un-recorded conversations. On a whiteboard I listed family members noting their gender, generation and family role, separated into categories according to their migration journey; in other words 'stayers', 'one-way migrants', 'zig-zag migrants' and 'slipstream migrants'.

The next stage was to identify 'turning points' in the narrative when subjects were prompted to re-evaluate their constructed selves and the meaning of past experiences or forced to make a life-changing decision (Brettell, 2002, Denzin, 1989, 2001, Mishler, 2006). As Denzin suggests, these 'epiphanies' occur in 'those problematic interactional situations where the individual confronts and experiences a crisis' (2001, p.37). In my own analysis I focussed on revelatory moments when public, external 'crisis' turned into internal 'crisis' at an intimate, domestic level. These were often

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[37] This software allows you to play interviews at variable speeds but does not produce a written transcript.

marked by silence, a change in pace or voice tone, switches of pronoun or tense, exclamations and questions, teeth sucking, emphasis and multiple repetitions. Since turning points also occur when an event leads to a resolution of 'crisis' or a change for the better, I noted all moments when the speaker invested the narrative with heightened emotion, whether expressing trauma and despair or triumph and elation. I used coloured pens to distinguish passages in the transcripts which conveyed negative or positive emotions such as fear, dismay and sadness or affection, relief and joy. After completing this analysis of each set of family narratives, I re-read the complete body of transcripts to identify common or recurring themes which had emerged from all family stories, such as 'self-reliance', 'survival strategy', 'silence', 'separation' and 'abjection'.

The final task before writing was to compare and contrast families. For this I returned to the whiteboard which I divided into three columns headed 'Fungai's family', 'Dwana's family' and 'Diane's family' with thematic headings down the right hand side against which I noted relevant quotations with the name of the speaker and a page reference for the transcript. I repeated this process several times with different side headings for the themes I had identified (see Appendix E). In writing about the families, I have kept the quotations relatively short but have added three longer extracts in an appendix (see Appendices F-H).

3.8   Presenting the families

The three families who agreed to take part share Zimbabwean nationality and have experienced a tumultuous period in their country's history but would be unlikely companions in anything but a piece of academic research. Reflecting the increasingly 'feminised' nature of Zimbabwe's 'crisis migration', key participants are all women in the middle of three generations who have acted independently of fathers and husbands. They left Zimbabwe between 2001 and 2003 in response to 'crisis' and subsequently endured a period of separation from one or more children. As it turned out, all three had secretarial or professional qualifications, a history of unhappy marriage, and were active Christians. Two of them were HIV positive. In other respects, however, their trajectories differed widely, largely as a result of their social and ethnic backgrounds. Fungai's family belongs to the majority Shona group and is extensive, relatively affluent, well educated and upwardly mobile; Dwana's family is Kalanga – a group affiliated to the country's second largest group, the Ndebele, and lacks the financial and social status of the other families; Diane's family is of white settler stock, used to the material and symbolic privileges which this brings but now part of a dwindling and beleaguered minority. Each family thus occupies a different position historically and politically and, as I will show in the following chapters, this is reflected in the varied ways individual members respond to 'crisis'.

Chapter 3

So how can I do justice to their uniqueness as individuals and groups while drawing out common themes that help us understand the nature of their experience? My first task is to introduce the reader to people who have become familiar to me, yet whose names I must change and whose rich life stories must inevitably be reduced to a few anecdotes and quotations. I appreciate the level of concentration it will require for the reader to grasp the complex webs of blood and affinal relationships. Hoping to make the task easier, I have written a chapter for each family, followed by a discussion in which I compare and contrast experiences.. I have named each chapter after the person here in the UK who acted as prime gate-keeper. After introducing the families through their 'maps', I draw on life-narratives and my own ethnographic observations to discuss the meaning of family to my participants, the importance of family 'culture' in shaping their interpretation of 'crisis' and the way in which gendered and age-related status and roles within the family help determine response. I further consider ways in which 'crisis migration' changes the shape of the family – the main safety-net in times of trouble – as ties of affection and duty are reinterpreted and renegotiated.

Chapter 4, *Thwarted progress: Fungai's family*, provides the bulk of research material – both because of the size of the family network and its accessibility. Perhaps because of their social status and education, most of them were confident and open and we achieved an ease and familiarity that made my work pleasurable. Chapter 5, *Re-awakened trauma: Dwana's family*, focuses on the Ndebele family of someone whom I have known for some years and consider a friend. Although the siblings I met tended to be somewhat bemused, if not suspicious, of my interest in their family and guarded in their response, Dwana and I talked regularly over many months and she gave me invaluable insights into her family's culture. Chapter 6*, Lost entitlement: Diane's family*, is also limited in scope, partly because this white Zimbabwean family is comparatively small, and because of Daphne's own tentative role within the extended network. However, the perspective of this 'settler' family is an interesting counterpoint to the others.

Chapter 4:   Thwarted progress- Fungai's family
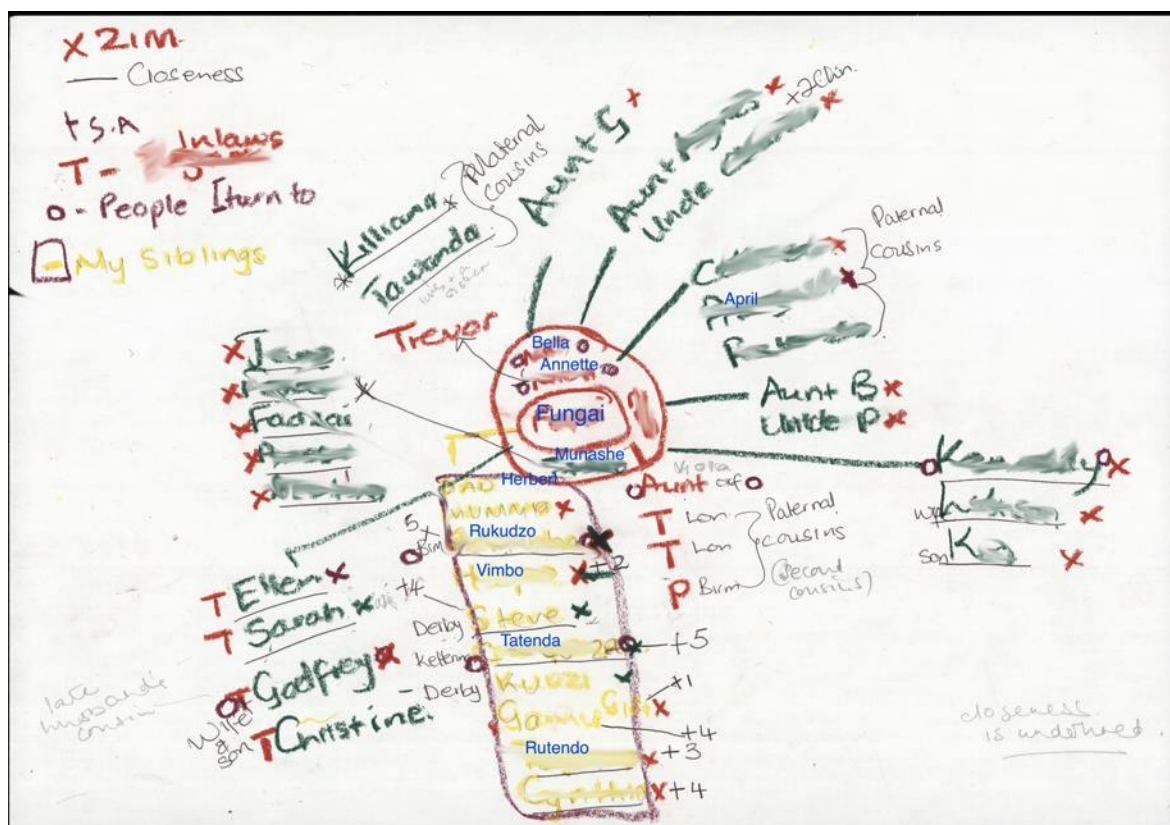
Figure 2 Fungai's family 'map'

 [Names blurred or changed to protect identities]

4.1   The Baobab tree

On completion, Fungai's family map was similar in shape to an African baobab tree, with a stout trunk and halo of green shoots exuberantly filling the page. At the heart of this tree she wrote her name in red, circling it and setting it within a wider circle in which she added the names of her four children – the 'nuclear' family. The supporting trunk (thick enough in the actual baobab to store water in times of drought) was a ladder of names written in yellow – 'Dad' and her late 'Mumma' at the top followed by her nine younger siblings. The branches extending to names in green indicated her daughter-in-law and grandchildren, four aunts, three uncles, five cousins, four second cousins, two sisters-in-law, her late husband's cousin and his wife. As an afterthought, prompted by her daughter Annette, she added the name of Annette's fiancé. Altogether Fungai listed 42 members of her extended family, with just a number to indicate their children - the nephews, nieces and cousins' offspring. The complete family, she said, would overspill her A3 sheet of paper but I asked her to confine herself to those people who mattered to her at this point of her life.

In 2014 I met Fungai's daughter Bella at a British Zimbabwe Society conference in Oxford and she expressed interest in my project. Her enthusiasm must have rubbed off on her mother because Fungai agreed to share her story and we spent a companionable two days at the house in a Preston suburb which she shared with her eldest daughter Annette and her teenage son. She was studying part time for a social work degree and, as a fellow mature student, understood the research task I was engaged in so there was an ease and openness between us that established a good base for subsequent research. Over the following few months she put me in touch with others in her large extended family – members of the majority Shona group, middle class and upwardly mobile. Most of them greeted me, as she had done, with an openness and warmth born of self-assurance. The following chapter is based on the life stories of eighteen members spanning three generations, aged from 81 to 19 years old (see Figure 3).

Fungai herself came to the UK in 2001 to get life-saving treatment for HIV/AIDS and was eventually granted indefinite leave to remain in 2007. In the UK, I also met her father, Herbert, two of her sisters, Rukudzo and Tatenda, with their partners and children, and their aunt Celia who arrived in 1969 to study nursing. Herbert, a staunch opponent of ZANU-PF, fled Zimbabwe in 2002 in fear of his life and was granted 'refugee' status. Tatenda trained as a nurse in the UK and had permanent residence but Rukudzo had only limited leave to remain.[38] In Zimbabwe, I visited Fungai's paternal uncle Anesu with his wife, her aunt Grace and younger sister Rutendo – all of whom stayed 'home' throughout the most troubled years. I also met her first-born son, Munashe, who migrated to the UK in 2002 but returned four years later and was setting off for Canada, and her sister Vimbo who zig-zagged between Zimbabwe, Botswana and Sudan before returning. Finally, in South Africa, I stayed with Fungai's cousin April and her family, who ran a successful business there.

Although the lives of these participants have been significantly changed by Zimbabwe's 'crisis', they have taken very different paths. Some migrated at the beginning of the economic downturn in anticipation of worse to come; some hung on till escalating problems prompted them to move, and others stayed. Those like Fungai and her father Herbert migrated because their lives were in danger; while others, like Munashe and April, saw an opportunity for advancement by moving elsewhere. In seeking to understand these variations of response I have examined their narratives

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[38] The UK grants indefinite leave to remain to those who have successfully applied for asylum or who have lived in the country for five years or more. Rukudzo was granted discretionary leave for a limited period because there were compelling reasons for her to stay in Britain but she did not have refugee status. See GREAT BRITAIN, H. O. 2015. *Asylum Policy Instruction: Discretionary Leave* [Online]. London: The Stationery Office. Available:
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/460712/Discretionary_Leave_2__v7_0.pdf [Accessed].

both as a linked family group and as individual stories. I start by looking at the way participants present family in its political and social context, for instance through foundational stories. Next I explore how they make meaning out of events at a macro level and weave it into a collective and personal history. I argue that, for this upwardly mobile family, the 'crisis' hit home when it thwarted their progression. Taking individual stories and comparing them according to differences of gender, generation and life-stage, I then reflect on participants' responses to the national situation and motivations for staying or migrating. Finally, I compare the way they interpret migration and its impact on the family.
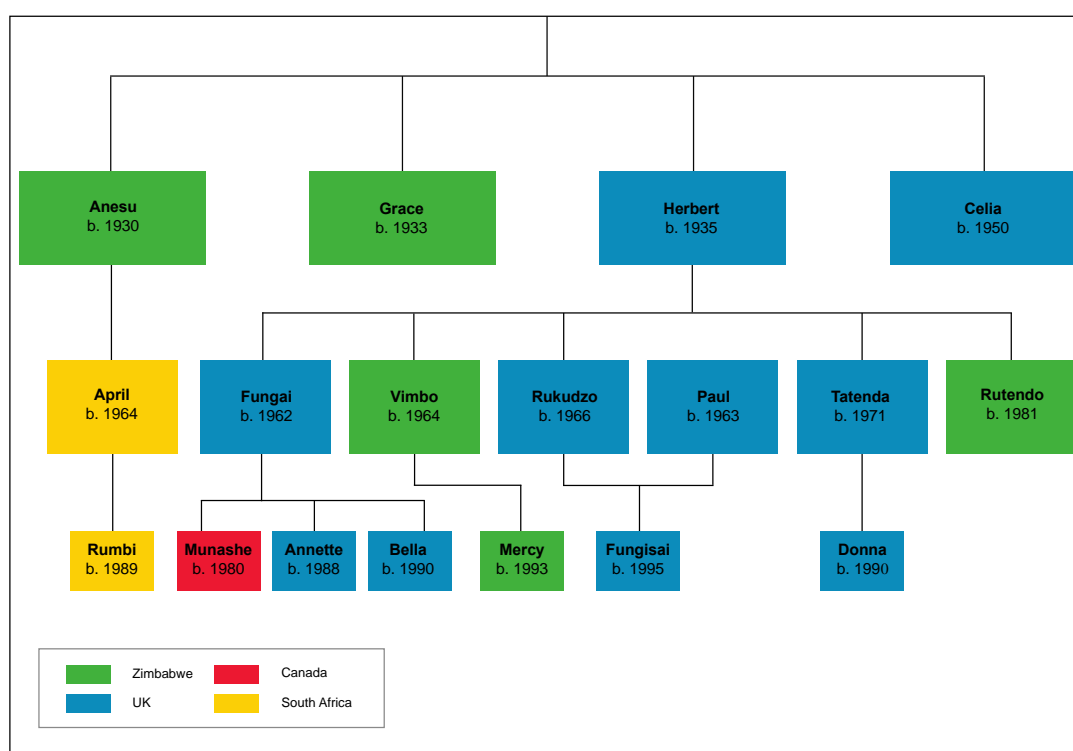
Figure 3 Members of Fungai's family who contributed to this research.

[Names are changed to protect identities and the colour key indicates countries of residence]

4.2   An 'African' family

Fungai's blood relations and most of her affinal relations speak both Shona and standard English – a duality which reflects their colonial heritage but also their status as middle-class, educated Zimbabweans (Makoni et al., 2007). Although they did not make an issue of ethnicity, it is significant that no-one I spoke to had married outside the Shona group and any references to Ndebele people tended to be negative. They described the family in terms of its size and unity - as 'massive', with 'loads of cousins', and as 'very, very close'. Fungai's generation of the family, like that of her parents, comprises groups of up to eleven siblings spanning an age range of 20 years,

though not all share the same father and mother. However, the third generation of so-called 'born-frees' (born after Independence in 1980) tends to be clustered in groups of three or four siblings. Some family members stressed the cultural aspect of this extended network, no doubt conscious that as a white Westerner I would be used to a different, nuclear model. Highlighting the fact that there is no distinction in the Shona language between cousin and brother, niece and daughter, Fungai's younger sister Rutendo explained her relationship with her nephew who is a year older than her: 'He's my son, the African way', laughing at her own use of convention. Another sister, Rukudzo, described their mother as 'very kind and embracing and typical African mother'. When marking the names of her nephews and nieces on her family map, she said:

> If there's need we just have to rise up to the occasion. No thinking about it. They need looking after and we have to be the social services. The safety net is usually with the family.

All the participants situated themselves within this group, seeing nothing contradictory in receiving family help while at the same time boasting their own agency and independence. They took it for granted that they should look after each other's children, share their homes and offer financial support to those in need, particularly junior siblings. So, for instance, Fungai looked after her younger sister Tatenda while she was attending school in Harare, and in turn Tatenda sheltered Fungai when she left her adulterous husband. Their uncle Anesu explained that he was receiving financial help from his younger sister Celia who was in Britain, stressing values of reciprocity:

> She is also helping me because I educated her, so she sometimes sends me a dollar, ten dollars or twenty and so on.

Moreover, the family, as Fungai pointed out, was the primary conduit for transmitting cultural values:

> It just kind of moulds people's characters to a very great extent because you are learning from people around you. Not that you are learning the do as I say but rather the do as I do, watching the people around you – how they handle life – all different adults around you; and you can actually choose to say 'Hum! I don't want to be like uncle so and so', or, 'I don't want to be like aunt so and so'.

The embodiment of family is the rural home of Mhondoro in the flat farmlands of Mashonaland East, 70 miles from Harare. This is the site of the family's collective memory, where three generations are buried and people gather round the fire on holidays and special occasions. The custodian is Fungai's uncle Anesu, the oldest member of the family born in 1930, proud owner of a single-storey house with a garden of mango and avocado trees overlooking parched fields.

Opposite, a track leads to a more traditional homestead with thatched rondavels[39] belonging to Fungai's half brother Blessing, and nearby is the original family home recently renovated by her aunt Celia, a retired academic in Oxfordshire. This is also the site of the family burial ground, where Anesu went to seek his parents' blessing before going to South Africa recently for a hip operation. For young and old, Mhondoro represents communal life, companionship and security. When the first two generations were growing up, many neighbours and fellow primary school pupils shared the same surname. Celia talked about a community of people who took turns to look after children while their parents were in the fields. Even the youngest generation, who spent more time in Harare, had fond memories of country life. Donna, born 40 years after her great-aunt and now living in the UK, said: 'I actually miss it sometimes. I just sit here and start thinking about what we used to do when we lived with granddad and grandma'.

It is likely, of course, that there was a degree of idealisation in their portrayal of the extended family, and indeed some hinted that not everything was entirely rosy. For instance, Rukudzo referred to it as '*like* one big happy family' [my own emphasis] before repeating the word 'happy' with a questioning, sceptical, tone. She then explained that, following Shona custom, her father sent her to live with her paternal uncle and his new wife which led to confusion about her identity: 'because when I lived with Uncle Steven I felt at home but still I wasn't their child'. Perhaps this sense of isolation gave her a more critical perspective than her siblings. Another more negative aspect of Zimbabwean family life, frequently mentioned in conversations with women, was male infidelity, symbolized by the so-called 'small house'. Anesu's wife Mary waited till he left the room before pointing to the brick building (literally a small house) next door housing his second 'wife', who used to work as their maid. She told me in a whisper how upset she was when he started the relationship. Fungai said her father, Herbert, had children outside marriage and talked of her husband's adulterous affairs. Her daughter Annette, initially left in the family home when her mother went to the UK, complained about relatives who moved in and 'overstayed'. She said, 'It was just awful just having too many people in the house', hinting that they took advantage of family ties. Clearly some relatives were 'closer' than others. Fungai and her sisters made a distinction between themselves and two 'half' brothers. Her niece Donna, Tatenda's daughter, complained that she and her brother felt different from their cousins because they lived in the rural area with their grandparents while the cousins had 'a better life' in town: 'I felt like they were more closer to each other and me and my brother were just there on the outskirts'.

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[39] The rondavel is a traditional round building with a conical thatched or tin roof.

4.3   'I will do it myself'

The family's foundational story, as related by Celia, conveys social status, independence and a willingness to defy convention. In early colonial days, her grandfather (Fungai's great-grandfather) was on an errand for the local chief when he was allegedly killed by a lion. The purpose of his mission, so the story goes, was to make a deal with the Europeans, which some community members disapproved of, and there was a suspicion of murder. Celia's widowed grandmother was left to raise five children on her own and, although tradition dictated that she should marry a brother-in-law, she insisted on staying single:

> She said, 'You can all jump, I'm doing it'. They said to her, 'Well we won't help you to raise the children' and she said, 'I will do it myself'.

Celia's father, who was born in 1900, went to a Methodist missionary school, financing his further education by carpentry and building work. Her mother taught women in the community how to bake and sew and the couple sent all their children to school, even though they were ridiculed for wasting their money on educating the girls as well as the boys. Within the family, education was seen as the key to self-reliance and self-improvement – signifiers of moral and intellectual 'worth' which is a recurring theme in the narratives of almost every family member. Celia said:

> I remember mum and dad just saying – particularly dad – 'When you've got your education you'll always be employable. You will always be able to feed yourself and your children; that's what I'm interested in. You won't have to knock on someone else's door to ask for a cup of sugar or a glass of milk'. And that's how I have lived my life and I expected my siblings to do the same.

The admonition to 'feed yourself and your children' indicates a reluctance to seek outside help but also a pride in not needing others, in other words a signifier of exclusiveness.

Education and the Christian faith were two guiding principles which contributed to family success. In what was then Rhodesia under colonial rule, a Christian education was the path to literacy and prestige although only available to a select few (Ranger, 1995, p.65). Ignoring the fact that missionary teaching was culturally imperialistic, Anesu defended the colonial legacy: 'Everybody liked the missionaries, you know. Missionaries were very good people; they helped us; they educated us; opened a lot of schools'. No doubt this reflected the fact that he had done well from the system by becoming a head teacher and church elder. His wife Mary and most of his seven siblings and their partners were also teachers under colonial rule so it was little wonder that their children started their life stories by listing their academic achievements. This theme of self-reliance gained through education and employment was imbued in the family culture. Fungai's sister Rukudzo said that it arose 'from a bit of individualism - that you've got to stand up for yourself, you've got to look after yourself, unless you *can't* '. Both Herbert and Anesu saw

independence in political terms, emphasising their long-standing opposition to President Mugabe's ruling party. However, Fungai and her sisters in the UK imbued it with feminist overtones, priding themselves on their financial independence and ability to raise children single-handedly. Fungai kicked her adulterous husband out of the family home and said she was doing fine on her own, 'because with men, oh gosh, those men are like children. They don't want to work; they don't want to do anything and they're so demanding'. Her younger sister Tatenda, who fell pregnant while still at elementary school and later lost her job when the economy collapsed, described the moment when she no longer relied on other family members to support her. She managed to set up a street kitchen serving sadza[40] in a high density suburb.

> I used to rent one room then I managed to move into two rooms; then I managed to move into three rooms; then I managed to live in a full house whereby I was able even to look after my brother … and when my other siblings would come they would have their own bedroom to sleep, which is very nice.

The size of accommodation marked growing economic success and was particularly significant because it enabled her to shelter her siblings, thus indicating moral worth and increasing her standing in the family.

Another mark of status was mobility. Despite their professed attachment to the rural 'homeland', most working-age family members had homes in Harare or elsewhere, regarding an urban life-style as a sign of 'modernity' and self-improvement. Tatenda attended high school in the capital, where she felt at ease 'because I think within my family there was that nature of understanding the urban views, the urban life'. Before the economic crash of 1997, some family members readily moved round the country in pursuit of work and many saw travel as a way of broadening horizons and enhancing social position. As the first to move 'overseas', Celia laid a trail for others to follow thirty years later when the situation in Zimbabwe deteriorated, by which time she had achieved considerable professional success so was in a strong position to help.

In analysing participants' narratives I will argue that family values of self-reliance and self-improvement were instrumental in guiding their response to national events, in that the 'crisis without' only became a 'personal crisis' when it threatened their ability to stand on their own two feet and help others. In the following section, I will focus on the way Fungai and her relatives interpreted Zimbabwe's national 'crisis' and how they made sense of a situation that must often have seemed chaotic and beyond their control.

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[40] Sadza is cooked cornmeal and is the staple food in Zimbabwe.

4.4   Shaping and interpreting national 'crisis'

Reflecting the influence of their Christian upbringing with its parable of the pilgrim's progress, Fungai and her family presented their life stories in a moral context as a series of opportunities and setbacks on a journey whose goal remained uncertain. Within these stories they described a dramatic series of trials and tribulations, which tested their moral 'worth' as measured by the standards of Shona and family culture. Brought up to value self-reliance and to strive for self-improvement, Fungai's sister Rukudzo explained that one of the worst effects of political instability and tension was the loss of autonomy:

> You just feel helpless and like a victim and it's got far reaching consequences because you become a victim in your thinking – fear, tchip,[41] you know, even when you are not supposed to be fearful. You just yearn for peace. You just say, 'Anything for peace!' You become a timid person.

Participants used particular anecdotes to show their strength in overcoming adversity or, less frequently, their victimhood. Older men in the family like the brothers Anesu and Herbert were more likely to present themselves in heroic or leadership roles than women, who in turn were more likely to emphasise their Christian faith and the emotional support they received from each other. There was a contrast between those who had remained in Zimbabwe and recounted their lives 'flatly' - as a progression without significant moments of discovery or dilemma, and those who had left, or left and subsequently returned. The migrants tended to divide their narratives into two distinct chapters - a 'before migration' and 'after', using change of pitch or tense to highlight significant moments, or turning points, when they were stopped in their tracks and forced to reassess past and future. Some of these turning points preceded their eventual flight from Zimbabwe but others involved migration and experience in receiving countries.

Fungai's sister Rutendo, who stayed in Zimbabwe, was one of only four members of the family who used the word 'crisis' to describe a distinct period of events on the national stage.

> Things were tough. Like I was saying, it was drastic change, each and every day. You'd wake up the next day, things have gone up; there's nothing on the shelves; there's no money. Crisis, I'm saying; it was a crisis.

For the most part, others referred to it obliquely, for instance as 'deterioration' or a 'decline in standards', through phrases such as 'things were turning, were taking a wrong turn', 'things were going bad around that time'; or through anecdotes about empty shops or night time attacks by ZANU-PF gangs. Their narratives comprise remembered fragments which intertwine public and

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[41] When transcribing I use 'tchip' to convey the sound of sucking teeth, usually a sign of disapproval or dislike.

private worlds. So Fungai, for instance, told the story of her HIV diagnosis and her husband's illness against a background of inflated medical costs and collapsing public services, while her sister Rukudzo set the disruption of her successful career in the context of economic collapse. Relatives in Zimbabwe were reluctant to talk about events on the national stage, or did so in hushed tones – a sign that 'crisis' is often what *cannot* be spoken or can only be hinted at through a gesture or facial expression. Rutendo, who acted as gatekeeper to the family there, quizzed me at great length about my research and how it would be used before agreeing to meet. Her elderly aunt Grace, who had been sitting reading her bible on the doorstep when I arrived at her home in Harare, glanced anxiously at the street outside before telling me in a whisper that there was no freedom in Zimbabwe – 'You cannot say what you want'. Later she returned to this theme, telling me she did not mix with her neighbours and never talked about politics for fear of being 'lifted', in other words arrested. 'Be silent! . . . Don't tempt; do your own job; don't put yourself in the fire, not in the fire.' These family members were more likely to play down the political aspects of the 'crisis' than those in the UK. So, for instance, Rutendo talked about her father Herbert leaving the country in 2002 without making any reference to the fact that his political activities at election time had put him in danger:

> 'It was normal. I think it was a transition at the time. I didn't see any problem. Of course I would miss him. I miss him. I love to be with him, sit down, we talk and chat, but there are some circumstances [pause]; it's beyond my control.'

By referring to her lack of control, or powerlessness, however, she undermined the suggestion of normality. Asked why it was not safe for her father to stay, she responded, 'The political thing, tchip, I'm not going to dwell much on that'. Her uncle Anesu was the only family member in Zimbabwe prepared overtly to talk politics, telling me that all but five members of the family supported the Movement for Democratic Change in its opposition to the government and that, as a consequence, 'during those early days it was really very dangerous, very, very dangerous'.

These participants in Zimbabwe were more inclined to talk about economic problems they encountered and the breakdown in public services. The most graphic account was given by Fungai's neice, Mercy, who was a young teenager living in Harare in 2008, one of the worst years

of 'crisis',[42] while her mother Vimbo was working in Sudan. As well as food shortages, she alluded

to the teacher's strike,[43] nightly political rallies and an outbreak of cholera[44]:

> Sometimes you wouldn't get bread, even soap. Soap now was flooding the black market
> but in the shops you wouldn't get those basic commodities. And the money, ah it lost
> value … Aye, it was tough; the economy was bad. We had no power. Sometimes we
> would go without power for a week or so. Water was available but it was dirty; that's
> when the cholera outbreak came in. For some time the water would be dirty but I think
> it was worse. That's why people had to get sick and they died … Remember I told you
> the clinic was just close to our house; so you'd be going to the shops and then just look
> on the sidewalk, you'd find that white powder, the powder they sprinkled when
> someone just vomited; so it would show you that people were just sick, vomiting on the
> way to the clinic.

Mercy's perception of 'crisis' was summed up in these images of desperate shoppers, filth and

contaminated water. In comparison, her experiences of being summoned at night to political

rallies and escaping from her house when it was attacked by ZANU-PF supporters, were recounted

briefly, as if in headlines, with an air of fear tinged with excitement:

> It was terrible; sometimes they would even come in the night and pick us and take us to
> go and sing [chuckles] and for us it would be fun because we were young so it was fun to
> go out and sing during the night.

> People even came to our gate, they were violent guys. The fence was that high but we
> had to jump over to avoid these people hurting us.

Interestingly, the accounts given by her cousins in the UK had the same dramatic brevity. Bella,

who was eight or nine years old at the time, remembered being tear-gassed when she got caught

up with protestors on the way home from school in Harare. Annette, two years older, recalled

lines of people at the passport office: 'There was panic; everybody wanted to leave … I think

people knew they were going to starve basically, and also the threats, the violence'. Perhaps for

this youngest generation of the family, who were protected from its worst effects, 'crisis' was in a

sense thrilling as well as terrifying.

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[42] The 2008 presidential election led to a wave of political violence and a further deterioration in the economy with an acute shortage of basic commodities including the staple, maize-meal. See MUKWEDEYA, T. 2012. Enduring the crisis: Remittances and household livelihood strategies in Glen Norah, Harare. *In:* CHIUMBU, S. & MUSEMWA, M. (eds.) *Crisis! What Crisis? The multiple dimensions of the Zimbabwean crisis.* Cape Town: Human Sciences Research Council.

[43] Between 2004 and 2008, 45,000 teachers left the profession while others resorted to absenteeism to engage in other forms of income generation, reducing the education system to a point of near total collapse. Ibid.

[44] The cholera epidemic of 2008/9 was the result of water shortages, which forced people in townships to resort to using contaminated water from rivers and shallow wells. Around 4,000 people died and 100,000 were infected. See MUSEMWA, M. 2012. Perpetuating colonial legacies: The post-colonial state, water crises and the outbreak of disease in Harare, Zimbabwe, 1980-2009. *In:* CHIUMBU, S. & MUSEMWA, M. (eds.) *Crisis! What Crisis? The multiple dimensions of the Zimbabwean crisis.* Cape Town: Human Sciences Research Council.

The only participant who avoided making any comments on Zimbabwe's 'crisis' was Anesu's daughter April, a business woman who had in a sense exploited the situation and even done well from it. She invited me to stay with her and her husband Samuel, a company director, at their six-bedroomed home with terrace and swimming pool in South Africa. Unlike members of the family who made no secret of their opposition to the ruling government, April described herself emphatically as 'very unpolitical', and scarcely referred to Zimbabwe's problems in her narrative. Dwelling on her professional life, she recounted how she set up a bus company in Zimbabwe with her husband Samuel and owned a nursery school. They were 'comfortable' and the decision to come to South Africa was simply pragmatic:

> A: It was Samuel's move. The company he was working for in Zimbabwe, an opportunity just arose and he was offered a company in South Africa and, oh, he went for it! That's how we moved to South Africa. I was very excited [laughs] I was very excited just to be away from Zimbabwe – wow! So in January 2003 we moved to South Africa.
>
> J: Why were you excited to be away from Zimbabwe?
>
> A: It was new and it was going to be adventurous. Just to be away from it all, experience something different and see how it is out there.

When I suggested things were not good in Zimbabwe at the time, she denied this - 'They were still good; things weren't bad at all', before conceding that they were 'beginning to go downhill'. Similarly her daughter, Rumbi, who lived round the corner in Johannesburg with her young son and worked in the family business, played down the severity of the situation: 'I don't necessarily look at it as a crisis but more a bump in the road'. This positive gloss on the situation was entirely consistent with both women's up-beat, confident attitude but perhaps it also reflected reality since their social and economic capital simply cushioned them from the worst effects of national 'crisis'.

In narrating their stories, participants used conventional biographical techniques, beginning with the date and place of their birth and following what Brockmeier (2000) calls 'autobiographical time' with its classical modalities of past, present and future. In the case of older family members, however, memories of past events bled into the present, or more recent events revived the past, and the two became confused. Thus, a question to Fungai's father Herbert about his departure for the UK in 2002 elicited a response about threats of violence two decades earlier. Although, in each case, participants chose those fragments of the past that helped explain where they were now in the present, they left their interlocutor in suspense. Instead of the neat resolution expected from a fictional narrative, these stories of 'real life' were inevitably inconclusive. Narrators' uncertainty about the future reflected an atmosphere of nervous anticipation in the wider Zimbabwean community and a sense that, for most people, the 'crisis' was far from over. This can be best illustrated by the case of Fungai's first-born son Munashe. He was to be my point

of contact in Zimbabwe, introducing me to other family members, but at our first meeting it was clear he had other things on his mind. With some embarrassment, he said he had just got his plane ticket to Canada and would be off in two days, explaining that he was unemployed and unable to buy clothes for his three young children or pay school fees. We went to see his elderly aunt Grace and, after telling her about his imminent journey, he knelt at her feet with arms outstretched as she prayed for his safety and blessed him. This was Munashe's third migratory journey (he had spent time in the UK and a shorter spell in the US) and I realized that from his point of view the 'crisis' was here and now.

Out of the family, he and his aunt Vimbo had suffered the biggest decline in income. Before the economic crash Vimbo was working for an international bank and her husband was a teacher. Now she was unemployed and unable to pay university fees for their 21-year-old daughter, Mercy, who slept on a mattress in a corner of the kitchen and whose only occupation was a part-time music course. Although Mercy believed 'things would get better along the way', she felt this might not be possible without leaving Zimbabwe as so many of her peers had done. To express her frustration, she launched into a performance of imaginary encounters:

> I have some former classmate of mine; sometimes I meet them just on the road or in town and I'm like, 'Hi! Hey you're looking smart', and she tells you, 'Ah, how can I be smart when I'm staying here? I'm staying in SA [South Africa]; I'm staying in Namibia; I'm staying in the UK; I'm coming from America'; you know; and you're shocked. And even things are getting worse by the way.

Other relatives in Zimbabwe recounted tales of daily hardship and continuing political tension. Rutendo complained her life was 'on hold': 'We are still in transition. We don't really know'. Her uncle Anesu said he was not very hopeful about the future 'because people are not seeing the light. It's still gloomy . . . I don't know how we are going but as long as we have this gentleman[45] leading we won't go very far'. It is possible that Zimbabweans have got used to describing economic woes, particularly in front of 'westerners' like myself. Some of their relatives in the UK criticized what they saw as a new climate of 'victimhood' – a reverse of the self-reliance they aspired to. As an outsider, I was uncertain whether to take statements about their 'suffering' as expressions of personal experience or generalisations. For example, Anesu's wife Mary told me that three of their six children, including April in South Africa, were employed. Yet Anesu gave a totally different impression:

> They went through form four easily and some to the university but they are not working after university education. They are just walking in the streets; come back to us – 'Mai

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[45] The black Zimbabweans I met tended to avoid naming Robert Mugabe, preferring to use euphemisms, whereas white Zimbabweans often referred to him by his surname.

[mother], we have no money.' We say, 'We have no money either', so things are not easy. I don't know how far we will go.

Although free from the daily insecurity experienced by relatives in Zimbabwe, family members who had migrated felt worried and responsible for those 'left behind' and were equally uncertain about their own future. In South Africa, Anesu's daughter April had permanent residence but was aware of increasing xenophobia: 'The people they always see us as taking their businesses, taking their jobs'. Fungai and her sisters in the UK felt that their dreams of a permanent home-coming were unlikely to be fulfilled because they saw no end to Zimbabwe's political and economic problems. Rukudzo was still in limbo, without full legal rights in the UK but reluctant to leave a place where there were 'more opportunities':

> Maybe things will get better in Zimbabwe but as of now, if you can't pay for a child's school fees, tchip, what posterity is there for you? If you can't educate your children, I mean especially with my grandfather's legacy?

With her use of rhetorical questions and reference to inheritance, she indicated that the 'crisis' would never be over so long as the family were prevented from fulfilling expectations of intellectual and social achievement.

In the next section, I will focus on participants' position in the family hierarchy as defined by age and gender, for instance, to suggest that their different roles and responsibilities have a direct bearing on their response to national events. Within their narratives I highlight turning points - moments when external events become 'critical' or 'insupportable' and a life-choice has to be made.

4.5   Family roles

For a family used to social status and privilege and expected to continue on an upward trajectory through education and enterprise, the rapid deterioration in living standards and sudden curtailment of opportunities for advancement were a bitter blow. Of all participants, only April continued to progress materially and socially. Others saw their options close one by one as state and economy shrank or, in Fungai's case, as her health grew worse. Those who crossed borders can all be described as 'crisis migrants' in that their motivation was survival. However, Fungai's father, Herbert, was the only one who had to leave in extreme haste when he was interrogated and threatened by ZANU-PF supporters, while for others there was a degree of choice at least in the timing of migration.

To understand these variations we need to look more closely at the individual life-trajectories of family members, their gendered responsibilities and the status accorded to them by age, seniority

and generation. It is clear that men and women responded differently as did the seniors and juniors of a generation; mothers with sole responsibility for their children had different motivations from those who were also wives; young adults and children responded differently from their parents.

4.5.1   Elders

Both Fungai and her uncle Anesu had a special sense of responsibility as the eldest of numerous siblings. Because of gendered cultural norms, Anesu interpreted this as authority and reputation whereas Fungai saw it in moral terms. Although unhappily married, she maintained conventions of respectability by looking after her sick husband. She crossed borders to fulfil her responsibilities while her uncle remained in the family 'home'. At the start of his life-story, Anesu asserted his superior status as 'the oldest' of eight children and 'rural head' of his district. His narrative, like that of his brother Herbert, was largely an account of personal achievements. He was a 'good' student, then a teacher who was 'promoted to go and head', returning every weekend to his family home to grow and sell crops. 'I accumulated a bit of money. That's why we were able to build this home.' He also described himself as a fearless opponent of the ruling government, who was 'so bold' in openly supporting the MDC. He said many neighbours supported him 'because they know I'm better upstairs' and contrasted his diplomacy and cunning with Herbert's 'provocative' and 'outspoken' behaviour. Furthermore, he presented himself as instrumental in getting his brother to safety, saying, 'Some people wanted to kill him, so we arranged for him to leave the country'; yet he was entirely absent from Herbert's version of the story. Explaining his own decision to stay in Zimbabwe, Anesu again stressed his importance and seniority both in the family and community:

> Since I was the oldest in the family I didn't want to leave these things; to whom? And at this time I am the senior chap in the area, so I don't feel like going to work outside Zimbabwe. I still want to help all the people.

Perhaps the 'things' he was reluctant to leave were material possessions but this was an implicit reminder of his guardianship of the family home and stewardship of its traditions and values. In contrast to earlier references to the financial support he received from relatives, this was a way of re-asserting his status as someone who had the power to help others.

In the second generation of participants, Fungai had a similarly important role as the oldest of nine 'same mother, same father' siblings, but tended to interpret this as a responsibility to her juniors:

> I think, despite the fact I had a child when I was young, I've always been very responsible. I've always kind of looked out for my siblings. I always looked after my

> siblings financially, buying clothes for them. It was me who knew it's Christmas time; I would bring them all to Harare, going to Barbers,[46] and I would take them to do Christmas shopping and then send them back to my parents.

The reference to Christmas, a time of traditional family gatherings, implies that her responsibility had a moral as well as financial dimension and Fungai made it clear that she associated generosity with worldly success. Describing her wealthy uncle Steven as 'a born businessman', she said 'I think the thing that makes him successful is that he's very generous'. Her own largesse gave her status in the family and was acknowledged by younger sisters. Fungai told a survivor's tale of battling against the odds and succeeding. She continued to work after marrying and having three more children and, when the price of basic commodities soared, maintained her independence by starting a knitwear business. By this time, her husband was dying from HIV/AIDS and she had the immediate responsibility of caring for him and the children while struggling to pay for medication that was becoming prohibitively expensive. In 2001, when she saw things 'were taking a wrong turn and I had to do something', she began making regular trips to South Africa to sell goods, even though her in-laws criticised her for leaving her sick husband:

> When the sun sets, it's me who the children will ask, 'What shall we cook?' Therefore I have to do it.

It was only at the end of that year that, widowed and in poor health, she decided to accept her brother's offer of a plane ticket to the UK where her mother, two siblings and her first-born son Munashe were already living.[47] She took her youngest child but left her two school-age daughters behind.

Although many migration scholars view the migratory journey as the crucial moment of disruption, Fungai's story shows that this is not necessarily the case. She described the journey to Britain in a matter of fact way, explaining that she regarded it as a temporary measure. However, this relatively low-key event was followed by a more dramatic journey over which she had no control. It was the result of the UK government's policy of 'dispersing' asylum seekers across the country:

> On one very rainy day a coach arrived and we were on the coach and we didn't know where we were going – kept asking, and we kept dropping people all the way until we were the last ones. I was thrown in Rochdale in this house which was dirty. It had been refurbished but you could see poo in some places as if to say they were places that had been abandoned for some time. And I remember cleaning with my little boy until the wee hours of the morning.

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[46] A department store in Harare.
[47] This brother was the first family member to seek asylum in the UK. Although I spoke to him on the telephone, he felt unable to participate in the research project because of domestic problems.

Fungai's voice dropped as she recounted this coach ride from London, where she had relatives, to a city she had never heard of, over two hundred miles away. As an asylum seeker, she was entirely dependent on the British government and forbidden to work – a state of abjection and loss of autonomy powerfully conveyed in images of dirt and abandonment. This moment of personal 'crisis' threatened her identity as the self-reliant family member always ready to help others. Although she was later reunited with her daughters, worse was to follow when the Immigration authorities discovered she was working illegally,[48] took possessions from her house and cut her meagre allowance thus further reducing her ability to support even her immediate family. She kept herself busy by taking a free catering course and brought home the left-overs from meals they cooked – 'the carcass, the bones, what have you' - to eat with her three children. She even managed to eke out her asylum benefit so that she could support her grandmother in Zimbabwe and send occasional remittances to other relatives:

> I had stopped but here and there you would because you are thinking those people back there are still worse off than I am.

The first part of Fungai's life-story was delivered in an up-beat tone, stressing agency in the face of uncontrollable events including her husband's illness, her own medical condition and escalating prices. Although there were low moments, such as her HIV diagnosis and her husband's death, she presented herself as more or less in control of events, taking responsibility for her decisions. In contrast, her description of the period which followed her journey to Rochdale was full of descriptive anecdotes and adjectives like 'depressing', 'struggling' and 'painful', showing her in a more passive and anguished light. It was as if the British immigration system made her impotent and turned her into a potential victim. At any moment her asylum application might be refused making her liable for detention and forced removal:

> We have actually seen people taken from where we lived like in the early hours of the morning. You are turned into a criminal just because you are trying to survive; therefore you are a criminal for wanting to live a life.

From the horrified tone of her voice she implied there could be nothing worse for someone like her – a mother and responsible elder in a well-respected family - than to be carted off in an immigration van like a criminal. Interestingly, Fungai's worst-case scenario followed a happier description of the day in 2007 when she learned she had been granted indefinite leave to remain in the UK, as if she could only bear to contemplate such humiliation after recalling its end-point.

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[48] Under the UK Immigration rules, the vast majority of asylum seekers are forbidden to work and can be penalised by a reduction in their welfare payments. See GREAT BRITAIN. HOME OFFICE. 2014. *Asylum Policy Instruction: Permission to Work* [Online]. London: The Stationery Office. Available: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/299415/Permission_to_Work_Asy_v6_0.pdf [Accessed 29 July 2016].

She had been in legal limbo for over five years but now, at this point in her story, life resumed its upward trajectory as she returned to work, continued her education and watched her daughters complete their university studies and her son go to college.

> What I really came for to the UK was to see my son grow up and I've often said to my friends, 'If I die today I will die a very happy woman. It doesn't matter my son's not an adult; if I die today I will die a very happy woman because there was a time I thought I would not see him turn ten'.

(See Appendix F for longer extract)

4.5.2 Wives and mothers

Vimbo, Rukudzo and Tatenda had less sense of responsibility for the family at large than their oldest sister but their place in the order of siblings and their own gendered roles influenced the decisions they made in the face of 'crisis'. Both Rukudzo and Tatenda featured in their autobiographies as independent women pursuing their own careers and overcoming setbacks, whereas Vimbo presented herself passively, as driven by circumstance and her husband's volition. She followed him to Botswana in 1997 because, 'he thought maybe it was better', explaining that 'It looks like he was an adventurer of some sort'. Her life story was a chronicle of events flatly described and with no major turning points. Indeed, without the supporting narrative of her daughter Mercy, this would be little more than a travelogue. Events that you would expect to be significant were mentioned almost in passing, such as her husband's trip to the UK and immediate deportation back to Zimbabwe and the fact that her children were living alone in Harare in a particularly violent period. The single journey that she made independently was her eventual return from Sudan in 2013, when she left her husband because she was 'missing home' and 'some other things were not going well'. There was a hint of regret in her subsequent remark that war in Sudan forced him to follow her a few months' later.

In age, Tatenda was at the mid-point of her generation of the family, and situated herself in a similarly central position in her narrative, presenting herself as someone blessed by good fortune and her own feisty character and surrounded by relatives ready to give practical and emotional support. While still a school girl she fell pregnant and, as a single mother, relied heavily on Fungai and her parents to look after two small children while she continued her studies. Other family members helped her find various jobs but none lasted, so, following Fungai's footsteps, she 'started being a businesswoman of my own', earning enough to rent first a room and then a house. At this point she brought her children from the rural home to live with her, a turning point marking adulthood: 'I think it was time for me to rise up and be responsible'. What she really wanted, however, was to go to England and in 1999 another sister offered her a place to stay. Torn between the prospect of fulfilling a dream and the children's needs, she felt compelled to

say no but, in her narrative, she performed a dramatic conversation in which they gave her permission:

> All my life I have wanted to go to the UK. I would love to leave this place but I can't leave now because I've got children; I can't leave my children . . . and I said, 'I can't leave you guys. I have to be here for you'; and it was like telepathic, both of them said, 'Mama go. Life will be better for us. Just go'. Oh my God I cried. I just couldn't control myself. I said, 'What? I can't just go and leave you'.

The national situation had given Tatenda an excuse to travel and she presented migration in economic terms as something that would improve her children's lives. Once again, the family was her chief means of support and encouragement. A sister in the UK housed her and found her work in return for babysitting.[49] After a spell as a chambermaid, a job she loathed, she managed to enroll on a nursing access course in Surrey with encouragement from her aunt Celia and was able to call for the children two years later.

Tatenda's security within the bosom of her family gave her a confidence and sense of entitlement that stood her in good stead when she confronted the immigration authorities in Britain. When rules were introduced requiring international students to pay fees, she announced she was <u>not</u> going to drop out:

> I said, 'You know what? For me, they're going to pay for me; I'm not dropping. I'm going to finish my access course and I'm going to finish my nursing and I'm not going to pay. These British people will pay for me; I'm not going back . . . why can't I stay here if I saw white British people staying in Zimbabwe? If you can enjoy Zimbabwe why can't I enjoy Britain?'

She could afford to hold her head up high. By arriving in Britain before visa restrictions were introduced and completing her professional training, she gained permanent residence on her own terms and resumed the path to social advancement. This was one of a series of anecdotes in which Tatenda presented herself as victor in a battle with British officaldom. Another was her contact with social services who accused her of child abuse after her daughter, Donna, complained to school friends about the domestic chores she was made to perform. Again, Tatenda used the incident to demonstrate her strength of character and the superiority of Zimbabwean values, telling me social services were forced to back down: 'In the end they lost because *me*, I just stood my ground'. The only crack in this confident self-portrayal was when she talked about her estrangement from her son, now living as an 'illegal migrant' somewhere in London. From her gestures and subdued tone of voice it was clear this was too distressing to comfortably include in her survivor's narrative.

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[49] She is now estranged from this sister and none of the other family members suggested I try to contact her.

Unlike Tatenda, Rukudzo hated the thought of going to the UK because, she said, 'It's grey; there's no space; the houses are small'. From her rented house in a quiet Birmingham suburb, she talked about the early days of her marriage to a civil servant and her glittering career in the travel industry. Before the economic crash she was literally 'flying':

> The in laws were nearby; we had a lot of support; we were travelling the world when we want to – Mauritius here we come! London here we come! Frankfurt here we come! Vic Falls, Hwange, Kariba – you name it! I didn't realize it was that good; you take it for granted.

However, when things were 'becoming funny', as she put it, both she and her husband Paul were made redundant and their attempts to move to Bulawayo and set up their own mobile phone shop were unsuccessful. Paul then moved to the UK on a student visa but Rukudzo stayed behind with their three children, even though this meant defying cultural expectations of the dutiful wife. After a visit to see Paul in the UK, her father confronted her with the question, 'What kind of marriage is that?' But the final tipping point was in 2002 when her landlord, an MDC politician, was attacked by ZANU-PF supporters[50]:

> For two nights we would hear people during the night surrounding the whole place and then this other night he was beaten up. His mother, an old woman, was beaten up. So the following day I just packed everything I could and moved.

This was the incident which Rukudzo said tipped her 'over the edge'. Leaving her children with in-laws in Harare she made a rapid exit. Like it or not, she felt she had no choice but to go to Britain.

> It was painful six months . . . I would cry, cry, and I would feel sometimes I would feel stupid. What am I doing, you know, if I don't have my kids? What is this – what kind of life? The place is grey; the place is cold; the life is h-a-r-d . . . but you know it was between the devil and the deep anyway because I knew it's bad back home – bad, bad, bad; so you had to forge ahead. You have to push.

Her stress on words like 'grey', 'cold' and 'hard' reflected her state of mind at the time and for many years afterwards. For this point on, Rukudzo's life-story was reflective and full of emotional and psychological insights. She said she had been depressed and that 'there was like pressure in the atmosphere, something oppressing me'. Her sense of alienation was exacerbated by British immigration policy, which left her in a state of continuing impermanence. Even though a lawyer told her she had grounds to seek asylum, she rejected the idea:

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[50] During the election campaign of 2002 anyone associated with the MDC was at risk. There were many cases of torture and killings, particularly in Bulawayo which was seen as an MDC stronghold. See BLAIR, D. 2003. *Degrees in Violence: Robert Mugabe and the Struggle for Power in Zimbabwe,* London & New York, Continuum.

> There was a stigma attached to asylum seeking and why would I do that when my husband is legal? That's what I thought, but it was so hard. It's been hard; it's been so, so hard, until now.

As the dependent of a student, Rukudzo preserved her dignity but had no recourse to public funds and worked long hours in the care industry to support the family. Then, when her husband started full time work and was granted permanent residence in the UK, she and their children got only limited leave to remain - a cause of resentment made all the more acute when Rukudzo was prevented from returning to Zimbabwe for her mother's burial because her 'papers' were with the Home Office. In addition, her children were unable to attend university because they would need to pay international student fees. On a happier note, however, she said she was at last beginning to feel more settled in Britain: 'Now, maybe because now I've got grandchildren here who might decide to settle here, my children might decide to settle here, I'm at peace'.

4.5.3 Young adults

Fungai's first-born son Munashe and younger sister Rutendo were a year apart in age and on the verge of adulthood when their country began its descent into 'crisis'. Munashe had just entered into a customary marriage with his teenage girlfriend, and Rutendo had met the man she would later marry but neither had significant responsibilities. As a young man, Munashe was free to try his chances abroad, whereas Rutendo's life was increasingly bound up with that of her husband, ten years her senior, and stayed in Zimbabwe.

Rutendo sketched out her life-story somewhat reluctantly over the kitchen table in a Harare suburb while her children and various relatives ate supper and watched TV. In her account, events on the national stage were reflected through the comings and goings of family members rather than her own actions. The only time she left Zimbabwe was to accompany Fungai on a trip selling goods in South Africa, but she 'couldn't stand it' and came back after a week: 'I said "I'm going home"'. She did not need to risk illegal crossings and the discomfort of street trade: 'I was single; I had no kids to take care of'. Later she experienced 'drastic change' as goods doubled in price overnight but was largely protected by her husband, who worked for an international company, and her father and older sisters who sent remittances from the UK. Once she had children of her own, she set up a crèche in the house and contributed to the family income, as well as sheltering an orphaned cousin.

If Rutendo's narrative was a largely uneventful account of the passage from girl to wife and mother, Munashe's was full of drama, a quest for wealth and adventure; though both fitted gendered norms. Munashe suggested an interview at a friend's house rather than his own home, but spoke more freely while driving me around the city. In the style of a bildungsroman, his

narrative tracked his course from brash youngster to sadder and wiser adult. At the age of 17, he was trading bananas in Botswana and when that failed, he began to sell car seat covers, doing well enough to lend one of his uncles the airfare to the UK before setting off himself in 2001:

> I've always been an entrepreneur and then . . . I left that because I realized my friends in England were making money, yeah. I'd make that but it wasn't consistent. Although it was growing, I didn't see that; because my friends were – was driving a car; I didn't have a car. And I was just curious about England, you know, and also the business was going down.

Although his pregnant wife followed, she claimed asylum in the UK and was housed separately. Initially supported by his grandmother in London, Munashe soon broke free. With disarming honesty, he portrayed his younger self as a carefree rogue who took part in an illegal money scam, enjoyed driving a BMW and was 'a bit arrogant'. Britain was 'better' than he expected and he might have stayed longer had it not been for the death of his father in 2006, a mark of his 'coming of age', which prompted return to Zimbabwe followed by wife and baby. Zimbabwe was increasingly unstable but he now had money in the bank and the kudos of 'success' in London. By this time thousands of Zimbabweans were living outside the country, a situation he exploited by buying trucks and a plot of building land:

> I was burning money fast; and also, you know, when you left you were not driving; suddenly you come back with a Mercedes; you've got money; you've got trucks; and I was like 26, 25 so I was a young boss and even my other friends I had been with in high school were still looking for a job or trying to get to university or something and there I was already rich. So I didn't really miss England because I had the comfort of seeing things around me; even the trucks – I didn't really use them to get me money, it was like a status. I loved to see them being washed and just sitting, you know.

Perhaps reflecting recent training to be a pastor, Munashe related this part of his story as a parable of pride before a fall. His business ventures soon failed, he burned up all his capital and, with three young children to look after, found himself increasingly dependent on his mother in the UK. Unable to re-join her because he had overstayed his visa, he headed to the USA but returned because, he said, 'I didn't really think I would live with my children there'. Recounting this story only a few days before leaving for Canada, he rehearsed the possible outcomes of his latest strategy for survival as if seeking my approval. His plan, which not surprisingly failed in the course of this research, was to claim asylum by concocting a story of homophobic persecution. He dreaded leaving his children but felt it was his last chance to provide for them and thus salvage confidence and self-respect.

Chapter 4

4.5.4 Children

For children who were under 15 when they arrived in Britain or South Africa, migration was something that occurred without volition in the slipstream of parents. Dependency and lack of choice had a profound impact on their experience. For some it was presented as a personal 'crisis', the moment when the happiness of early childhood was brought to a sudden end. April's daughter, Rumbi, who gave a brief account of her life while on reception duty at her mother's import company, was 13 when they moved from Zimbabwe to Johannesburg in 2003:

> It was very sudden. They only told me I think a day before that you are moving to South Africa to complete your school so it was very confusing; because, I mean, the majority of my family and friends are back home and for me just to pack up and leave, it was confusing, heart-breaking and I was kind of angry.

She described the preceding years in Zimbabwe as 'the better part of my life' and, even though she subsequently studied in Switzerland and took an internship with Disneyland in the USA, she said she was determined to return 'home' as soon as she could in order to start her own business. Fungai's daughter Bella was about the same age as her cousin when she too was uprooted. In 2002 her mother arranged for her and her older sister Annette to go to England:

> Oh I wasn't happy. Life was going swimmingly well for me; I was going to be the head girl; I was not happy. Like, yeah, my life was good; I liked my life; I liked the things that I got to do, 'cause I used to – I played a lot of sport, I played netball for the team, played football, played tennis, had a really good coach, so I didn't want to leave . . . I wasn't happy to leave Zimbabwe and when I came here, the shock of this country! I was depressed.

Up until then, the only major set-back in her life had been the death of her father from HIV/AIDS. The journey from Zimbabwe was a moment of existential uncertainty:

> I think that was probably the first thing, the second after Dad, that I actually took on board, like 'Oh my goodness, what is this life?'

She vividly contrasted Harare, where she hardly ever stayed indoors, knew the area like the back of her hand and was always bumping into someone she knew, with life in Rochdale, which she nicknamed 'Dogdale':

> I wasn't happy. I had no friends. Everybody was white and they thought like I came from a village . . . I hated this country; absolutely hated this country; and I made my mum's life really difficult because I hated it; and I just used to beg her to send me to boarding school – like 'Can I go? Can I go back and just go to boarding school?'

Annette, on the other hand, stressed the joy of reunion with their mother, though she too was disheartened by her surroundings: 'There was this old wallpaper that reminded me of British television when I was in Zim [sic]; it was just dull'. What made it worse was the gap between

expectation and reality. As she proceeded with her description, her voice and facial expression reflected remembered dismay:

> The sofas - oh gosh! Oh, I couldn't deal – that was really depressing; because you come with this, 'Oh we're going to England! Oh it's going to be beautiful! We're going to have this, this, this'. You have all this imagination – what you see in TV. That was depressing, really depressing for a while and then we got used to it.

This period of misery for both girls was in part culture shock, in part dented self-esteem. They missed the advantages of a middle-class Zimbabwean life-style and were appalled by the unruly behaviour of classmates. This made it difficult to have British-born friends. In addition, they shared their mother's sense of humiliation at being labelled 'asylum seekers' and subjected to racial stereotyping. Bella grew to hate the annual BBC event *Children in Need* because it portrayed Africans as poor and 'everybody thought I was starving'.

Annette was particularly anxious about the possibility of detention and deportation.[51] Like her mother, she lived in dread of seeing an immigration van draw up on their estate:

> You'd be coming home from college thinking, oh my gosh, are they going to be there? That was – that was traumatic.

She felt her plight as an asylum seeker even more keenly when she left secondary school and watched contemporaries going to university or earning the money for a more independent lifestyle. Her mother told me she was on the verge of serious depression.

The sense of powerlessness and insecurity made this period a 'crisis' in the life of the family, perhaps felt more acutely by the children because it came at a time when they were forging new identities and dreaming of independence. As well as losing the material and emotional advantages of being 'home' among the extended family, they also lost social status and were plunged into an immigrant under-class , becoming 'second class citizens' as Bella put it, an experience she described as 'degrading'. There were compensations, however. Annette continued to invest in her future by taking a free course in holistic therapy, which eventually led her to mental-health nursing, and Bella, a self-described extrovert, found refuge as well as an escape route through the local church:

> Church helped me a lot. Church saved my life. Not that I was going to kill myself but church saved my life. It was good. It was good even in teaching me about English society and the variation in the classes and having friends that were like middle class and not in

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[51] Under UK Immigration rules, asylum seekers may be detained in an Immigration Removal Centre (IRC) if it is believed they are likely to abscond and are liable to be deported if their asylum claims are rejected. See REFUGEE COUNCIL. 2015. *Detention in the Asylum System* [Online]. UK: Refugee Council. Available: https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/assets/0003/3990/Detention_in_the_Asylum_System_March_2015.pdf [Accessed 29 July 2016 2016].

the working class and not from the estate, and just seeing that life could be different; like, I had friends who had like a lake at their house and that was good, like it was – it taught me a lot. I had friends who went to private school.

True to her family values, Bella began to accept her new life once she could envisage an upward social progression. When Fungai was granted asylum both sisters were able to advance their careers through higher education.

As we know from Rukudzo's narrative, however, this opportunity was not available to her three children, barred by their immigration status from access to student loans. The youngest, 19-year-old Fungisai, sat on the couch in her Midlands home while her mother prepared us a snack in the kitchen. She said she had hoped to study English literature at university but had to settle for an apprenticeship in child-care and, although she enjoyed the job, she felt a keen sense of disappointment:

> The lack of opportunities matters; that's what matters. And the reason the two go together is because once an immigrant – which isn't a bad word, it's just what it is – once an immigrant is deprived of an opportunity it makes them feel like it's because of who they are and that's not fair. And that's what hurts and that's what makes them feel second class.

As soon as Fungisai started to relate her brief life story, it became clear that some significant experiences were too fresh and raw to be packaged in an autobiographical sequence. Her narration, which was at time tearful, was full of self-questioning and focussed on the issue of identity. Only five years old when she came to Britain, lack of fluency in Shona contributed to a sense that she was not 'Zimbabwean enough'; yet she said, 'If I call myself British I feel like I've forgotten where I'm from'. Whereas cousins in the UK were comfortably both Zimbabwean and British, she believed she was neither one thing nor the other:

> I feel like I'm in the middle and I feel that I don't really have a culture . . . to this day I don't know what to call myself; how to describe myself.

It thus appeared that Fungisai, who was too young to have experienced the national 'crisis' first-hand, was now suffering the consequences, albeit indirectly. She narrated her story at a turning point in her life, when her sense of self was threatened.

Thus we see that the response of individuals to national events has to be seen within the context of the extended family and their situation within it, whether determined by *inter alia* age, seniority or gender. In the next section, I will focus on the re-shaping of family as the result of 'crisis migration'.

4.6 Re-assessing the family

The period of 'crisis' and 'crisis migration' has altered the shape of Fungai's family as ties of affection and duty have been re-examined and re-negotiated in a transnational space. Within their narratives, participants all stressed the family's continuing importance as support and safety net. In their maps too, they presented a dizzying array of names and connecting lines and circles, choosing coloured pencils to indicate geographic location or relationship [see Appendix C].[52] However, there was a sharp contrast in the way they assessed the impact of Zimbabwe's economic and social collapse and their own dispersal. Those who stayed in Zimbabwe and perhaps had most to gain from family ties were more likely to portray a strong unit unshaken, indeed possibly re-inforced, by national events, whereas migrants and their children detected fractures and were inclined to question the future of the 'African' extended family.

4.6.1 The stayers' perspective

As pensioners, Anesu and Grace were most dependent on relatives with access to foreign currency and emphasised the closeness of bonds. When I met Grace at her home in Harare, she had recently returned from a visit to her brother Steven in South Africa and praised him for 'supporting the family'. She pointed out that migration was not as final as it might seem because even relatives in England kept coming back to Zimbabwe: 'We meet each other time and again'. Similarly, Anesu's wife Mary gave it an entirely positive spin, saying she wished all her children could leave Zimbabwe as April had done: 'I would be glad if they were out of the country. They would come back and see me; go again'. She and Anesu relied heavily on remittances sent by their daughter in South Africa and, as Anesu pointed out, they also received regular parcels of clothing from the UK:

> I should say I'm a lucky gentleman because my brother's children, who are outside Zimbabwe, they all look after me; so our family is blessed. We are so linked together. Whenever there is anything - say I happen to ask for any help – I ask freely; I don't even get worried about it.

Thus older 'stayers' downplayed the rupture caused by migration, emphasising its circularity and the benefits it brought. Anesu said it opened a window on the wider world, offering Zimbabweans a view of other societies:

> Some went out and they did a lot of good, and not only to their own families but to us all. They took what was bad to educate the other people outside. Now when they come

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[52] Munashe and Anesu's wife Mary were the only exceptions. Munashe drew a short list of his 'closest' relatives while Mary sketched out a family tree in pencil.

> back to us they also teach us the good things about outside so it balances; it balances. Like my brother who is in London when she [sic] comes home she [sic] tells us a lot of things especially good things about European way of living.

In conjuring up this idealised diaspora, he gave it a political spin. The MDC, which he supported, benefited from its large overseas membership, particularly in the UK. This caused various ZANU-PF ministers to accuse migrants of being 'British lackeys' whereas he regarded them as emissaries who could alert the outside world to 'bad' things going on in Zimbabwe.

Rutendo was more ambivalent. She saw parents and older siblings leave the country in quick succession, presenting this as almost routine: 'I can't say it was painful. It was normal'. However, she talked of missing her father in particular and regretted not having seen her mother in the six years before her death, even though they were in close contact:

> It's just that we kept our relationship – that consoles a little bit; and that she was buried here - it consoles, you know. And you face reality. That was it; we can't run away from it; it was tough. Sometimes I would think that if I just call she would pick up the phone and we'd just talk.

Bringing her late mother 'home' for burial was an important symbol of the family's continuing rootedness in Mashonaland and relationships were constantly confirmed and renewed through mobile messaging and social media. Stressing the fact that bonds were strong enough to survive physical separation, Rutendo presented a network of family members each with a different supporting role:

> Our family are a big family and people in our family they value the relationship so much. It's something which, I think it's hereditary [laughs]. So I don't really find it difficult to relate to my siblings because they're out of the country. Of course we have our differences but we agree to disagree. Of course we go on very well. I have four sisters there, that side, and one brother. I even know how to approach them. Let's say I have a problem even with my husband; I know this problem; I'll go with it to Fungai - this one; I'll go with it to this one. You know the way they take it is different. You know that this one, the advice she will give you because of their past experiences, because of their nature you know. I know them. Some may become emotional; that's how she is; I know that. I know where to take my problem at a particular time. I know who to share with at a particular time and sometimes I don't need a solution; I just want to pour out to my sister. She'll give an ear.

As one of the youngest siblings, Rutendo was used to being looked after, though had recently told them, 'I am no longer a baby; I can stand up'. Just as seniority gave Anesu and Grace an entitlement to material and emotional support, so youth allowed her to accept a degree of dependence without embarrassment or shame. However, although she emphasised the normality and benefits of her family's scattering, she added that there were always 'two sides of the coin'. She complained that the rate of migration in Zimbabwe was now 'extreme' and 'far beyond' what was acceptable:

It's like a broken vase; the pieces are all over and you can't put them together; you can't join them.

4.6.2   The migrants' view

In contrast, family members who migrated were more likely to suggest a loosening of bonds formerly taken for granted. As a child, Mercy followed her parents on a zig-zag journey across the African continent and spent time alone with her brother in Zimbabwe. She was the only family member who placed as many friends as relatives on her family map, describing them as 'my new family'. She said, 'I had to move so much and I didn't get that chance to be so much attached to my relatives'. Her mother Vimbo felt equally estranged but blamed poverty, which stopped her from fulfilling family obligations:

> V: Somehow I feel that if you are not on your feet economically – like, if I feel I want to go and see my baby sister Cynthia - time does not allow me somehow; I don't have something to carry for her. Because it's traditional, it's cultural, it's heart wise that if you are going to somebody you have to give her your heart and you cannot say you love somebody when you just go.
>
> J: If you're not bearing gifts, it's not good enough?
>
> V: It's not good enough. Looking at it also, I mean as elder sister, they might also look at me; they might say, 'Ah we are looking on our sister'. They might count on me but failing to do it, somehow it's a challenge, to be honest; it's a challenge. Because when I was in Sudan I was always thinking about my baby sister. I thought I would do something for her but I didn't manage to. So it's shaky.

Within the family's moral framework, the ability to bestow gifts on a younger member of the family was of central importance. Thus Vimbo regarded gifts from her father and older sister Fungai as 'their obligation, between them and God, and between them and tradition', but was mortified by her inability to help Cynthia:

> We did not grow up like that. My mother, my father, they would give us … my uncle Steven was just a giver, so you would think it was my turn to give. So somehow you just wish and wish the economy would get better and you could stand on your feet and just be fruitful. Even if it was not as fruitful as you would like, at least we have something to provision.

Unlike Vimbo, who felt disadvantaged by poverty, her cousin April was burdened by wealth. On the first morning of my visit, she received news from her mother that an uncle had just passed away and there was not enough money to meet funeral costs. April told me, 'Everyone here is expecting us to settle the bills back home' and throughout her interview complained about the burden of family expectations, which she described repeatedly as 'not easy' and 'tough'. She reckoned that forty percent of her and her husband's income went to relatives by blood and marriage.

> A: I have to look after my mother, look after my father; I look after my mother-in-law; and Samuel, from his mother's side, they had three siblings and they're all late and they left children who have got to be looked after; they have to be sent to school and they give birth to their children and we have to look after those children and their children's children, you know, and the list just goes on and on and on.
>
> J: If anything happened to either of you and you couldn't do this, what do you think would happen?
>
> A: I don't know, just – I am sure they are praying for us to live for ever, every night! [laughs] I'm telling you I shudder to think what would happen; I shudder to think what would happen. And it's not just on his side. My side as well. I have a sister who was very ill at some stage and I have to get medication for her and she had a son who was in America and he came back with nothing and he got married and now he's got a child and he stays with my sister; and he has to meet the hospital bills; they have to feed that child. You know it's not easy. It's tough.

Her joking reply to my question showed there was more to family ties than good-hearted affection, and there was a degree of egotism in the notion that relatives could not do without her. Undoubtedly, affluence and social status gave April status within the extended family. As well as sending financial gifts, she employed her older sister as headmistress of her Harare nursery school, and had recently employed a brother in her Johannesburg warehouse.

> A: It's not easy; it's not easy at all, you know. Everyone from your family and the extended family expects you to give them jobs even if they don't qualify. If you don't give them jobs they expect you to look after them as well. It's tough, but life has to go on.
>
> J: This large extended family - is there a boundary to it? I mean would a cousin expect the same as a sibling?
>
> A: Oh yes, really; really.
>
> J: And an uncle the same as your parents?
>
> A: Exactly. It's not easy. It's tough; it's tough.

Although April had in a sense done well from the 'crisis' in Zimbabwe, downplaying its impact in her tale of professional success, she hinted at negative consequences for the family:

> There are no longer those close ties. Like I said, me and my cousins we are spread all over and our children are not that close – the way we were close, the way we were brought up; they are not. They don't even know each other, you know, unlike us. We really know each other. We know where who is every time and we are still very close. We have always kept in touch with each other, yeah, but not these ones, no. So I don't think there will be an extended family. They will take care of their siblings only but not the extended family.

This pessimistic view of the next generation, however, was contradicted by her middle daughter Rumbi, who said she spoke to her 'cousin sisters' almost every day through a shared messaging system, and that, when it came to obligations to the wider family, she thought she would 'take

after' her parents: 'I mean, it's a great privilege to learn and follow their footsteps'. Like her cousin Bella, she claimed a strong Zimbabwean identity and was determined to return there when the economic situation improved.

The individualism of British culture and the pressure to keep their heads above water financially made Fungai and her sisters in the UK reassess family obligations as defined by Shona culture. Although they never overtly criticised blood relatives, they lamented what they saw as a change in attitudes in Zimbabwe, describing people as 'lazy', increasingly 'materialistic' and with a 'victim' mentality. Stressing their own independence, they all distanced themselves from what they saw as Britain's 'benefits culture'. Fungai drew a comparison with the extended family.

> When we grew up, when my father wasn't able my uncles my aunts would chip in. However the downside of that is it can, it can feed into the dependent syndrome; because I can see that tendency with my other siblings now – that they think that's the way we grew up and they probably might think I owe them or the next person owes them.

As a third generation member of the family, who had grown up in a more individualistic society, her daughter Annette was more critical of Zimbabwean relatives. On her first return visit she was disappointed that some seemed more interested in what gifts she brought than in finding out who and how she was:

> I even got ill 'cause I was so tired seeing people, visiting people. They want to know what you've brought with you. And when I went in '13, no, I don't look for people. I see my brother and the kids and we do all the aunty things like aunties do and I bring them loads of stuff. Everybody else – no. And then I see my aunties, yeah, but I think the bond grows apart. I think if we're going to be honest, it's quite sad but it happens and if you don't have anything in common; because with my brother it's natural because he's my brother and obviously my nieces, but with everyone else I've just grown – I don't know if it's just me and I'm a nasty person – but I've, it's just distance now.

Disillusionment caused Annette to distinguish between 'close' family members like her brother and nieces and others she regarded as more distant. She even planned to break with cultural tradition by excluding various members of her father's family from the guest list for her forthcoming wedding in Zimbabwe.[53] Her sister Bella suggested there was even a distance between family members in the same country, partly because of their different immigration status. While drawing her family map, she chatted about her relationship with cousins in the UK:

> I think perhaps we have become more like relatives as opposed to being friends like we were when we were younger because we have had such different experiences.

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[53] Annette was engaged to a fellow Shona-speaking Zimbabwean living in the UK.

Chapter 4

She acknowledged that in making this distinction between relatives and friends she was revealing the influence of a British upbringing:

> Nobody drops by at your house. You know when someone's coming; they call ahead; so yes I think it changed our relationships but maybe that's also because we were children at the time and we've grown into adults and we don't have anything in common any more so it may just be that. I think the way I view family has been changed by the society that I live in. I don't think family is as important to me as it would have been if I lived in Zimbabwe; at least, I don't view it in the same way. I feel no obligations because you're family. I believe in friendships. I think within the family my sister's one of my best friends; we are friends; and then there are people for example I wouldn't invite to my wedding because I don't feel they play a part in my life.

Despite her patriotic identification with Zimbabwe, Bella shared her sister's scepticism about the extended family, saying that concentration on the nuclear unit was not as strange as she once thought. She recalled a British friend telling her that her mother had only one brother, whom they visited once a year on Boxing Day:

> I just remember thinking it was ridiculous that she sees this person once a year. I realised that the nuclear family was the all-important thing in society – you, your husband and your children. I didn't understand how anybody could live like that but, now that I'm older, I think I'm much the same [laughs].

Unlike Fungai and her sisters, who were forced by their immigrant status to concentrate principally on the nuclear family, their children now saw it as a matter of choice.

As many migration scholars have shown, cultural attitudes are gendered. Another aspect of Zimbabwean culture that Fungai and her daughters questioned was its patriarchy. Fungai complained that her countrymen were idle and too demanding: 'Sometimes when I look at the lives of my contemporaries who've got husbands, I think I'm doing fine on my own.' Annette said she believed Zimbabwean culture was 'just to oppress women' and hoped there would be no conflict with her Zimbabwean fiancé's family because, 'Oh they love their culture!' Bella was horrified by the acceptance that Zimbabwean men had 'small houses', describing them in general as 'terrible fathers'. An apprehension of irresolvable cultural differences reduced the chance that family members in the UK would return permanently to Zimbabwe. By acknowledging a distance that was more than geographic, Ruvimbo illustrated some of the tensions and gaps that had appeared in the family network:

> R: . . . because distance brings distance if you know what I mean, in a way. And we are in a different culture so that makes perceptions change. So, because we've got now different perspectives, that's a big change. The way we look at life, the way we look at things, it's been altered in a way and to an extent our culture has been altered because of being away. So yes, obviously there's change.
>
> J: Can you envisage a time when it will all be put back together?

R: No. Even if we put it back together it will be a different shape from what it would have been; if it was a ball or a shape; it would never be the same that it would have been if this hadn't, hadn't happened. For better or for worse I don't know but it will not be the same.

4.7   Conclusion

When Zimbabwe's economy nose-dived at the end of the 1990s, Fungai's family was better able to cope than the average, not only because of its economic but also its social capital. Although rooted in the rural area of Mashonaland East, its members were mobile and entrepreneurial, thus able to adapt to changing circumstances. Older participants felt they had done well out of colonialism, seizing the advantages of a Methodist education to progress up the social scale and provide a strong support network for their children. As Shona-speakers who were relatively affluent, they had access to power as long as they kept their political opinions to themselves and those like Fungai's entrepreneurial uncle Steven and aunt Celia were inspirational figures who opened up pathways to South Africa and Britain. When currency lost its value and people began to lose their jobs, Fungai's outspoken father Herbert responded by campaigning for the MDC and was forced to run for his life. Other family members manoeuvered their way round difficulties, changing jobs or finding new ways of making money in the informal economy. Goals of self-improvement and self-reliance were not merely individualistic but were intended to strengthen the family collective, protecting those who were weaker because of age or circumstance, and throughout the 'crisis' members operated a strong network of practical and emotional support. Emphasising the family's size and closeness, they regarded it as a crucial safety-net.

In relating their life stories, they presented national 'crisis' as the context for a series of trials and tribulations which tested their 'moral' character and had to be overcome. At the point when external events threatened to disrupt their progress, the public became personal prompting evasive action. However, rather than presenting themselves as victims of circumstance, most of them stressed their agency. Women in Fungai's generation made a particular feature of educational achievements to assert their modernity and independence. Furthermore, Fungai, Tatenda and April used their stories to show how they turned 'crisis' into an opportunity, breaking free from a patriarchal culture, while their daughters adopted 'modern' feminist views.

On the whole migration was seen as a family project, though individual decisions about whether to leave or stay in Zimbabwe varied according to age and gender-related roles. Fungai, Rukudzo and Tatenda presented themselves as largely driven by the needs of their children while Vimbo and, to a lesser extent, Rukudzo conformed with the cultural norm of dutiful wife. As the oldest family member, Anesu emphasised his authoritarian role in maintaining the family's social standing at 'home', whereas Fungai foregrounded her caring obligations. At the height of

Zimbabwe's 'crisis', Munashe and Rutendo were at a stage of transition, comparatively free of responsibilities, but whereas Munashe, as a young man, was free to exploit the situation by venturing abroad, Rutendo's priority was settling down with her new husband. Children like Rumbi, Annette, Bella and Fungisai had no choice in the decision to migrate and as a consequence felt resentment and even anger. In their narratives, it was migration itself which represented 'crisis' rather than events in Zimbabwe.

Although there were pre-existing disparities of wealth and social status within the extended family, the 'crisis' and resulting migration opened up new gaps, altering the delicate balance of reciprocity and, in some cases, changing the way people felt about each other. As one of the most affluent family members, April stressed the burdensome nature of obligations to those back in Zimbabwe, while Vimbo, who was at the other end of the economic scale, expressed shame at not being able to help her younger sister. Family members in Zimbabwe, who were culturally entitled to support on grounds of age and life-stage, emphasized the strength and closeness of blood and affinal ties and the extended family's role as a safety net. Migrants, on the other hand, increasingly focussed on the smaller nuclear family, both as a matter of necessity and choice. Migrants' children who lived in Britain and experienced a more 'individualistic' culture had begun to re-assess their relationships with the wider family and were less likely to idealise it than their parents. So, although extended family bonds were re-created and maintained through SMS messaging and social media, they were seen as a poor substitute for face-to-face contact.

All the family members I spoke to believed that they were still experiencing 'crisis'. For those in Zimbabwe this took the shape of continuing economic and political insecurity, for those abroad it was uncertainty about legal status and identity. The rural home in Mashonaland remained an idealised site of stability and belonging for those whose lives were in flux but few imagined that they would ever return there for more than a brief visit.

Chapter 5:   Reawakened trauma - Dwana's family
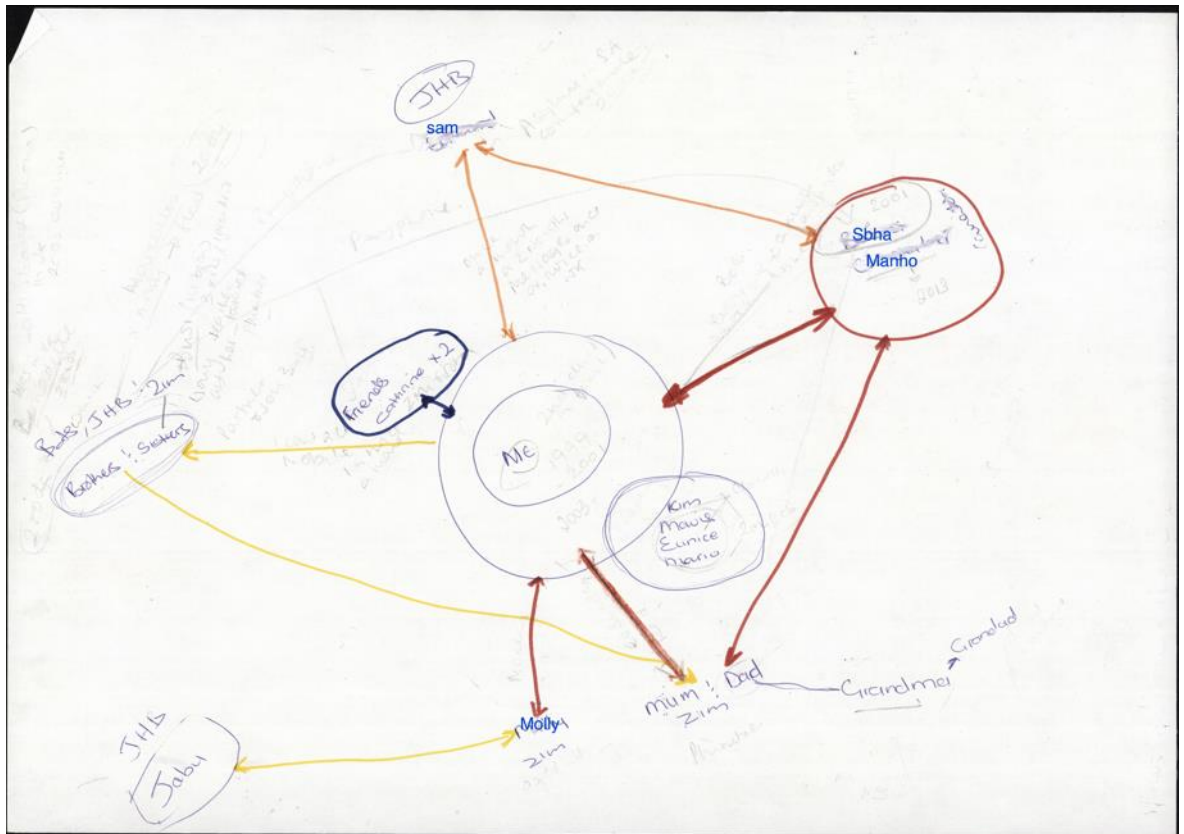
Figure 4 Dwana's family 'map'

 [Names changed to protect identities]

5.1   Minority status

The first thing that struck me when Dwana drew her family map was how few people were on it
and how isolated she was, a circle within a circle at its centre. Where was the crowd of extended
family members that I had come to expect from talking to other Zimbabweans and was
represented in Fungai's drawing of the baobab tree with its stout trunk and spreading branches?
Later, when Dwana told her life-story, it became clear that this was a reflection of her present-day
reality, both physical and emotional, and that she and her relatives had little in common with
Fungai's close-knit and self-confident Shona family. Born in 1965, she is close in age to Fungai and
a single parent. She too is HIV positive, a condition she blames on her philandering ex-husband
and which has resulted in a disabling bone condition. Furthermore both women endured years in
limbo before gaining legal status in Britain, though Dwana's migration experience was perhaps
even more traumatic because she left her only child behind in Zimbabwe and was alone in Britain.
In terms of geography, social position and ethnicity, however, the two families are widely
divergent. Throughout her narrative, Dwana made frequent references to her ethnicity, proudly

identifying herself as Kalanga, a sub-set of the minority Ndebele group. She explained her family's opposition to Zimbabwe's ruling government as an ethnic issue and said six of the ten siblings, including herself, had been forced to leave the country after 2000 for political reasons, heading for neighbouring Botswana and South Africa or further afield. One brother was still in hiding and even his family did not know his exact whereabouts.

The first names Dwana wrote after placing herself – 'Me' – on the map, were 'Molly', her daughter, 'Mum' and 'Dad' and her late paternal 'Grandma', while her nine siblings – some named but others grouped as 'brothers & sisters' - are spread around the periphery. Using colour to indicate strength of emotional attachment and frequency of contact, Dwana drew red lines from herself to the people with whom she exchanged daily text messages and contacted by phone at least once a week, namely Molly in Zimbabwe, her brother Sbha who migrated to Canada in 2001 and their younger sister Manho, who followed him in 2013. She used orange to link her and Sbha to their brother Sam in South Africa, telling me they exchanged messages once or twice a week and telephoned less regularly. Yellow indicated more problematic ties and only occasional communication with the rest of her (unnamed) brothers and sisters in Zimbabwe and South Africa. In two circles close to her own, she put the names of friends - all but one of them Zimbabweans living in Southampton - who provided the day-to-day support she said she would otherwise have expected from blood relatives. As I was to learn subsequently, the blank spaces separating this family were repeated in the maps of other members [see Appendix D] and signify more than physical distance. This is a family whose members maintain strict boundaries between themselves and the outer world and do not easily confide in each other, let alone outsiders.

Whereas Fungai used her status as oldest sibling to persuade others to talk to me, Dwana's tentative position made introductions more difficult. However she arranged for me to stay with her sister Dundwana in Bulawayo and visit their parents in Matabeleland South,[54] though she warned me they might feel uncomfortable having a white visitor.[55] Although Dundwana was a kind and warm host, she did not want to participate in the research but her father and two of her sisters, Lyra who was the 'baby' of the family and Zinhle who was visiting from South Africa, gave me brief life stories. Afterwards I learned that there were other relatives I could have met, but while I was there I observed no signs of contact with extended family members. When I later visited South Africa, Dwana arranged for me to meet her brother Sam who was working at a gold

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[54] See Fig. 1, p.27.
[55] I was never sure whether this was because I would draw unwelcome attention to her parents in a volatile political climate, or whether it was simply a matter of social embarrassment and concern that I might be too 'grand' to stay in a rural homestead. It was possibly a bit of both.

mine. However, no-one suggested I get in touch with their other brother who was working in a different part of the country.

Fortunately, however, the thinness of the sample was largely compensated by the depth of my relationship with Dwana, whom I first met when working on an oral history project about refugees in Southampton in 2010. Recent studies in therapeutic counselling gave her an interest in exploring both her history and culture and her life story, told over an 18 month period, was richly layered. In many ways I count our collaboration as the gold standard for this kind of work. Proximity meant that we could meet every few weeks in relaxed circumstances, developing a relationship outside the parameters of research. In reading transcripts of her life story, it is interesting to see the progression over time from a bare outline to detailed description as key incidents were revisited and revised. For instance, after my visit to her family in Zimbabwe, she was able to explain things that puzzled me. She also kept me in touch with family developments and I observed the dramatic change in her situation. After a prolonged legal battle, she was joined in Southampton by her daughter Molly. Suddenly her rather bare one-bedroom flat became crammed with new furniture to accommodate the young woman and a process of mutual rediscovery began. It was almost a year before Molly agreed to take part in the research but again, time and geographic proximity allowed me to wait for the right moment.

This chapter is based on my conversations with Dwana, six life stories and meetings with three generations of the family, aged between 24 and 77 years old (see Figure 4). First, I examine their linked stories, showing that the family's history and its identification with a beleaguered minority subject to discrimination and violence has a profound impact on the way they interpret and respond to 'crisis'. Their story has to be understand through the unspoken as well as spoken narratives and I seek to interpret the hesitations, gaps and inconsistencies. Next, taking individual accounts of migration to the UK and South Africa, I explore the way policies of 'home' and 'host' countries affect the experience of exile. Finally, I focus on the stories of Dwana and Molly to explore the theme of separation.
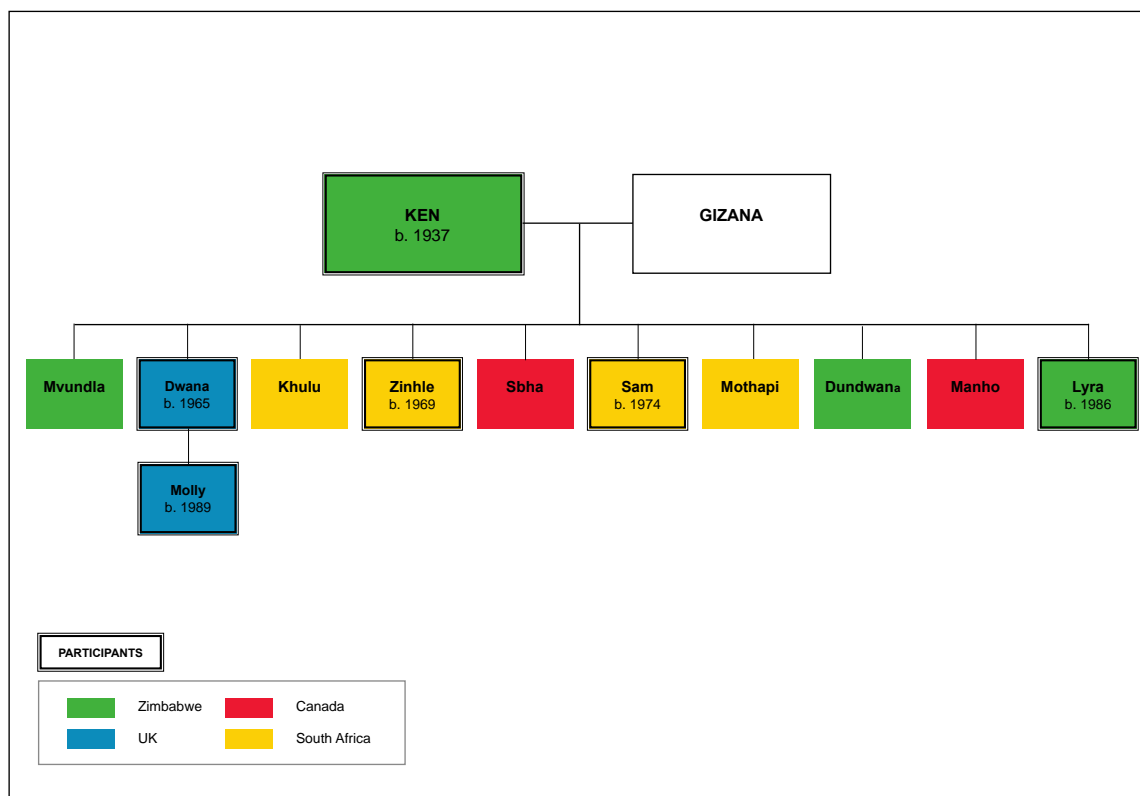
Figure 5 Dwana's family tree

[Names changed to protect identities]

5.2   Starting from scratch

Whereas Fungai's family history is rooted in a distant past, Dwana's begins with her father Ken, born in 1937, a fatherless child in a society where land, wealth and status are passed down the male line (Peters, 1998, Schmidt, 1991). The lack of a patrilineal pedigree was a significant social disadvantage but in his life story Ken presented himself as the founding father of his own dynasty. He and his wife Gizana, a fellow teacher, retired many years ago but still farm land in a remote part of Matabeleland close to the Botswana border, an area of dense woodland and kopjes (rocky hills) an hour's drive by car from the nearest metal road. During my visit, Ken took me to see the spot where Catholic priests set up one of the first missions in Zimbabwe – a tree in a clearing that would be indistinguishable to anyone but a local historian. Perhaps to compensate for the lack of a long patrilineal ancestry, he began his life story with an account of the region, highlighting its significance as a site of ancestral worship as well as Christianity.

 It would be 'normal' in Ndebele culture to live on your father's land, but Ken described the area as his mother's family home. He explained that his father 'took another woman', abandoned his wife and child and subsequently had children by his second and third wives, a fact Ken only

discovered by chance later in life when he met a man who turned out to be his half-brother. With evident pride, he told me this brother reported back to their father saying 'I've seen your son. He has a big beautiful home'. After elementary school, Ken worked as a carpenter in order to support his mother, but by the time he met his father he was teaching in the rural area and had accumulated enough capital to build a home of traditional thatched rondavels:

> I bought material for this house here; I bought all the planks, the roofing, the window frames and the doors and cement as well … Whether it is foresight, I don't know; my insurance policies helped me build up this home.

With a solid foundation, Ken set about creating a family of his own, giving his ten children Ndebele names that reflected a growing sense of achievement, such as 'blessing' 'let's build this home' and 'we are saved'. He described his large family as 'revenge of my father and my father having got me alone'. Within the family narratives, this rural home, in a devout Catholic community scarred by periods of violence, is the embodiment of family life. Its creation and survival form their foundational story.

In a sense it was the Catholic church which took the paternal role in Ken's life, furnishing him with a moral framework and academic grounding, but in his narrative he emphasised the fact that he had done everything alone and passed on this lesson of financial prudence and self-reliance to his children. Whereas he framed his story in a moral framework, Dwana was more inclined to interpret her past in both moral and psychological terms. She described her upbringing as 'traditional' in that her father was the authority figure who would sit on a chair while his wife served him and the children. She said he was a 'loving' father, even though he gave her a number of severe beatings. In his life story, Ken declared that his over-riding aim was to instil in them Christian principles:

> I believe in prayer, in God's guidance, and I want my children to realise without the help of the Almighty life would be almost lost. My real desire is that if they could go through all the Christian principles and abide by them I think they will be happy; and perhaps, as we all anticipate, life after death will be better than the life we are leading now. So my desire and my continual employment to them is that they should abide by their Christian principles. I'm saying to myself that I educated them and – the problems they're facing now – they're better equipped because they are educated. If they were not educated then I would feel very bad because the world is not kind to people that don't have the, you know, the correct attitude or the correct orientation.

Perhaps Ken's own experience of discrimination, first under colonial rule (he remembered being forced to walk in the streets rather than share the pavement with 'whites') and then under a majority Shona government, fuelled his hopes for a better afterlife. He did not explain what he meant by the 'correct orientation' but it was to be reached through education. Like Fungai's parents, Ken and Gizana were subsistence farmers as well as teachers and paid for all their

children to attend boarding schools, putting a severe strain on family finances. Without inheritance from his father, Ken was unable to provide the life-style Fungai's family enjoyed and all the children had to help around the house and farm. Like Fungai's sisters they were brought up to improve themselves through education, the route to high social status, but as Ndebele-speakers in a deprived area of Zimbabwe they faced greater obstacles. Nevertheless, Ken boasted that two of the girls, Zinhle and Lyra, got a Master's degree, his oldest daughter Mukundla was a deputy head mistress, his son Sbha was an electrician now studying to be an engineer and another son was an electrical mechanic in a well-paid job in South Africa.

Even without the security and influence of a patrilineal line, they might have expected emotional support from their mother's relatives. Unfortunately, as Dwana's sister Zinhle pointed out, here too they were left wanting:

> My family is unique in that our father is the only one in the family so we don't really have many cousins . . . [Mother] came from a large family but we are not very close to her part of the family because she comes from a bit far from where my father is. We know them; they come to family functions; but we have not established ties with them, not strong ties.

Like Fungai and her relatives, this family thus presented themselves as set apart from the wider social community but in their case it was a cause of regret, almost a sense of inferiority, whereas the Shona family felt they were a cut above the common herd. Moreover, where Shona participants peopled their stories with this wider inter-dependent family network, Dwana's brother and sisters and her daughter Molly appeared more solitary and self-reliant. Molly introduced herself as 'the only child my mum has'. Zinhle started, 'I'm number four out of ten'. but continued her life story as if the others hardly existed. Lyra said that by the time she was born, 'most of them were gone'. It was as if Ken's isolation had been passed down the generations and here again they differed radically from Fungai's gregrarious, voluble family. Furthermore, their personal isolation mirrored the geo-political situation of Matabeleland, a region regarded as ethnically distinct from the rest of Zimbabwe. To interpret their collective story, it is therefore important to understand the wider historic and political background.

5.3   A troubled history

A decade before the recent Zimbabwean 'crisis', the rural area where the family lived was a place of considerable danger as government forces moved in to settle scores with their ZAPU rivals. The Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (Zimbabwe), which gathered first hand testimony on

the Gukurahundi[56] in Matabeleland and the Midlands from 1980 to 1988, reported that Mugabe's Fifth Brigade targeted civilians and 'dissidents' alike:

> One of the most tragic impacts of 5 Brigade on Matabeleland was the resulting perception among those civilians who suffered that they had become victims of an ethnic and political war.

> (2007, p.95)

This period loomed darkly in conversations with the people I met in Matabeleland, and was a shared point of identification. Thus Dwana and all but the youngest family members recounted their lives through the prism of historic trauma. With the exception of Zinhle, who said she could see beyond 'tribal boundaries', they viewed themselves as weaker partners in an ethnic conflict waged by the Shona majority. Ken, whose role as teacher made him a likely target for violence[57], said it was caused by 'tribal hatred between Shonas and Ndebeles' while his son Sam said:

> These people they hate us. They are not on our side. They don't want us around, because obviously these people showed they just wanted to victimise us.

Within their narratives there was a tension between idealised concepts of 'homeland', 'home' and 'family' and a more troubled reality. Just as the family itself was a site of conflict as well as comfort, unity and fracturing, so 'home' was a place of security but also danger. As Ken remarked, during the Gukurahundi it became 'the most unsafe place'. He said the family was regularly threatened by soldiers who suspected they were harbouring dissidents, adding that girls were particularly at risk because soldiers would take them 'for entertainment', a euphemism for rape[58]. In the narratives of both Dwana and her brother Sam, the homestead itself was breached and their mother, still recovering from childbirth, was subjected to a brutal attack by Fifth Brigade soldiers. Dwana told the story of her return home from fetching water:

> My brother, the one in Canada, he had gone inside the kraal where we keep the cows; he was hiding there and everyone in the kraal was beaten up and my mum was at home; my mum saw that happening and she thought she would come; she said, 'Why are you beating my children?' My mum was a very feisty woman. I don't know what they said; I saw my mum fighting. She took hold of the gun; they were now fighting with the soldier;

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[56] See also Chapter 2.2.

[57] The Fifth Brigade systematically attacked civil servants including teachers. For instance, in 1983 in Lupane, at least five teachers were killed and 60 teachers left the area. See ALEXANDER, J., MCGREGOR, J. & RANGER, T. 2000. *Violence & Memory: One hundred Years in the 'Dark Forests' of Matabeleland,* Oxford, James Currey.

[58] The high incidence of rape was commonly believed by Ndebele people to be a systematic attempt to create Shona babies. However, it was not just government forces who used rape as a weapon. The dissidents earned notoriety by coercing civilians to give them food and raping young girls. ' See ibid., CATHOLIC COMMISSION FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE IN ZIMBABWE & LEGAL RESOURCES FOUNDATION (ZIMBABWE) 2007. *Gukurahundi in Zimbabwe: A report on the disturbances in Matabeleland and the Midlands 1980-1988,* Johannesburg, South Africa, Jacana.

> they were wrestling; and my mum said, 'You will not beat me!' and then, when the other one saw that the soldier was being overpowered, he came and started beating my mum and then the gang beat her . . . sticks and guns and fists, you know. It was horrible. She had just given birth, just given birth and, ah, thank goodness my dad was not around; they would have killed my dad; I think he was going to fight them but he was in Bulawayo.

Dwana used this dramatic account to show her mother's vulnerability but also her capacity for survival, themes which recur through her family's narratives. She highlighted her mother's courage, her 'feisty' character, in the face of the soldiers' brutality and hinted that her father would have fought to the death. Showing herself to be a chip off the same block, she related how she refused to run away on seeing what was happening, and instead walked towards one of the soldiers ready to drop her load of water on his head, declaring, 'I won't take it lying down'. In Sam's version of the attack, he too emphasised the ability to survive a David and Goliath type struggle. Eight or nine years old at the time, he remembered carrying the newborn baby from the house to show the soldiers so that they would stop beating his mother, implying that he saved her life. He said, 'My mother hasn't stopped thanking me for that'. In these two accounts we see a gendered response to violence. As women, all Dwana and her mother can do is resist with the almost inevitable consequence that they will be abused, while Sam – the boy child – acts as his mother's protector.

Another anecdote, this time with no personal connection, featured in the family memory and illustrated the brutality of the notorious North Korean-trained forces. Both Dundwana and Ken related how villagers were forced to watch as a pregnant woman had her belly ripped open, not daring to cry out lest they too were punished. Whether this was a collective 'memory' or something witnessed by a family member was not clear, but it is similar to some of the atrocities recorded in a Catholic Commission for Peace and Justice report. Nor was it just the 'enemy', in other words the Shona-dominated government, which threatened the family's existence. Sam also recounted being forced to keep a watch out for ZAPU dissidents on the run from government forces, and being caught 'between a rock and a hard surface'. As Ken pointed out, even though most Ndebele people supported ZAPU, they were sometimes accused of giving information to the government:

> We had to stomach quite a lot of trouble here, a lot of trouble, being tortured, being investigated in a way because, when they came in here, if the soldiers came in here you had to answer where the dissidents were; if the dissidents came in here you had to answer where the soldiers are … The soldiers will come to defenceless people to ask a lot of questions about people that are armed like themselves; so it's a mental torture and no small wonder if some of us have hyper-tension.

The threat of rape was a recurrent theme in Dwana's life-story (see 5.6.1), and during the Gukurahundi she reported two narrow escapes. The first, described in graphic detail, was when

she was at boarding school in 1982 in a remote area. Government soldiers, who were 'supposed to be protecting us from the dissidents', entered her dormitory and raped some pupils and teachers, including a nun. The second incident happened at home one Christmas when a 'dissident' came asking for food and tried to follow her into the hut where she was sleeping. She hid, absolutely terrified but determined not to give in: 'I told myself that's the last thing I will let them do. I will fight'. The places where she should have felt most secure were thus transformed into sites of fear but, again, she used her narrative to demonstrate her ability to survive.

In comparison to these graphic accounts, more recent experiences of 'crisis' were presented sketchily or through innuendo. Family members seemed evasive or unwilling to elaborate, returning to the past rather than confronting the near present so it was sometimes unclear which period they were talking about. It was as if these tales of the Gukurahundi were a way of expressing pain that was too raw to put into words. Moreover, as Ken explained, the current situation re-awakened past trauma. Any acts of violence perpetrated on Ndebele people by the country's leaders, 'those up there', reminded them of their history:

> As I said, we belong to the victims and we don't normally victimise one another, but those up there at times if they do anything wrong, it reminds; it quickly brings back [the past].

Among the Ndebele people I met in Matabeleland, there were many who talked about unhealed wounds and the fact that no-one in the government had ever offered an apology[59]. It was clear from the way participants deflected attention from recent problems by reverting to past conflict that recent events had made those wounds deeper. Community work in the aftermath of disasters leads Dukes et al (2012) to suggest that deep trauma from substantial injustice that has gone unacknowledged may last over generations and leaves communities less resilient. It is therefore also possible that a history of ethnic-related violence reduced this family's ability to withstand 'crisis'.

5.3.1 Words that betray

The narratives that form the basis of this chapter are heavy with silence as if participants were frightened to say anything that could be regarded as critical of the government, or as if political oppression and trauma had somehow robbed them of speech. Michael Jackson offers a possible

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[59] In 1999 President Robert Mugabe acknowledged for the first time that soldiers sent to fight the dissident insurgency 'went beyond limits' by killing innocent civilians. Speaking at a memorial service for former vice-president and PF-ZAPU leader Joshua Nkomo, he added 'It was an act of madness; we killed each other; we destroyed each other's property. IRIN. 2007. *Zimbabwe: Calls for justice 20 years after massacre* [Online]. IRIN. Available: http://www.irinnews.org/report/64321 [Accessed 1 February 2016].

explanation using Hannah Arendt's argument that systematic violence reduces its object to the status of nonentity:

> State violence effectively extinguishes the person as an individual subject through a process of iconic essentialising that transforms him or her into a mere instance of a more general case: a species, a specimen, a pathology, a class.

(Jackson, 2013, p.90)

Similarly, colonialism and ethnic conflict turned Ndebele-speakers into non-persons. To survive, they had to conceal their identities and change their language or remain silent. Furthermore the truth of what happened in Matabeleland either could not be told, or was not heard, rendering language useless. Therefore, like the Iraqi and Somali refugees whom Jackson encountered, some of Dwana's relatives met the invitation to tell their stories with awkwardness and suspicion and it was necessary to stay alert to what was left unsaid.

In relating her childhood story, Dwana said, the very fact of speaking Ndebele put your life at risk[60]. You had to 'be clever' and prepare to switch languages, disguising your ethnic identity: 'We are afraid of one another. We don't trust each other, the Shona people and the Ndebele people'. Silence both protected and imprisoned Dwana and her relatives. It may have kept them out of further harm's way but it locked them into a small circle of people they trusted, preventing them from forging new ties.The presence of spies in their midst meant family members could not let their guard down even in the company of other Ndebele speakers. Ken said that, although he told the children the truth about what was going on, he warned them: 'Don't give it out . . . keep it to yourself'. It was perhaps no wonder that a number of family members described themselves as quiet, as if the requirement to maintain silence manifested itself physically in an inability to speak up. Dwana, for instance, commented on her 'low' voice and the fact that as a child she sat almost silent in class.

As a researcher, this presented me with a challenge. Although Dundwana, my host in Bulawayo, gradually relaxed in my company and by the end of a week was even sharing confidences about her marriage and difficult relationship with her step-son and mother-in-law, she refused to sit down and relate her life story. Zinhle, who was visiting Bulawayo from South Africa at the time of our meeting, left many gaps in her account of the events that led her to leave Zimbabwe and told

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[60] At the height of the Fifth Brigade's activities, every Ndebele-speaker was considered a dissident liable to be killed. Moreover, one of the tactics of oppression conducted by ZANU-PF was to force people to attend huge public rallies at which they were made to dance and sing Shona songs for hours on end. Those who did not know the words or tired of dancing would be beaten. See CATHOLIC COMMISSION FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE IN ZIMBABWE & LEGAL RESOURCES FOUNDATION (ZIMBABWE) 2007. *Gukurahundi in Zimbabwe: A report on the disturbances in Matabeleland and the Midlands 1980-1988,* Johannesburg, South Africa, Jacana.

me, 'I think it's a time that none of the members of the family will talk to you about'. She said they were all 'angry' but had learned not to show it. Lyra, the youngest of the siblings, who stayed in Zimbabwe and was a student throughout the most turbulent period, talked about the 'deep crisis' and said, 'You'd hear stories and things would happen. Ah, it was tough', but refused to be drawn when I asked what she was doing in 2008, a year of extreme political violence when many other students at her university were arrested. So the family code of practice was one of concealment born of fear. Addressing me directly in her narrative, Dwana emphasised the sense of threat:

> You wouldn't walk freely, Jenny. You wouldn't speak freely to people. You know you can [pause]. The atmosphere was very tense and we knew something bad was going to happen but when and how you didn't know.

She stumbled when trying to describe the threat, starting a sentence that was never finished: 'You know you can – ', as if there was no word to describe the horror of what could be done. Dwana learned from experience that not only were words potentially dangerous, they were also futile. As an Ndebele-speaker, her testimony was treated as valueless by government officials so she suffered what the philosopher Miranda Fricker (2007) calls 'epistemic' or 'testimonial' injustice, an intrinsic harm done when one's capacity as a knower, essential to human value, is denied. When she was attacked in her home, she said she did not consider making an official complaint because there was no point: 'You can't even go the police; you can't go to anyone; you can't go; they won't listen'. This sense of injustice, of truth that was unrecognised or denied, rendered speech useless.

5.3.2   Absence of trust

Dwana referred to a lack of trust which she claimed was common among Zimbabwean people, who were 'very private'. She said, 'They wouldn't tell you what was happening because we didn't trust each other'. Alluding to events that caused her and others to leave the country, she said there were things that could not be spoken even now, among close Zimbabwean friends in the UK:

> We don't talk about – we talk about other things but we don't talk about those things. It just has never come to – I think no one is ready to talk about their – their situation; hence they don't want to ask, because if they ask about – the other person will then ask about *their* situation.

Her hesitation and reluctance to put 'those things' into words suggested a continuing fear of reprisal. Indeed, there were rumours within the Zimbabwean diaspora about CIO agents sending reports back to Harare (Mzaca, 2011, Taylor, 2011). Dwana's brother Sam, whom I met in South

Africa, had similar concerns. He said he did not like using his smart phone to talk to the rest of the family because you never knew who might be listening:

> I find it difficult to finish conversation or confide in someone using these social mediums; especially because, if you really must talk to someone you must use things like skype but then again, you're talking to someone and you're thinking, maybe he's not sitting alone; it's never really like talking face-to-face.

Another brother, Mothapi, had gone into hiding in South Africa and Dwana said he occasionally communicated with his brothers in the country but used a pay phone 'because he doesn't want to be traced and he doesn't want to put anyone in danger'.

With this lack of trust in the wider community, family members had only each other to rely on. As Lyra said, 'I have resolved that my family members have got to be my friends because friends you can never trust them, never ever trust them'. Molly also complained she had confided in a school friend who 'betrayed' her to classmates. On the other hand, there was some information that could not be shared even within the family. For example, Dwana kept her husband's abuse secret:

> He was violent and I couldn't tell anyone, even my parents, I couldn't tell them. I only told my mum when I was here [in the UK]. I never told them what he used to do to me and what he used to do, his cheating habits; I couldn't, I couldn't tell them.

As well as wanting to protect her parents from an uncomfortable truth, she knew that they would insist on her staying with her husband and so, once more, speaking out was futile. In that instance, distance eventually helped her open up to her mother, but in general the family's physical dispersal as a result of 'crisis' made communication even more problematic. As head of the family, Ken complained it was difficult to assert his authority when 'using a remote control', by which he presumably meant a mobile phone:

> Using a remote control is the most difficult thing to do particularly if you are not sure of the technology of using that remote control. If someone doesn't see you, they tend to ignore whatever you say, but if the words and the action are seen, there is some respect for the admonitions put across, so it's difficult really to rely on remote.

Here Ken implied that the break-up of his family challenged his authority as father. But whereas his concern was losing control, they worried about the loss of emotional comfort. They missed the verbal communication, body language, eye contact and so on, that create bonds of trust (Boden and Molotch, 1994, Urry, 2002). In South Africa, Sam worried about his elderly parents and the fact that people might not tell him the truth if they were very sick:

> You know, people when you ask them how they found them, they never tell you what the situation on the ground; they always sugar-coat it; so you hear stories about people who are very sick and they'll tell you, 'Ah, they're alright'.

Lyra was always sending messages and chatting on the phone to relatives, but agreed that this was no substitute for physical contact because words could deceive:

> If I'm looking at you, I can tell you are not OK, but over the phone, if you say 'I'm OK', I wouldn't know if you're really OK or you're just saying OK'.

She added that it was easy to develop grievances and misunderstandings when you did not meet face-to-face, a point that was repeated by Dwana, whose experience in the UK as a counsellor made her appreciate the value of talking and who worried that her daughter Molly was too 'quiet'. In a strange reversal of the principle that 'face-to-face' contact is more trustworthy, Molly admitted that she found it easier to communicate with her mother by SMS message, even in the same house:

> Mum would try to tell me about her life and I would try and tell her what I can. I'm good at typing, writing texts. Even if I want to ask for something I would prefer sending a message. I would go to another room and send you a message and say, 'Mum can I, may I please have this?' or something. I can't really hold a conversation with someone; it's hard for me.

After years of separation, which had never been properly explained to her, she took refuge in silence, unable to form the kind of daughter-mother relationship that Dwana expected and that involved the sharing of confidences [see 5.7]. This was not the only blood bond that fell short of the cultural ideal of a close happy family. As we saw with Fungai's family, the collective story is one of loving family gatherings in the rural home, yet individually members hinted at rivalry and tensions and a common trope was that of the missing brother, Mothapi.

5.4   Family ties and tensions

Within the collective family narrative, parents are providers and law-givers who work hard to sustain the family and mete out punishments to those who transgress. Although the middle generation of siblings identified with their father, regarding him as the apex of the family, Dwana portrayed her mother as equally strong-minded, telling me that as an Ndebele speaker she refused to use her husband's Kalanga language or teach it to the children. Laughing she added 'Maybe she wore the trousers at our household'. In her life story, as in that of her daughter Molly and younger sister Lyra, it was the paternal grandmother who took a more nurturing role. Piecing together the stories, it is clear the children spent a long time apart from their parents. At times when the rural area became unsafe, they were sent to the family house in Bulawayo and at secondary level they were educated in boarding schools. The highlight of the year was Christmas when they gathered at the rural home:

> Christmas was good fun; because we didn't have luxury things and things like rice, chicken and maybe pigs, so they would buy it maybe at Christmas. That's when they would cook and to us it was everything. It would be like 'Wow!' We really looked forward to Christmas. It was really exciting.
>
> [Dwana]
>
> Christmas time is family time. We meet together and even if we don't have fancy meals or celebrations but the fact that we're all together, you know, makes our Christmas.
>
> [Zinhle]

Since the 'crisis', however, and the family's dispersal, Christmas had become a reminder of separation, a focus of nostalgic longing. As Zinhle pointed out, in recent years, three or four of her siblings were missing – 'There's a lot of people who're not there'. Dwana is one of the absent ones, unable to return to Zimbabwe because she has no passport. For her, the festive season signifies belonging, a contrast to life as a 'foreigner' in the UK, where 'you never feel fully accepted; there's always something that says you don't belong here':

> Every year at Christmas we used to go home and we'd have our Christmas there, all of us and our children. It used to be very nice. And always Christmas, around Christmas time, you think of all those times and you can't do that and sometimes Mum and Dad are there by themselves. It must be hard for them as well to have all the ten kids and they don't see them, and they can't be with them.

As a time of family unity, childhood Christmas was the antithesis of the isolation she experienced as a migrant and the reality of the present situation. Dwana worried about her elderly parents who now had to cope without the support of their children. When I visited the family home, I watched Ken, whose sight is failing, try to sow seeds in straight furrows, scattering them far and wide. Every few weeks Gizana, who is diabetic and suffers from arthritis, has to travel a sixty mile journey by scotch cart and bus to collect her pension and medication from Bulawayo.

Although together the family presented an idealised portrait of unity, individually they alluded to different alliances and rivalries that had evolved since childhood. These tensions were more apparent from things not said, or spoken in unguarded moments, than their life stories and it was left to Dwana to fill in some of the gaps. I always noticed that she spoke much more affectionately about her brother Sbha than the others. She and their sister Manho who had joined Sbha in Canada, exchanged daily messages. Dwana explained that they had a special bond:

> I think we are of similar character the three of us. We are quiet and soft. The others are very boisterous . . . We take a back seat and are rational. The others are irrational.

Sbha was the only family member in whom she could confide all her troubles and she had a motherly relationship with Manho, who was barely a teenager when she left Zimbabwe:

> Some of us are lighter than others. The three of us are dark-skinned and she used to say, 'We should be closer to each other because we are the two girls who are dark' and she felt a bond for me and I felt responsible for her.

In making this distinction between light and dark, Dwana was alluding to the racial stereotyping of her colonial childhood and the belief, even among black Zimbabweans, that a white skin was superior to black or, as she said, 'some people associate light with pretty'. She was also hinting at a hierarchy within the family itself where some were more advantaged than others. As an only child, Molly did not have to contend with sibling rivalry as such, but admitted that she fought her aunt Lyra for her grandmother's affection. The two were close in age and grew up side by side in the rural home. 'We used to fight for granny. She used to think my granny loved me more than her so she would bully me whenever I was with her'. She pointed to a scar on her finger, an injury deliberately caused by Lyra who was 'walloped' with a stick as punishment.

Migration widened existing fault-lines. Dwana blamed her sister Mvundla for neglecting their parents even though she lived close by, and criticised her male in-laws. For instance, she accused Mvundla's husband of 'cruelty' to Molly and another brother-in-law of trying to seduce her, and dismissed Zinhle's husband as Shona and therefore 'not to be trusted'. When Mvundla's husband died in 2015 and Dwana was telling me about the funeral arrangements, she said his relatives accused her sister of sorcery and had even attacked her parents. On another occasion, she said she would rather receive a gift from a stranger than a relative because it was less likely to contain some kind of curse.

Talking of the current 'crisis', Dwana further revealead that one of her uncles[61] was a 'spy', a member of the Central Intelligence Organisation (CIO) who later became President Mugabe's bodyguard. Her parents refused to have anything to do with him but he came to the family house in Bulawayo when they were not there:

> Can you imagine? He used to come to our house from the villages, from torturing people there, some villagers, I don't know which villagers . . .

After refusing to let him leave his gun at the house while he went drinking at a shebeen, she was horrified to glimpse a dead body in the vehicle he had parked in her yard. When I asked her why she and her siblings let him come, she replied:

> Because he was a relative. We were younger. To us he was still our uncle. We knew he wouldn't do anything to us even though we speak bad about Mugabe, he wouldn't do anything to us. We knew that.

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[61] Dwana was not sure how she was related to this 'uncle' but believed it was through her maternal grandmother. She said, 'In our culture, even if it's a distant relative, it's still very close'.

Participants thus offered a more nuanced family portrait than the idealised version given by Fungai and her relatives. Whether more critical and quarrelsome or simply more prepared to admit failings, they presented a less united front. Dwana in particular suggested that the family might not provide a strong enough safety net to protect her from the worst effects of 'crisis'.

5.5   Family scattering

It was clear from Fungai's family narratives that an individual's role within the family, as well as gender and life stage influenced the decision to stay or leave during the 'crisis'. However, there is a fundamental difference between the way the two families presented their stories. Whereas Fungai's relatives emphasied their own agency and the choices they made, only referring to public events when they impinged on their own personal trajectories, Dwana and her relatives foregrounded political and ethnic tensions, presenting themselves as the victims of circumstance. They lacked the social and economic resources which gave the Shona family its sense of autonomy so that, to a certain extent, they were swept along by events over which they had no control.

Ken, who deflected questions about the recent 'crisis' by reverting to previous episodes of conflict, never talked directly about his own experience or whether he considered leaving Zimbabwe. Therefore, I can only surmise that pride in building the family home and raising ten children, his duties in the parish where he spent Sundays praying with those who were house-bound, and his role as teacher and moral guide, prevented him from leaving Matabeleland. Furthermore, age and failing eyesight and Gizana's health problems restricted mobility. At the other end of the age spectrum, their youngest daughter Lyra and grand-daughter Molly were still at boarding school when the family began to disperse and had no choice but to stay behind. Lyra was sharing the family's Bulawayo house with Zinhle and Dundwana when they too left for South Africa, so was then on her own:

> I think somehow you just become tough; you become strong. Now I'm used to staying by myself. Maybe that's why I'm a bit quiet because I don't, I don't really need people to talk to because I've stayed by myself for so long.

Zinhle, who had gone away to university in Harare and married a Shona man, implied that she crossed borders principally to find work, though said, 'With Zimbabwe, it's difficult to separate the economics and the political because the two are like Siamese twins; you can't talk about one without talking about the other'. Leaving her young children with her parents, she zig-zagged between Botswana, South Africa and Zimbabwe. Dundwana, the sister I stayed with in Bulawayo,

was single at the time and without ties. Although she would not speak to me about her experiences, her husband told me she had gone to South Africa and then flown to the UK in 2001 but was immediately detained and deported. She elaborated by saying, with some bitterness, that she believed the UK authorities wanted MDC supporters like her to stay in Zimbabwe so that they could vote in the forthcoming presidential election.

Behind all these journeys was a sub-text of fear. Dwana said her oldest sister, Mvundla, who was a teacher in the rural area 'was tortured by ZANU-PF people' who accused her of influencing pupils to support the MDC. She crossed the border into Botswana but later returned and now worked under her married name as the deputy head of a boarding school near home. Two brothers, Sbha and Sam, who were active members of the MDC, went to Canada and South Africa respectively because their lives were in danger. Recounting her own decision to leave in 2003, Dwana said that she was living in the family's house in Bulawayo when about six ZANU-PF supporters burst into the house asking questions about her brothers: 'I was beaten and they wanted to rape me I think but I fought my way … I wouldn't take it lying down'. A friend who also supported ZANU-PF then came to give her a warning:

> 'You'd better disappear because they are planning to come and attack you, really attack you, because they have warned you several times.' When my friend told me … and I know that . . . I knew that other people had been killed and I, I have heard and I've seen what had happened to other people and I thought, she's only alerting me because she cares; she wouldn't lie and say such a thing; and the way they had come to the house and beat me, I knew . . . if I was someone really weak they were going to do really horrible things to me; and at home I told myself, I can't fight them, and some of them were big, big men and I can't . . . and, if they are armed, I can't defend myself.

By this time Dwana had left her abusive husband, despite her father's disapproval, and had been diagnosed as HIV positive. She was already ill and, whereas in earlier parts of her narrative she presented herself as brave and defiant, here she emphasised her own 'weakness' in contrast with her potential attackers, pictured as 'big men' who were 'armed' and could do 'horrible things' to her. It seems likely that the near-rape experiences of her childhood added to her sense of vulnerabilty. Leaving Molly in the care of her parents, she travelled to the UK where she knew she could get treatment.

A story that dominated the family's collective memory of exile was that of the 'missing brother', Mothapi, who deserted from the army and went into hiding in South Africa, thus incurring the 'social death' (Kankonde, 2010) of being marginalised, cut off from familial ties. Desertion would have been interpreted by the state as an act of betrayal and the authorities would have come looking for him, putting his whole family in danger. Zinhle said that he knew 'a lot of intelligence … so they would look for him and the first port of call obviously is family'. Their father Ken identified his desertion as the main cause of family dispersal:

> K: He can't come back in this country. Even the family was bothered because they wanted to find out exactly where he could be located so quite a number of my children decided to leave for, er, diasporic protection in a way.'

> J: What would have happened to them if they hadn't?

> K: Oh, they would have been tortured to say exactly where he could be found. If ever they have his phone numbers they would be forced to give them and, er, if they didn't, perhaps - I don't know, anything else could have gone. I don't know. The forces have their own ways of ekeing information from people, torturing and perhaps at times brutally killing.

Although Ken's children told me they worried that he was equally at risk of interrogation and torture, he denied this, saying that he and Gizana were never approached because they kept themselves 'away from political undertakings'. However, he then admitted, 'It was a very difficult time, very difficult time, difficult time'. Gizana told me that sometimes she could not sleep for worrying about 'the son who has disappeared'. She described him as 'always a loving child' and said she wished she had wings to fly to South Africa to find him. Zinhle said no one in the family knew where he was, and Dwana told me he moved around all the time because he believed people were following him, and would never be able to return to Zimbabwe while Mugabe was in power. He would occasionally phone her and, though he never asked for money, she could tell how he was from his tone of voice and would send something. When she last spoke to his common-law wife, she was told they had been eating nothing but cabbage the whole month. 'It's not the fault of his own', Dwana said. 'He ran away to save his life; now he has to pay for the rest of his life.'

As a consequence of 'crisis', the family that Ken so carefully built from scratch had scattered within the space of a few years, threatening their dynastic project. The elderly parents talked about the speed and shock of their children's departure. Ken said, 'Ah, it was all very sudden, all very sudden; disappeared, ah, they all disappeared'. As I walked with Gizana to the fields where she was supervising the two farm workers in ploughing, she complained about high blood pressure and pain in her joints, saying that by now it should be the time to rest but this was not possible with her children gone. She said they had 'just disappeared', phoning later to tell her where they were and that 'it was terrible news'. Unlike Fungai's older relatives in Zimbabwe, who saw migration as a family project which benefitted the whole family, Dwana's parents saw it as something imposed on them by external forces, with only negative consequences. When the children first left, Ken sent money to South Africa to support them but recently Sbha had visited from Canada and arranged for the construction of a house in the family homestead – the only two-storey building for miles around and a sign of considerable status. It was normally kept locked but Ken and Gizana opened it in my honour and he and I sat there on a comfortable settee while the women sat outside round the kitchen fire. I knew from Dwana that the siblings sent money

and gifts whenever they could and Ken acknowledged that 'at some stage they drop a few cents for our upkeep'. However, he preferred to maintain his image as the responsible founding father and added:

> I was prudent to keep some animals, yes, so at some stage I had to sell some beasts for our upkeep.

The value of cattle, highly prized in Ndebele culture, was a contrast to the 'few cents' that were his children's contribution and he was thereby suggesting that ultimately he only had himself to rely on.

5.6   Exile

As 'crisis migrants', whose main objective was not to seek a 'better life' but to survive, Dwana, Zinhle and Sam encountered major obstacles when they crossed national borders. Although, as we saw in the previous chapter, Fungai and her migrant siblings faced discrimination and harsh immigration policies, the network of extended family ties proved a valuable resource and remained more or less intact, even though it was re-shaped. A close examination of Dwana's experience, and that of her sister Zinhle and brother Sam in South Africa, reveals an altogether different picture. Despite shared family history, their accounts of 'crisis' migration highlight differences of gender and also reflect the impact of different asylum policies.

5.6.1   Seeking asylum in the UK – Dwana's story

By the time Dwana fled to Britain, she was already vulnerable after suffering 13 years of violence at the hands of her unemployed husband who, she discovered, was having numerous affairs and using her wages to support eight illegitimate children. Leaving him was a bold decision because it broke social convention and meant loss of status in the community for both herself and her parents but even worse was to follow. In 2001 she was visiting Zinhle who was studying in the UK when she became seriously ill and was diagnosed with HIV/AIDS. The doctor treating her suggested she should claim asylum but at the time she had 'no intention of staying', telling me, 'I thought it was a horrible thing to apply for asylum'. However, when she returned to Zimbabwe to find a worsening political situation, she changed her mind. After the incident in Bulawayo when she was beaten by a gang and warned to flee, Dwana returned to Britain via South Africa using a South African passport.

As a woman repeatedly exposed to abuse by men, she was already traumatised when she set out on her migration journey. In comparison to Fungai, who encountered her own share of humiliation and setbacks, Dwana seemed extremely vulnerable. When her claim for asylum was

refused, she faced a period of legal non-entity, an abject state in which she relied on the charity of other Zimbabwean exiles until they moved away, making her homeless. At this point, she was supported by a voluntary organisation[62] who helped her appeal against the Home Office decision. By the time Dwana related this part of her story, we had achieved an intimacy that allowed her to explore the past almost as if she were re-living it. She talked of her fear in the face of British officials and the fact that she could not even trust a Zimbabwean friend who tried to encourage her to fight her case:

> I thought, well she doesn't like me; she wants me to be deported and what's going to happen to me? I can't even defend myself; I can't walk. What's going to happen to me?

Eventually she was summoned to an interview with two immigration officers, an encounter which brought back memories of the past. By drawing me as interlocutor into the narrative, she stressed its emotional impact:

> I was so afraid Jenny. I think it's the intimidation of the authorities of Zimbabwe. The immigration officer, a tall man, big build, and his radio was whistling about, I couldn't concentrate, tchip, I ended up saying to the lady who was interviewing me, "You know what? Coming from Zimbabwe where I was afraid of the authorites, this man intimidates me. I don't know whether I will tell you the truth in front of him. Is it possible for him to maybe wait in the other room? Because I can't concentrate; I don't know what I will say to you".

Again, Dwana was facing a 'big' man who had power to extinguish her identity, not by raping or killing her this time, but by refusing to believe her story. Once again, a figure of authority refused to accept her word, thus denying her value as a truth-teller. In Zimbabwe this happened because of prejudice against her ethnic group, but in the UK it was because of her abject status as an asylum seeker. Her intimidation was a stark contrast to the sense of entitlement which protected Fungai and her sisters when they arrived in Britain[63]. They believed the former colony owed them something and should recognise their worth whereas Dwana felt nothing but humiliation: 'I felt very low. I, I didn't feel worthy of anything'. Believing that her HIV status was somehow visible, she avoided going out:

> Walking in the streets, when I could still walk, you'd think everyone is judging you, everyone is pointing fingers at you, but what have I done? What have I done? And specially with the HIV which was really horrible for me, sometimes speaking to people I would think, oh, maybe I would pass it on to them. Well they didn't know I was positive but that's how I was thinking, that they are judging and maybe they think I had … maybe loose morals and all that and [pause] it was really … I can't even describe it. It was a dark

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[62] SWVG (Southampton and Winchester Visitors' Group).
[63] Fungai's sister Tatenda recounted an interview with the Home Office to discuss a problem with her visa. She said she told the officer: 'I'm not even moved by what you say. I'm here to stay … I'm not going back to Zimbabwe. You sort things out!'.

time for me, really dark time. I couldn't accept myself let alone to think anyone else could accept me.

She said that at times she even delayed taking rubbish to the dustbin till her neighbours were out because she didn't want anyone to see her. This feeling of being conspicuous and exposed was what Jackson (2013, p.84) identifies as a kind of 'cultural agorophobia' common to traumatised refugees: 'The sense of being isolated by and trapped within one's own experience exacerbates the feeling of being isolated in the world'. In Dwana's case it also reawakened the family's collective memory of isolation. Her lack of close family ties and increasing physical disability put her at the mercy of strangers and robbed her of agency. Unlike Fungai who could at least take pride in feeding and clothing her children, Dwana was unable to send money home for Molly. Moreover there were months when she could not communicate with her daughter who was at boarding school with no access to a phone. Dwana thought of suicide but was helped by a counsellor who suggested she buy a notebook and write down her feelings so she could show it to Molly one day and say, 'See, I haven't forgotten you'.

The British government turned down Dwana's second application for asylum, but in 2010, seven years after putting in her first claim, she was granted indefinite leave to remain in the UK. At this point, she reasserted the resilience foregrounded earlier in her story. She regained her voice and, when she next had to go to court to fight for reunion with her daughter, she had no problem speaking directly to the judge: 'I wasn't afraid when I got on with this court. I was ready to fight'. She told the court that she 'was never brought up to be dependent' and nor was her daughter, so they would finance their own upkeep. Against the Home Office's wishes, Molly was granted permission to reside in the UK and she joined Dwana in 2014.

As well as Dwana's Christian faith, it was the support of local friends, most of them fellow Ndebeles but also some Shona, that helped her regain self-confidence. As she indicated in her family map, these became part of her re-formulated family, 'closer' than some blood relatives. She said that, for emotional support, she turned to her brother Sbha in Canada but perhaps relied more on this circle of friends in Southampton:

> It's like we are family now . . . I don't hide anything from Sbha but these ones would give me more immediate support than Sbha because Sbha is far.

Whenever I visited Dwana, there would always be at least one phone call from a Zimbabwean friend and they met regularly at church or the local multi-cultural centre. Although, as she said, they did not talk about their experiences of 'crisis' in Zimbabwe, they shared news about their families 'back home'. Dwana's other blood ties, however, had been stretched to breaking point. Whereas Fungai placed herself at the heart of a strong family 'tree', with roots and branches that signified affective ties and reciprocal favours, she presented herself as an island cut off from the

rest of the family. As well as reflecting her geographic isolation, her map indicated no such supporting network based on give and take.

5.6.2 Broken ties

As we have already seen, there were fault lines among the siblings dating from childhood. Migration turned Dwana into an outsider and perhaps this, as well as her ongoing therapeutic training, granted her insights she might not have had before. In an earlier part of her life story, she recounted an incident when as a teenager she took the blame for something her older sister Mvundla had done and received a harsh beating from her father. Then, when Mvundla married and trained to be a teacher, she postponed her own plans to go to secretarial college in order to care for her baby nephew. During her years as an asylum seeker, however, the two were estranged. Dwana's explanation was that Mvundla's husband mistreated Molly, who stayed with them for a while. 'He was a mean man, I think, and he was doing, saying horrible things to Molly'. She believed her sister had failed in her sisterly duty by letting this happen:

> I was thinking, how could she just allow things to happen like that and how could she also agree into such things happening? I didn't understand and [pause] I thought we had that connection that I would do anything for her kids and she would do anything for my kids, because with her first son I sacrificed my year to go to school; I stayed home and looked after her son while she went to school …

The failure to reciprocate favours was a recurring theme in Dwana's narrative. It is not clear whether she resented delaying college for child-care at the time , or whether she viewed it as a 'sacrifice' retrospectively, from her position in the UK. In either case, obligations which might have been taken for granted in the ebb and flow of family life, were presented as one-sided and therefore unreasonable, causing a sense of abandonment and exile. Dwana said, 'I would do anything for my sisters', relating how she also looked after Zinhle's son and paid for Dundwana to take driving lessons; yet , when I asked her if they had helped her financially or emotionally, she replied 'No'.

> D: There was one time when I was really upset the way they were treating me; I was really, really annoyed. I said something to my mum and I said, 'You know, when I do something I'm not doing it because I want someone to do it back to me or to give me something back; I do it because I feel the right thing to do and I feel I want to do it'. And I was saying, 'You people are struggling with Molly's care and education. None of my siblings is helping. But how many of them have I helped?' And they were even taking my stuff without me knowing, without asking me. I don't think it's fair, because every time I had something I thought … I, I always thought of sharing with them, even though I was married, I used to share. No, none of them can say 'You never helped me', none of them. I used to help everyone. Even now when I have something and someone is in need – I don't have much, I only get benefits – I, I always prefer to give. But now Sbha he does help us. He does help us.

J: And he's the only one?

D: He is the only one I can say financially has helped me. Dundwana now, if I send her to do things for me in Zimbabwe, she does them for me; she doesn't complain … or anyway I would send money for fuel or whatever, but she, she would give her time to do stuff.

The way Dwana re-enacted the conversation with her mother reinforced her sense of grievance and emotional pain. She contrasted her own willingness to 'share' and 'help' to her siblings' failure, describing the lack of exchange in moral terms as injustice – not 'fair'. Furthermore, her reference to them 'taking my stuff without me knowing' suggested a break-down of trust. Although she admitted getting practical help from one of her sisters, and her brother, it was clear that she could not rely on the family as a safety-net.

5.6.3   Migration to South Africa – Zinhle's story

Zinhle, born in 1969, presented herself as the least isolated and most resilient family member. In the presence of Dundwana and Lyra in Bulawayo, she acted the part of responsible older sister, and in her life story she gave herself a pivotal role in the family as 'one of the gifted ones', with a 'modern' outlook. Educated outside Matabeleland, at the University of Zimbabwe in Harare, she defied her parents' wishes by marrying a fellow student who was Shona, telling me 'she could see beyond tribal boundaries'. Like Fungai's sister Rukudzo, she saw Zimbabwe's 'crisis' as a rude interruption to her upwardly mobile career in a beverage company, preferring to dwell on the economic effects rather than anything more politically sensitive:

> It was like overnight I had to go to the other side of the fence where you just can't afford anything. Prices were going up on a daily basis. You'd buy a bottle of cooking oil today; you go back the following day, it's gone up. So things changed rather abruptly and it was difficult to adjust.

In heading for South Africa, Zinhle was following the well-trodden path of numerous Zimbabweans who worked there on farms and could readily introduce her to people selling their identities. She never mentioned asylum as an option, even though Dwana told me their brothers' activities put them all in danger. Instead she told me it was easy to pass herself off as South African because the Ndebele language was very similar to Zulu. However her husband, a Shona-speaker, would have struggled in South Africa so stayed behind.

I interviewed Zinhle when she and her three children were on one of their periodic visits to Bulawayo. As we sat in her sister Dundwala's small living room, she talked about her days as an 'illegal' migrant, sharing accommodation in Johannesburg:

> A room like this would fit maybe six; same space; but we'd divide the rooms, maybe curtaining to divide the spaces. You have your own bed there; the next person has theirs in the next space, which we then called rooms [laughs] . . . It didn't really work for me

because the type of jobs I was getting was really not good for me. I mean I wasn't used to that kind of thing. I'd been a manager here. I actually rose from being a sales representative here in Zimbabwe to sales manager and then, can you imagine going from sales manager where you call the shots to a receptionist or even a waitress? So it wasn't very easy.

For a female illegal migrant there was little choice but to take menial jobs in the service industry and she had the added pain of separation from her first born child. Her usually matter-of-fact tone of voice changed when she described the moment of leaving him with her parents in Zimbabwe:

Oh, goodness gracious, you can't describe that [pause]. My first child [pause]. And I left him when he was [pause]; he took his first step to walk the day I left.

Zinhle said the long term effect of this three-year separation was that now she and her son 'were not very close', a matter of great regret. Torn between needing to fend for herself and wanting to stay with husband and three small children, she zig-zagged between countries. Meanwhile her husband left for the UK and disappeared from view.

Eventually, Zinhle decided to legitimise her migrant status, usuing her own identity as proof of professional and academic qualifications so that she could get 'decent jobs'. With the right papers she was able to live with her children establishing a network of friends, who became what she called her 'support step':

These friends are now my sisters because ninety percent of them are also Zimbabwean migrants. Some of them I met in South Africa and others I knew them when we were still here. The strongest bond is with a friend of mine that we share accommodation. We knew each other from here in Zimbabwe so she's been like a sister to me.

Although she described these friends as 'the new family members', on her family map [see Appendix C] she placed these 'workmates/migrants' in a space just outside the family circle, along with 'relatives-in-law', indicating that for her blood came first.

Zinhle made it clear that as a migrant in South Africa she sacrificed many home comforts but there were compensations in terms of her standard of living: 'It's not like home but it's better than home, for now, at least to eat every day.' Unlike Dwana, she felt supported by the extended family, particularly her parents:

They were our pillar because every problem you had, whether it's looking after children or even financial, they'd sell the little that they had to help you establish wherever you go.

Her sense of security was undoubtedly aided by relative proximity. Although she complained about the geographic distance separating her from her brothers in other parts of South Africa and the cost of travelling back to Zimbabwe, she was able to spend months on end with her family in

Matabeleland. Whenever there was a family occasion, such as Sbha's wedding in Harare or her brother-in-law's funeral in Plumtree, she could be there. She also communicated with relatives on almost a daily basis:

> You know, it's the old – 'Hi! How are you?' If they haven't been well, 'How are you feeling now?' It's nothing much.

Thus, despite her migrant life-style, Zinhle gave the impression that she remained integrated with the extended family in a way that Dwana could not be.

> I mean you make relations with individuals within the family; there are some you get along with more than with the others; but with my family I think all members have been a support to me. Yeah, although with some families you get squabbles and things like that but with my family, I don't know, they say absence makes the heart grow fonder because we've all been like, you know, not together. You treasure every moment that you can spend with members of the family so we're quite close that way.

Far from thinking that family ties had been weakened by 'crisis migration', Zinhle said they had grown closer by being apart or 'not together'. Perhaps her location in Bulawayo at the time of this interview caused her to feel more optimistic.

In the course of my research, Zinhle's migration journey took a new turn. We had arranged to meet again when I went to Johannesburg in 2015, but shortly before my arrival she sent a short message saying she had gone to Botswana. This followed a series of allegedly xenophobic attacks on some Zimbabweans in Joahnnesburg and Sam explained that she was worried about her children's safety: 'It was an issue of the place where she stayed; there were reported incidents of violence'. As a single man without children, he too faced potential violence yet was able to withstand it. This was yet more evidence that women migrants were particularly vulnerable.

5.6.4   A political refugee – Sam's story

Sam introduced himself as the sixth of the ten siblings, born in 1974 and a child when Mugabe sent his forces into Matabeleland. Like his father Ken, he set his life story in a political context, choosing to relate actions rather than emotions. He said he first became actively involved in politics as an apprentice engineer.

> Look first we needed a change; and also the influence of the Gukurahundi it made me dislike the present government because I wouldn't understand why the government would target a certain section of the people. They victimised them, killed them and traumatised them, disrupted people's lives, education and all that stuff. It needed someone else to take over the reigns . . . Me and my two brothers we were active; we were seriously active . . . We were more vocal than your average guy. We needed a change more than anyone else I think.

Political activity was not allowed on the university campus but Sam campaigned for the MDC 'through word of mouth', organised clandestine meetings and 'tried to influence the other youth to see the light'. The atmosphere was increasingly tense in the run-up to the 2002 presidential election and Sam said the government sent youths trained as a militia to target certain individuals who were considered influential:

> So me being influential and one of my friends having a near miss, I thought this is time for me to leave. I will not wait to be butchered. I'd rather leave in good time.

His brother Sbha had already left for Canada but he and some fellow activists decided to go to South Africa and carry on with their work over there – a plan that failed to materialise because they subsequently went their separate ways and 'the organisation lost some steam'.

Sam narrated his story while driving me across the veldt to his home in a mining area in central South Africa and, like Zinhle, he needed frequent prompting. I asked him how many possessions he took with him from Zimbabwe:

> S: Just a suitcase, not much, a backpack if you want; and it was a challenge; different people, different lives different people, without relatives, the usual friends; you have to make new friends.
>
> J: I can't imagine what it's like – did you go by car or by bus?
>
> S: I go by bus.
>
> J: And you don't know what's round the corner?
>
> S: No idea at all.
>
> J: Did you think South Africa was a place of opportunity?
>
> S: I hoped so; I hoped it, but there was a stigma that people who had gone to South Africa are the people that had failed in life; so the people that didn't get – that failed in education, they would go to South Africa.

In this account, the day's bus journey from Bulawayo to Johannesburg represented a complete rupture, a step into the unknown and a sign of defeat as he joined the migrant underclass. At the border, immigration officials gave him 'about thirty something days' to stay in the country and he then joined the queues in Johannesburg to register as an asylum seeker. He said, 'You would queue for days and you would come home and go back again next day because it was chaos'[64]. Unlike Britain, South Africa allowed asylum seekers to work and Sam quickly secured a job with an auto-electrical company, but it took about two and half years to gain asylum, a process which

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[64] The African Centre for Migration & Society has criticised South Africa's asylum system, highlighting long waiting times at refugee reception offices, delays in procedure and the poor quality of decision-making. See AMIT, R. 2012c. No Way In: Barriers to Access, Service and Administrative Justice at South Africa's Refugee Reception Offices. Johannesburg: African Centre for Migration & Society.

involved 'time and a lot of effort', knocking on doors and handing over bribes. He was always afraid he would be deported[65]:

> I've heard scenarios where people's asylum papers were torn and they were arrested. There are hot spots where things like that would happen easily. I've tried my best to avoid them.

When he was eventually granted refugee status, he moved to Cape Town where he felt safer. He learned the local languages, Afrikaans and Sotho, and earned enough money to buy a house, which he rented out. His job at the time of our interview was maintenance engineer at a gold mine working, he said, either underground or in an atmosphere polluted with dust. He was taking an on-line degree course to improve his qualifications in the hope of promotion.

Although Sam had lived in South Africa for almost 15 years, he presented himself as an outsider and, like Dwana, seemed very isolated despite the fact that two of his brothers were also in the country. The house he shared with a friend on a compound next to the mine was very much a 'batchelor's pad', completely bereft of homely furnishings or personal adornment, and the nearest town provided little in the way of entertainment. Presenting a consistently negative view of his environment, Sam criticised what he saw as the everyday violence in South African communities, where values were distorted by over-population. However, perhaps the most distressing aspect of his life was the need to hide his identity, thereby re-running the trauma he had experienced in Zimbabwe where, to be open about ethnicity or political beliefs, spelled danger:

> There were times when I was happy to portray my nature and who I am, but there were times . . . I met instances where if you're a foreigner you'd be treated differently; you are attacked. You are forced to play at a higher level and maybe also to . . . to not disclose who you are to everyone, because you don't know what they're after, what they can do.

Our meeting coincided with a new wave of xenophobia, particularly targetted at Zimbabwean migrants (Associated Press, 2015, Mutasa, 2015). In this climate, Sam felt the need to 'play at a higher level', by which I took him to mean 'be extra vigilant'. He told people he came from Cape Town, hoping this would explain his accent, yet always feared someone would break his cover and expose him either to xenophobes or Zimbabwean spies. Restraint came at huge emotional cost.

> I'm not happy with my life. Dissatisfied. Life is about letting go. If you constantly have to restrain yourself, it's some kind of being a slave, slavery. You're enslaving yourself or the circumstances are enslaving you.

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[65] A law protecting asylum seekers in South Africa is frequently violated, resulting in the illegal detention and deportation of asylum seekers. AMIT, R. 2012b. Breaking the Law, Breaking the Bank: The cost of Home Affairs' illegal detention practices. Johannesburg: African Centre for Migration & Society.

Chapter 5

The image of slavery, made all the more powerful by repetition, set Sam's condition in the historic and political context of colonial oppression. As I noticed with other migrants in this study, his language was more emotive when recounting the experience of exile than when describing the events that led to it. This may have been because it was closer in time, but it may also suggest that migration involved a more profound shock to individual identity than anything which went before and I will return to this in Chapter 7. The only chance for Sam to be himself was when he met up with relatives:

> For a few months or a few days, when you're with family, you can let your hair down and be who you are; otherwise you must live a controlled life.

As the one place where he could relax and reveal himself, the family was a site of identification and belonging. Although Sam did not need its financial support – indeed, he sent regular gifts of money or goods to his parents in Matabeleland for distribution 'to the areas of need' – he clearly drew comfort from the 'idea' of family. The reality, however, was more problematic, for it involved a risky border crossing:

> S: It is a dangerous thing to do. If I should go back, when I did go back, I would pay people to just pass the border.
>
> J: Have you done that?
>
> S: I have, yes.
>
> J: Was that a frightening journey?
>
> S: It was. It was; and it made me uncomfortable. Even when you were at home and supposed to be relaxed and happy, you cannot be because you're thinking, I still have the journey back; it can end up badly.
>
> J: Was it a particular occasion you went back for?
>
> S: I went back twice. The first time it was because [inaudible] and the second time I had to attend the funeral of a close relative.
>
> J: Did you have worrying moments crossing the border or did it all go smoothly?
>
> S: It was worrying across the two borders because I had to stay in the toilets and I had to travel by night and pray that they don't search the vehicle.
>
> J: On the Zimbabwean side?
>
> S: Yes.
>
> J: If they had found you, what would happen?
>
> S: Oh, let's hope I'm lucky. Luckily they didn't find me.

Once more 'home', which should have represented safety, was also a place of potential harm. Although Sam said he was 'not in the first page of the wanted people', he lived in constant fear of exposure to Zimbabwean authorities. The most immediate cause of his insecurity was the period

of political violence which started in the late 1990s but it had its roots way back in his family's history. It was as if the inability to trust and the potential for victimisation were hard-wired into his DNA.

5.7   Separation – a daughter's perspective

In both Shona and Ndebele families, it is not unusual for children to spend long periods away from their birth parents. Many participants were brought up by grandparents while their mothers and fathers were away working, or were educated far from home. However, in the uncertainty of national 'crisis', the separation of mothers and children was particularly painful because it was often unplanned and for an indeterminate period. Although Fungai and her sisters downplayed the moment of parting, saying it was only temporary, while their daughters implied it was nothing extraordinary, Zinhle's description of leaving her baby son was one of the few moments when she showed any emotion and Dwana spoke at length about the misery of life without her daughter. Indeed, by setting her account of separation from Molly alongside Molly's recounted experience, we see the complexity of ties within the extended family, the disruptive effect of 'crisis migration' and the delicate process of re-formation.

Dwana left Molly in 2003 and did not see her again till she gained refugee status and was able to travel to South Africa for a family reunion eight years later. In that time, she said she almost stopped believing she had a daughter, even though she talked about her almost incessantly.

> I used to find comfort talking about her. I think I was just telling myself that she is real, she is there, I have to keep her memory alive, I don't have to just keep quiet, I have to remind myself that I am a mother and I have a child.

It is interesting to note that, after a life-time of 'keeping quiet', she now used words to affirm her identity. Motherhood, as far as Dwana was concerned, meant providing both emotional and financial security for a child yet for a while neither was possible. In 2008 when, as she said, the situation in Zimbabwe was particularly 'bad', she saw a photo of Molly that again led her to question her identity as mother.

> Molly was so thin, to the extent that you could see her bones had gone in [sigh]. She was at school with her friends and there was no food at school. They were starving. Parents were supposed to bring in groceries. It really tore my heart and I thought, there is nothing I can do. What kind of mother lets her child go through this? I could eat every day, every day. I didn't go without food, even though it wasn't much but I never went without food. I would eat but how about her, my only child? I can't even look after her.

At one point, she said that Molly asked her to come home and again she used the analogy of emotional fracturing, reiterating the metaphor of her heart – the essence of her being – split into two.

>It really tore my heart. I was thinking, am I a bad mother? And it's not like she had siblings. She has my relatives; she doesn't have anyone very close to her family-wise but it was *my* family not *her* family.

Dwana was the only participant to make this distinction between her family and her child's family as if to deny the importance of any relationship except parent and child. Her seeming negation of the extended family's role so central to Ndebele culture was perhaps another reflection of her physical and emotional isolation. It was also a reference to her belief that members of the extended family had mistreated Molly.

By the time Molly joined her in the UK in 2014, Dwana knew me well enough to talk about the problems of adjustment as she saw them and, in particular, her worries about Molly's reluctance to discuss emotions. Over a year later, Molly agreed to tell me her life story and we arranged to meet at her home while her mother was out. She started with the announcement:

>I was born in Zimbabwe in 1989. I'm the only child my mum has and I grew up living with my grandparents and my mum came to the UK a couple of years ago.

Thus, she stressed her single-child status at the same time as placing herself firmly in the world of her grandparents and then added the fact of her mother's departure while being rather careless about the time frame. It was as if she was confusing her own arrival in the UK 'a couple of years ago' with Dwana's migration more than a decade earlier. Throughout her narrative, she foregrounded her relationship with her grandmother: 'I didn't have much friends; I just had my grandma with me'; 'I'm just Granny's girl' ; 'I lived with my gran; I grew up living with my grandparents; I saw my grandparents more than my mum'. Dwana was away working when Molly was at primary school but took her to Bulawayo in the school holidays:

>It was fun going with her because she would buy me sweets; she would buy me new clothes and it was fun; but I would miss my granny, because granny would put me on her back; even when I was in grade three she would still do that. Maybe I would be seven. I was very skinny though. I was very skinny when I was a baby.

Molly seemed to suggest that material treats were no subsitute for the emotional warmth so powerfully conveyed in the image of a small child on her grandmother's back. Although she never criticised her mother, there was an undercurrent of resentment in this account of childhood. She had no sooner formed an attachment than she learned her mother 'was going to go somewhere else to make life better for all of us' – a strange and misleading explanation in the circumstances. After some initial discomfort about talking about herself, Molly suddenly became expansive in answer to a straightforward question about school:

>My grades dropped quite a lot because that's when I heard that my mum wasn't feeling well and I think it all kicked in that, OK, my gran is not my mum. My mum is my mum. My gran is my gran. So, and there was a time when I spent so much time with my mum

that I started getting attached to her and then before I knew it she was gone. So, 'cause they would try and hide it from me but the network was so bad that whenever mum calls she would be on loudspeaker so at times I would hear and I would hear her crying, saying she's in pain, it's not easy in this country and all that; but they didn't know I knew because I never opened up to anyone, so that really disturbed me quite a lot. And when I went to boarding school for my secondary education, gran was not there so I was, I felt as if I was all alone and I was just in the wilderness on my own and I felt as if no one really cared about me because they just dumped me. You'd be there for three months; you'd go home for a month; go back. But [sigh] it's just the way.

The fact that no-one in the family talked to her about her mother's illness added to her sense of loneliness and confusion. While understanding that the person who met her emotional needs (her grandmother) was not her mother, she discovered that the person who *should* be in that role (her mother) was in fact too needy herself. It was no wonder then that, at boarding school, Molly felt abandoned by them both. On the day her mother left for the UK, she remembered crying all the way to school in the car, concluding dramatically: 'And that was the last time I was with her'. When she later found out that her mother could no longer walk, it was when she was living with her aunt Muvindla and overheard a phone conversation.

M: [Sigh] It hit me hard. It did hit me hard but again I couldn't say to anyone because they would say, 'Why are you listening to adults' conversation?' So, all I could do was go in the little corner, grab my doll and cry.

J: What did you talk to your mum about on the phone?

M: I didn't know what to say because . . . I had so many questions I wanted to ask her but I just thought she's in so much pain already and maybe that will trigger something, so I'd hold it back.

Throughout this period, her grandmother was the person Molly remained close to, exchanging letters or calls on a daily basis, though even her grandmother would not talk about her mother's illness: 'I think she wasn't emotionally strong to tell me because she would shed a tear every day she would talk of my mum'. The first reunion of mother and daughter was at a family gathering in Johannesburg in April 2011, which Zinhle described as 'one of the exciting moments of the family', and 'a very beautiful sight', though she first had to warn Molly that Dwana would be in a wheel chair. It was a momentous occasion for Dwana, who said she did not know what her daughter would look like:

I said, 'Who is this woman?' I expected her to be tall just like I am and I just saw this small person running towards me with my sister and I said, 'Mm, that's my daughter!' [laugh] It was really something else.

However, Molly's memory of the event was charged with more ambivalent emotions.

I remember seeing my mum for the first time. I cried because they were pushing her in a wheel chair and I was like, the last time when I saw her she was able to walk. I didn't know what to say to her and she just looked at me and started crying. I'm like, oh gosh,

yeah; I didn't know what to say . . . By then I had been told why she had gone away for so long, so I was just feeling guilty that she left home because she wanted to take care of me, because she couldn't afford to do that when she was in Zimbabwe with her family and everyone. I felt bad because I thought she left on my own account and she was far from family and everybody else because of me.

What should have been a joyful reunion was marred by tears and a sense of guilt. As well as being tongue-tied with her mother, Molly had difficulty interacting with other relatives because they 'felt like strangers to me', and clung to her grandmother: 'I just always sat next to my granny'. When I asked her if she had received any support from her uncles, aunts and cousins, she said 'No' because they had 'their own kids to look after' and the 'budget was tight'. Of all the participants, she seemed the least interested in the national situation, telling me, 'It passed me by' and she knew nothing of the political dangers that contributed to her mother's departure.

For the next two years, Dwana concentrated on her legal battle for reunion with Molly as if all her hopes depended on it but, once again, Molly professed to 'mixed feelings'. On the one hand, she was excited and wanted to help her mother, 'and start a new life with her and make up for all those lost years', but on the other, she dreaded being away from her grandparents and 'moving to another place with someone I barely know'. In effect, the 'crisis' was presented in her life story as a double separation, first from her mother, then more painfully from her grandparents:

> I remember the day I had to go and say goodbye to them. It was raining heavily in Plumtree so there's a river that you have to go cross, it was full, you can't even go past. Day two it got worse; day three, and I didn't have day four to go back, so day three I was like, I *need* to see my grandparents and I went early in the morning. I remember I left Bulawayo at 5. a.m. in the morning because in Bulawayo it wasn't raining that much so I went there and, from Plumtree to where my grandparents live, I got a lift from this guy who drove a tractor. Big as a tractor is, we thought we would go past but the driver was like, 'No', so I had to wait, and we waited and waited and waited and waited because he said, 'Ah the rain has stopped now', so the water should, you know, go down; the level of water should go down. So I think we were there for about six hours, and I had to go back on the same day and it was getting late so, yeah, and then finally we managed to cross. I went and because I wanted to spend the night with them but I couldn't. Then I had to say my goodbyes. It was really hard to say goodbye because my grandmother started crying before I did, so it was a bit [pause] and my granddad's voice just went all . . . I'm like, o-oh. Then I had to bid my goodbyes and went back. It wasn't easy but . . . [sigh].

(See Appendix G for longer extract)

Normally so quiet, so suspicious of words, Molly eloquently expressed a range of emotions from anticipation and longing, through frustration and anxiety, to loss and emptiness. In comparison, her ensuing descriptions of the plane journey to the UK and meeting Dwana at the airport were related in a more cursory fashion. She admitted that she found the first few months 'quite hard' and missed her 'gogo' [colloquial word for grandmother]. Throughout her narrative, there is no

suggestion that she was given any choice about the future and perhaps this lack of agency made migration particularly hard.

In the UK, she continued to turn to her grandparents for support, calling them at least once a week and chatting about her day-to-day activities. She joked about being treated like a five-year-old, receiving admonitions to brush her teeth, read her morning scripture and take care crossing the road, and in turn she asked them, 'What did you eat? What will you do today? Do you miss me?' and saved her wages from care work to send them frequent gifts. In contrast to the easy intimacy of these exchanges, in which she still played the role of small protected child, there was a sense of awkwardness in her accounts of the daughter-mother relationship.

> My weakness is I'm not open. I'm reserved. I don't talk about things. I just keep quiet. But I think my mother doesn't understand that because at times she tells me about her health – I don't know what to say – but it does hurt me and I wish I could help but I just don't know what to say to her. So I just tend to keep quiet and I think she takes it the hard way that, OK, maybe she doesn't care. But it's not the case; but I'm not brave enough to tell her what I have to say. But this is me. I, I don't talk that much.

Molly did not explain what she would have said to her mother had she found the courage. In Dwana's company, she was always dutiful and attentive but the years apart had left a distance that was perhaps impossible to bridge with words.

5.8   Conclusion

When linked together, these stories generate an overwhelming impression of vulnerability that can be explained by various historic, political and social factors. The narrative of victimology continued almost seamlessly and without much relief across chronological and physical distance, encompassing the period of economic and political turmoil and a new post-migratory transnational space. As far as participants were concerned, the end of colonialism led to a new form of discrimination by the Shona majority[66] who subjected them to ethnic rather than racial prejudice, a condition in which their intrinsic value as human beings was denied by those who had power over their lives, their voices were silenced or ignored and their identity had to be concealed. Some outstanding moments of existential threat in these narratives occurred *before* the most recent period of 'crisis'; for instance when, as children, Dwana and Sam saw their mother attacked in the homestead. Events at the start of the millenium then reawakened

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[66] In her language biography, which I recorded in 2014, Dwana said one form of colonialism was replaced 'with another'. 'Sometimes Ndebele people would say we were better off with this Smith regime because at least you would get a job, things will be there … but now things may be are worse.'

unhealed wounds of the past, increasing their sense of injustice and reducing their capacity for self-reliance.

In a patrilineal society, where strength and wealth came from the father's line, the family lacked the status and security of a large network of paternal relatives and their relationship with outsiders and even, at times, with each other was marred by suspicion. Although a number of the siblings had academic or professional qualifications, there were no rich or well-connected members of the family who could help them out; nor were there any pioneers who had laid a trail abroad for them to follow. This meant that migration was not so much a family project as an individual affair, a series of haphazard movements often taken in the heat of the moment without much preparation. Furthermore, it threatened the foundational myth of a strong house built by strength of character and hard work. 'Crisis' is embodied in the shadowy figure of the brother who has gone into hiding; it belongs to the realms of silence and concealment. Family and community history taught participants to hide their identity behind a wall of silence. Their mistrust of the spoken word was materially expressed in quiet voices and transmitted down the generations. As well as protecting them, it isolated them from the wider community thereby reducing their resilience.

The individual stories of family members interweave the macro and micro, revealing how they see themselves swept along by external forces. At a turning point in her narrative, Dwana described how the failure of her asylum application plunged her into a state of extreme depression, in which she lost her sense of self. Zinhle had to take a false identity when she first went to South Africa and Sam, a political refugee in a land of 'spies', lived in constant fear of being 'un-masked'. Although they were less inclined than members of Fungai's family to idealise the closeness of their ties, they all presented 'crisis migration' as a painful rupture, especially when it led to the separation of mother and child. Moreover as Bonizzoni and Boccagni (2014) suggest, prolonged separation had particularly adverse effects, making it unlikely that Molly and Dwana would ever achieve the intimacy Dwana craved. Stories of the 'missing brother' revealed a hole at the heart of this family and, in the absence of physical contact, any rifts seemed likely to widen as time went by.

Chapter 6: Lost entitlement - Diane's family

Figure 6 Diane's family 'map'

[Names changed to protect identities]

6.1 Set adrift

I was introduced to Diane, the key to the third and final family in this research, through an Ndebele-speaking Zimbabwean friend who asked me whether I was going to include white Zimbabweans in my research. She and Diane used to attend the same church in Bulawayo and had ended up as 'crisis migrants' working in care homes in Southampton. At our first meeting in a café, Diane seemed shy and uncertain what to expect. As if to prove her Zimbabwean credentials, she brought along photographs of her farm in the Midlands area, a modest bungalow in a clearing which she called 'Reflections'. She said she had the title deeds but that someone was claiming onwership under the Zimbabwean government's policy of land redistribution and they were fighting it out in the courts. She continued the story when we next met at the flat she shared with her daughter Lisa and her second husband Nick, another white Zimbabwean 'in exile' now working as a bus driver. I noticed that she never called this 'home', a title she reserved for 'Reflections'.

On a personal level, Diane has much in common with my other key participants, Fungai and Dwana. For a start, she is around the same age, was brought up in a rural community in colonial Rhodesia during the 1960s, and is a committed Christian. What is more, Diane's experience of 'crisis' at a political level coincided with the personal trauma of a failing marriage, just as it did for Fungai and Dwana, and she too had to attend an immigration tribunal before gaining leave to remain in the UK and, with it, the right to work. It would be wrong, however, to stretch comparisons too far. Whereas Fungai and Dwana grew up mixing almost exclusively with other black Zimbabweans and suffered the degradation of life under colonial rule, Diane came from a white settler family who migrated to South Africa from Britain in the 19th century. Her grandmother moved north to what was then Rhodesia in 1930 and was part of a small but privileged minority who saw themselves as 'superior' in every way (Alexander, 2004, Chennells, 2005, Hughes, 2010, Pilossof, 2012). However, they lost their secure footing when the country gained independence and the introduction of fast track land reform in 2000, followed by the take-over of white-owned farms, threatened to topple them altogether. As Chennells puts it (2005, p.135), a relatively short period of history 'reduced an arrogant and politically all-powerful white élite to an anxious and embattled minority'. The story this family tells is therefore one of lost entitlement as well as displacement. Uprooted from the land, they are no longer sure where they belong.

Diane did not present 'family' as a network of close and interdependent relationships. In fact when I asked her to draw her family map, she seemed uncertain whom to include. After a few minutes' thought, she put down the people she was most 'in touch with', both friends and relatives, grouping them in nuclear units with their partners and children. Their names appear in balloons which look as if they are about to float free of the ties that hold them, a fluidity which partly arises from her artistic sensibility but also reflects the more individualistic nature of the family and the sense that, at any moment, its members might choose to head off in different directions. Using colour to show their current geographic location, she has shaded some of the balloons with both purple for Zimbabwe and blue for the UK – indicating the transition from one country to another. As well as her two grown up sons, Jonathan and Bernard who are placed close to her, she has included all Nick's sons and their partners. Her cousin Pat, her two brothers Ian and Peter and Ian's daughter Becky remain in Zimbabwe but Ian's other two children are in South Africa. Although each 'nuclear' family keeps in regular contact by email and phone, there is only sporadic communication within the extended family – none of the daily chit-chat on mobile messaging services that Fungai's and Dwana's families enjoy. Nor is there much cross-generational contact, so cousins might exchange news via Facebook but they would not expect

their elders to join in. As one of the older participants, Pat, remarked, 'There's not a marvellous correspondence at all. It's all broken up. Everybody's become very individual'.

Since Diane first migrated in 2003, she has zig-zagged back and forth between Britain and Zimbabwe. I met her four times over the course of 18 months, three times in Southampton and once in Zimbabwe, and each time she was on the point of departure. I also met Lisa before and after a return trip to 'Reflections'. The prolonged but sporadic nature of my involvement did not afford me the same depth of intimacy that I reached with Dwana, but it offered insights into the emotional and psychological twists and turns of the migrant journey. Diane's narrative, in the Western tradition, focussed on the self as an autonomous entity and she used me as a sounding board, rehearsing her doubts and fears about the course of action she was taking. Of all the participants in this research, her situation was the most unstable and therefore, in some ways, the most disturbing. She was adrift from her bearings, neither there nor here.

After telling me the first installment of her life istory, she gave me contact addresses for Ian and her sons but, unlike Fungai and Dwana who acted as go-betweens, she left me to introduce myself and track down other members of the extended family. Again, this seemed to indicate an emotional distance between them. Whereas Fungai had authority as the oldest of her siblings and both she and Dwana could draw on favours that were 'owing' them, Diane had no such claim or perhaps she lacked sufficient 'status' within the family. Without her direct introduction, I used a kind of snowballing technique, moving from one family member to another and interviewing relatives by marriage as well as blood. Within this chapter, I look at the family principally through the lens of Diane and her brother Ian, who still farms in Zimbabwe, their children - Lisa and Jonathan, Becky and Nicola, and their cousin Pat, who share the same foundational myth and culture. I use the stories of their affinal relatives, Ian's ex-wife Claire and her mother Susan, and Becky's husband Mike, to set their stories of 'crisis' in the context of each other and the wider white community. Susan, born in 1936 and now based in Cape Town is the only member of the 'first' generation while Lisa, born in 1997, is the youngest of the ten participants (see Figure 6).

First I explore the family's foundational myth, presented in Diane and Ian's narratives to explain their attachment to land and claims of Zimbabwean identity. By linking participant stories, I then look at the way they view the impact of 'crisis' on family, suggesting that cultural perceptions and a history of settlement and migration has made them more reliant on the wider white community than an extended network of blood ties. Finally, a look at individual stories reveals racialised interpretations of 'crisis', differentiated by age and gender, which portray the gradual encroachment of white space by black 'invaders'.
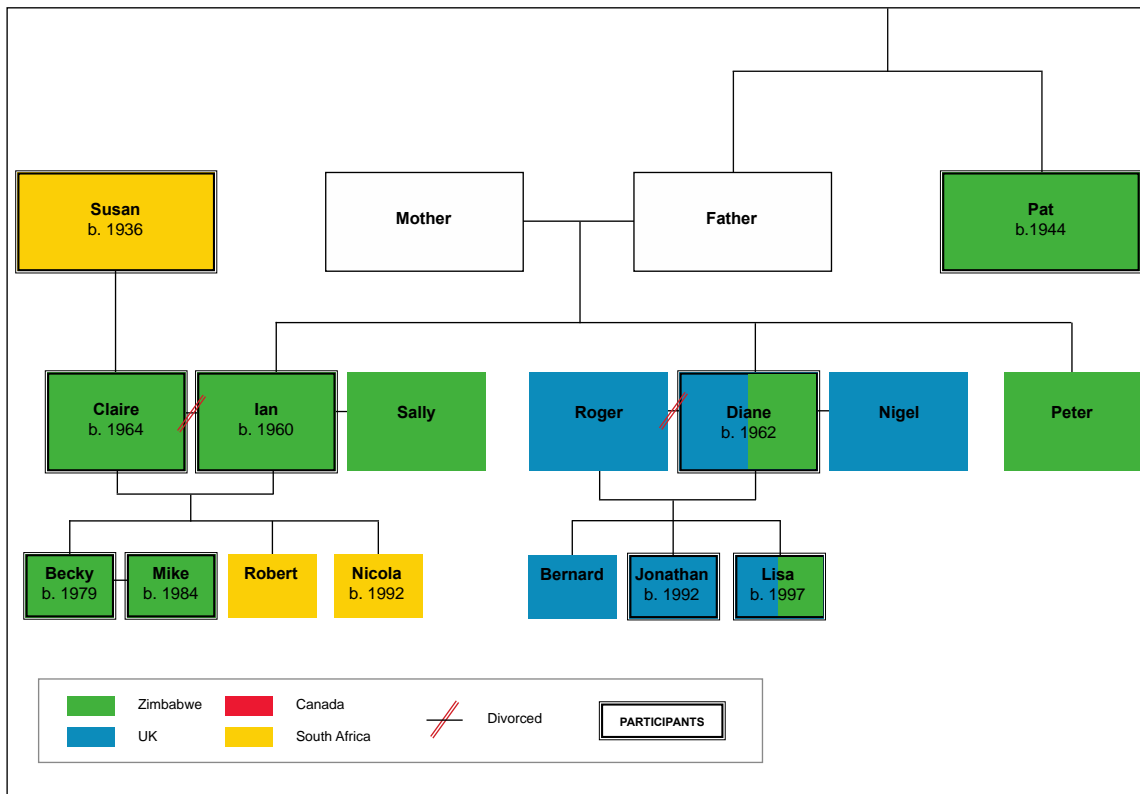
Figure 7 Diane's family tree

6.2   'Reflections' – Ties to the land

The family history as told by Diane and her brother Ian dates from the moment their forebears arrived in South Africa, shedding their European selves to start a new and 'better' life. However, instead of using the word migrants, the family see themselves as 'settlers', implying an almost instant claim to the continent, an automatic sense of belonging. Their foundational story is centered on the figure of their paternal grandmother, 'a real pioneer' who travelled north to what was then Rhodesia in 1930, bought a plot of land[67], named it 'Reflections' because it had a river running through it and started farming single-handedly. By this time their grandfather, 'a wanderer' renowned for bicycling up Table Mountain, had disappeared from the scene, which Diane attributes to 'lack of commitment to the family'. There is an interesting parallel here with the story of Fungai's great-grand-mother, left to manage her household when her husband was reportedly killed by a lion, but whereas the Shona matriarch was part of a large family and tribe, the white grandmother was a solitary figure in an alien landscape. I visited 'Reflections' with Diane's brother Ian, who was manager of a larger farm in the same district, and we walked to the

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[67] Neither Diane nor Ian identifies the person who sold their grandmother the land. Perhaps they never knew who it was or preferred not to acknowledge its history.

spot now overgrown with thorn bushes where she built her first house. Next he showed me her grave beside that of his parents on a plot marked out by stones. Stressing their grandmother's legal entitlement to the land, which she bought for £5,000, he related how she trained her white neighbours' oxen to plough straight, using them on her own farm in exchange and thereby earning enough to 'build up' a herd of cattle:

> That's how difficult it was to start. Can you imagine a sixty-year-old woman out in the hot sun ploughing alone; holding a hot plough? It would not have been easy.

By telling this foundational story, brother and sister show that they have earned the right to the land through sheer hard graft and sacrifice. Ian said their father was working above ground at a mine, enjoying a good life of constant parties and games of tennis and golf though returning to help his mother on the farm at weekends, but gave up his job when she died. Diane said he showed his loyalty to their grandmother by staying and 'building up' the farm, enduring 'trials' and 'a very tough life'. Ian recalled his own childhood apprenticeship as a farmer, helping his father dip the cattle, learning to drive a tractor, ploughing and planting. Like Shona and Ndebele participants of his generation, he measured the family's social advancement in hectares and head of cattle, telling me how his father bought adjacent land and leased another farm so that eventually he could keep a 900-strong herd. Where the other families saw hard work as a way to social advancement and mobility, in this narrative it is a way of securing existing privileges and rooting themselves more firmly in the country. Practical skills and strength of character were regarded as more important than academic achievement and Ian's daughter Nicola was the only participant with a university degree.

There was a gendered difference to Ian and Diane's attachment to the land. For Ian, it extended beyond the family farm and was part of his identity as a farmer with professional expertise handed down from father to son. He used his life story to bear witness to the plight of Zimbabwe's white farmers, presenting the land redistribution programme and farm occupations at the start of the millenium as the destruction of everything they had developed in Zimbabwe. Diane, on the other hand, expressed her tie to 'Reflections' in more emotional and spiritual terms, recalling her father's words when he was close to death:

> He was in hospital and he said, 'Di, I've left the house and a piece of land around the house for you in case you need to fall back on it one day'. And those words are always with me – something that my father's given to me, passed down to me because I might need it one day.

The rest of the land was left to her brothers, who by then had stakes in other commercial farms, but this portion was to be her safety-net in times of trouble. It represented both her link to the past and stake in the future and she planned to live there permanently farming as her

grandmother had done. In fact, when we last met she had been back there, breeding chickens and tilling the land with the same traditional method of ox and plough. She related an anecdote to explain her almost visceral attachment to the land, telling me she was waiting for her sister-in-law Sally at the kopje where her grandmother chose to build, when she decided to take a rock as a keepsake:

> I don't know why it's so important but I felt like I needed to have something from this kopje and there was this lovely big flat rock and I said, "I'm taking that rock" and I just picked up this rock.

The rock was so heavy that she tripped and dropped it but fortunately it fell forward rather than 'bouncing back in her face' and, with Sally's help, she carried it to the car. Signifying a burden as well as something precious, the rock linked her directly to her grandmother:

> We stood up there on that kopje and Sally and I were just thinking about what she must have seen, how she must have looked out – it was a lovely, lovely view from there. So real pioneer, she must have been a real pioneer. You know I've got all these emotions and I'm feeling all these things but the whole time I'm there ,when I'm there, I just feel like this is what I'm supposed to be doing; this is what we're supposed to be doing; we're supposed to be here; we're supposed to be carrying on, you know; and I just can't give up. There's something inside of me that just won't give up, or can't give up. I could walk away from it tomorrow but I'm - something inside just won't let me let it go.

It is tempting to see Diane's need to take and hold onto a piece of Zimbabwean land as a metaphor for the settler mentality, signifying a need to *belong* as well as a desire to possess. Her switch to the first person plural 'we' indicates a belief that her family and perhaps all white Zimbabweans have a 'God-given' right to that possession and are destined to stay – a claim they often reinforce by recognising the beauty of the landscape. It also carries a hint that they are custodians with a responsibility for the country's survival. Her own daughter Lisa, born in 1997, shared this sense of connection, believing that she, not her older brothers, had a proprietorial claim:

> L: If I lost 'Reflections' I'd be very very sad because I'm pretty sure it's going to be mine, like when I'm older. My mum knows I have every intention of wanting to take over the farm one day as well. I'd be very, very sad because I really see it as mine. I know it's my mum's but I see it as ours.
>
> J: It's your inheritance? So it's your link to Zimbabwe?
>
> L: Even if I lost it, I wouldn't willingly go, 'Oh that's it; that's it; going to lose it'. I would stay. I would try and find something else to do; make a plan. But I would be very, very upset if we lost the farm.

Lisa's brother Jonathan, on the other hand, saw 'Reflections' as a memorial of the past rather than part of his future – 'as a place I'd like to take my kids one day, as a holiday to show them the farm that my mum grew up on', saying he had no plan to go and live in Zimbabwe.

In feeling the pull of history, Lisa stood apart from her brother Jonathan and cousins Becky and Nicola who were content to pursue careers elsewhere, either in the city or another country. For this generation, Zimbabwe represented freedom, a place to have fun rather than an obligation to continue family tradition. Most of them enjoyed outdoor sports and Lisa and Jonathan contrasted the space to run in Zimbabwe with the confinement of a school playground in Britain. Nicola, now living in a small apartment in Cape Town, reminisced about roaming free in the 'beautiful' countryside:

> Growing up on our farm was one of the best experiences to ever have, you know. We would just be outside the whole day, climbing trees, building forts, going down the dam. We'd always try and catch barbel fish. It was a great, yeah, a great place.

Her sister Becky, who was in Harare, said she enjoyed going back to her father's farm and 'just being out in the open', while her husband Mike remembered weekends on his cousins' farm, exploring rivers and looking for game[68]. There was more than a flavour of a lost Eden in their descriptions of childhood but the Zimbabwean countryside certainly offered an attractive, relaxed life-style, often characterised in conversation by the habitual 'braai' – the Afrikaans word for a barbecue. Like many Zimbabwean migrants I have met, Jonathan tried to recreate this weekly ritual with friends and family in Southampton:

> It's organised chaos but it's good fun; always with the braai. We've managed to convert a number of local English people to our way of braiing.

Beneath the playful surface, the family adhered to grittier values, sharing a belief in self-reliance with their Shona and Ndebele counterparts. When Lisa said she would not give up her dream of return easily but would 'make a plan', she was using a common family motif. 'Making a plan' meant turning a problem into a challenge, adapting to changing circumstances, and was part of their 'settler' culture[69]. Within the family, resourcefulness was a mark of moral strength which set them apart from white Zimbabweans who left the continent[70] and earned them entitlement to a place in Zimbabwe's future. Diane and Ian's cousin Pat saw it as an ability to adapt to changing circumstances. After independence when black Zimbabweans moved up the promotional ladder

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[68] Like the white Batswanans in Gressier's study, many white Zimbabweans pride themselves on their knowledge of the environment and bushcraft as if these were signs of belonging. See GRESSIER, C. 2015. *At Home in the Okavango: white Batswana narratives of emplacement and belonging,* Oxford & New York, Berghahn.

[69] The phrase 'make a plan' is also much used by the white population of South Africa and Botswana meaning 'to keep things moving, working and functioning'. See Ibid.

[70] The white population never exceeded 5% of the total population of Zimbabwe and almost two thirds of them emigrated in the 1980s. See HUGHES, D. M. 2010. *Whiteness in Zimbabwe. [electronic resource] ; Race, landscape, and the problem of belonging*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.

and her colleagues in the tax department began to migrate overseas, Pat was determined to stay on:

> I realised I'd have to change my culture; I'd have to change my attitude; I'd have to change my thinking in so many ways if I was going to stay here, because it's going to change. I'm not going to change the rest of the world. I've got to change because the rest of the country is not going to change. I've got to do the changing and that is where I decided to stay.

Ian, too, realised that he would have to adapt to survive. Although he lost his stake in the family farm, he continued to manage a neighbouring white-owned farm called 'Hightop' until that too was seized. Rather than walking away as most white farmers did in this period, he negotiated to keep his job, even though it meant working for government-appointed owners. Alluding to the economic crisis, his daughter Nicola said resourcefulness was a Zimbabwean characteristic:

> Actually my dad would say it a lot – 'We'll make a plan', you know. We'd go days without water so we couldn't have a proper bath; he'd get a bucket and wash in it. We'd make a plan, so that was our motto then.

She also recalled her mother's positive spin on food shortages:

> Mama was great; she was like, 'We'll make a plan', so we would have nights where all we could have was bread - that was the only thing to eat - but as kids we were like, 'Oh this is cool' you know, bread and butter on it and that's fine; we were OK with that. I think we kind of went with it and we enjoyed having to live in, you know, different ways.

Nicola presents their good humour as heroic, failing to mention that the family had greater access to food than the majority of Zimbabweans, for whom bread and butter was a luxury. They also had South African passports and an escape route if things got really bad. In pointing this out, however, I do not wish to diminish their courage as members of an increasingly beleagured community, nor the sacrifices they made, and these will become more apparent when I analyse individual life stories.

6.3   A fragmented family

Most participants idealised the large extended family, reminiscing about holidays shared with cousins and regretting the fact that people were now scattered across the world, many of them in other 'settler' cultures like Canada, Australia and New Zealand. However, their life stories presented a very different view of family life and one that diverged widely from the accounts given by Shona and Ndebele participants. Where Fungai and Dwana situated themselves among their siblings and within the wider family network, these participants were independent agents in their stories, allocating peripheral parts to their relatives. Apart from Ian who helped Diane both practically and financially, there was no mention of reciprocal favours nor was there a sense of

responsibility for anyone outside the nuclear household unit. Family relationships, if mentioned at all, were often seen as fractious and potentially damaging.

Diane presented her father as a man who put his farm before his family, was domineering and a stickler for standards. She remembered him working all hours, fencing off his land:

> He was always out there working very hard and he was so . . . you know, excellence was his thing. This fence had to be so straight you know [laughs]. He'd line up the fence. Even my brother says now, 'Why did they have to be so straight?' [laughs].

He was a 'harsh father figure' who liked it when the children did well at school but showed no affection.

> I can't ever remember having a hug from my dad. You know, I can only remember harshness. Any physical contact with him was like – he would grip your hand like that [gripping gesture] –'Want to cross me? Don't you cross me!' – that kind of thing. So I can't actually remember him affectionately giving us a hug. I used to give him a kiss every night but it was very much a formal [demonstrating kiss]; he was reading his newspaper and that was it [laughs].

This description, tinged with the threat of physical violence, is not so very different from Dwana's picture of her father, but without the same degree of affection and respect. Diane went on to say that she was jealous of her brother Ian's relationship with their mother and grew up feeling 'unloved and unhappy'.

> It wasn't a very happy growing up life. I do remember a lot of unhappiness and between my mum and dad as well, they would go two or three days without talking and there was a lot of tension.

This time, there are echoes of Fungai and her sisters' description of their parent's relationship. However, the fundamental difference is that Shona children were protected by grandparents and the extended family, whereas Diane felt exposed to her parents' unhappiness. Ian also hinted at a problematic relationship with his father. When he returned to Zimbabwe from South Africa, he 'fairly quickly realised that things weren't going to work out on the farm, between me and my dad', so he found a job as farm manager for a white landowner.

All first and second generation participants were divorced except for Claire's widowed mother Susan. In her narrative she tended to present the past in a rosy light yet hinted at difficulties in her marriage. Diane endured 20 years of a 'rocky' relationship with her 'volatile' first husband, who 'used to scream and shout', causing 'a lot of fear'. Ian, who took a job in South Africa soon after independence, believed his first wife Claire trapped him into having a family too soon:

> I always hankered to come back [*to Zimbabwe*] and farm. So from the late '80s I was planning to come back and then, you know, Claire would present me with another pregnancy, another baby.

For her part, Claire blamed Ian for putting the farm before the needs of his family and insisting on staying in the country when she thought they could have a more settled future elsewhere. Their oldest daughter Becky said she left home during their break-up but her younger siblings 'really got the brunt of that'. No-one claimed this was the tight-knit happy family idealised by many black African participants. As Pat said, 'We were never a close family. Some families are very close but we've never been very close'.

In the European tradition, family members were brought up to be independent, or as Claire put it, to have 'both roots and wings'. Even in Pat's generation, the trip 'overseas' to Europe was a right of passage for the young and a mark of status, and in her early twenties she took a boat to Southampton before joining the Rhodesian tax department and getting married. Her niece Nicola, who went to Cape Town University in 2010 and later found work there, said she could not wait to get away from Zimbabwe even though she missed its 'friendliness':

> For me independence has always been a very big thing and I think for my mum as well; I think she's always wanted that for me – 'Just get up there! You know you can do it'.

She also admitted that the family was getting along much better now that its members saw less of each other. As young teenagers, Jonathan and his brother learned independence the hard way when Diane left them with their father, who largely ignored them, and took Lisa back to Zimbabwe for several years. When I asked Diane, in the presence of Lisa, if the prospect of grandchildren would draw her back to England, she said, 'I'm fine with not being round with grandchildren', though quickly added, 'Isn't that a horrible thing to say?' and laughed. When Lisa agreed, Diane excused herself by saying she was copying her own mother:

> You know what Granny said, she said to me straight when we had children, 'I don't babysit. They're your kids; you look after them!' That's what she said, yeah, she said, 'I've had my time with children'.

A mother's refusal to care for her grandchildren would be unthinkable in Fungai or Dwana's families, where grandmothers were seen as the source of nurturing and security. However, in this white family there was no expectation on either side of hands-on care. Claire's mother Susan, aged 80, lived next to Claire's sister in Cape Town but saw her other children once a year at best and, although she was in the same town as her grand-daughter Nicola, had never been to her flat.

Difficulties within the family led them to seek support elsewhere and in one sense, Diane and her relatives were less exclusive when they talked about relationships than family-oriented black participants, populating their life stories with school friends, neighbouring farmers and work colleagues who formed a protective network when 'crisis' hit. During the conflict that led to independence, Diane said farmers kept in touch by radio through 'a hub in town where we would

call for assistance'. Three decades later, she relied on church members and the few neighbours who were left to help her on the farm:

> I've got a lot of church friends who are very caring and even the local farmers, my nearest neighbour the Smiths, John and Debbie, they're very encouraging. They're just next door. We often go in there to get a bit of advice or do a bit of welding; they've got electricity so they've been very helpful, very helpful, and they go the same church we go to in town.

During the land occupations, Claire's husband Roger said there was a 'great amount of community spirit for helping people in distress'. Newly arrived in Harare in 2002, Becky met her husband-to-be Mike and found a circle of 'very good friends', but was bereft when they began to leave the country on 'gap years' to Europe that extended into full-blown migration. As we will see later from their individual stories, it was the break-up of this wider white community, even more than family dispersal, that signified 'crisis', particularly in the eyes of those who remained in Zimbabwe. Their interpretation of national events is literally presented in black and white terms.

6.4   'Us' and 'Them'

In '*Whiteness in Zimbabwe*' McDermott Hughes argues that white Zimbabweans laid claim to the country by ignoring the fact that it was peopled by 'blacks', adapting to it by an imaginative connection to the land but isolating themselves from the majority of the population. He maintains that Robert Mugabe exploited this when he used nationalism to scapegoat the white population:

> For a time, love of landscape allowed whites to root themselves in Zimbabwe and in other parts of Africa. Later, precisely that geographical obsession and its attendant social blindness exposed whites to tremendous political risk in the black-ruled nation.
>
> [Hughes, 2010, p.23]

While it is true that Diane's family identified with the countryside of Zimbabwe rather than the nation or people, they could not ignore the shadowy presence of the 'other'. The 'we' and 'us' of their stories are white, while the 'they' and 'them' are black, operating in a parallel but unknowable universe, and 'crisis' is the moment when the two worlds collide, when black Zimbabweans move out of the shadows.

In some of their life stories, black Zimbabweans are never directly mentioned, or only after my prompting[71]. In the first generation, Susan's husband worked for the Rhodesian railways and she listed the 'lovely railway houses' they lived in - 'nice' homes' in 'nice' areas with gardens and an

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[71] A number of scholars have observed this 'blindness' amongs white immigrants in predominently black countries. See ARMBRUSTER, H. 2010. 'Realising the Self and Developing the African': German Immigrants in Namibia. *Journal of Ethnic & Migration Studies,* 36**,** 1229-1246.

easy walk to the shops and schools, without ever mentioning the people who serviced them. The couple moved to South Africa after independence because, she said, her husband could 'see the writing on the wall'. Diane's cousin Pat grew up in the 1940s and 1950s in Bulawayo, where her father was a postal engineer, and said with a touch of irony, 'It was completely white. There were no blacks at all'. In the photograph albums at her retirement home in Harare, black Zimbabweans – if they appear at all – are merely a back-drop for family sports on the lawn, fishing trips to Lake Kariba or a fancy-dress parade to mark the 1953 Rhodes centenary exhibition. An accountant by profession, though recently retired, Pat had stayed in Zimbabwe throughout the turbulent changes in the white community, and would reject accusations of racism. Indeed, she quoted 'an African woman' who told her she was colour-blind – 'You don't see black and white, you see a person'. Nevertheless, she made frequent references to racial difference and framed her observations about black Zimbabweans in a colonial, paternalistic discourse as if they were children who had to be taught. For instance, she said the 'folk' who worked for her parents would never have been able to run the farm:

> . . . because they never learned from them, although dad would show them what to do. Mum showed them how to do celery but when mum said to the guys, 'OK, you carry on running it', ah-ah, she had to be continually checking on them. And even now you find they don't learn by looking at anybody.

It was a point she turned to in different contexts, later remarking, 'The indigenous African works well under supervision, the closer the better', and telling me it was difficult to persuade black Zimbabweans to do charitable work: 'Your African will support his family but he won't give anything out of the family unit'. This was the discourse of post-colonial white Zimbabweans who, as Alexander (Alexander, 2004, p.203) argues, have 'shifted the logic that necessitates their presence from one of outright domination to one of themselves as a role model to guide and shape the future of the country'. By addressing a type rather than individuals, Pat was denying their humanity, reducing them to an indistinguishable mass waiting to be tutored by superiors.

Diane was 18 years younger than Pat but was brought up in an equally racist society, where the black majority were restricted to 'tribal lands'– kept 'in their place' at a safe distance.

> I grew up with whites all around. I mean there were a few Africans in the town but again there was another section of the town almost where they would mainly be . . . you know whites wouldn't really go into those areas . . . and there would be the occasional one, the African, who would come into white areas but all the shops and everything, it was all, it was like a white-owned country [embarrassed laugh]. It's what it felt like.

Her embarrassed laughter on describing it as a 'white-owned' country, and her immediate qualification – 'it's what it *felt* like' [my emphasis] – indicates a self-awareness that Pat lacked.

Diane, who was 'born again' as a Christian in her early twenties, admitted that as a teenager she considered herself 'better than them'. What is more, she said she came to 'hate' them:

> Whenever I saw an African riding a bicycle I'd say, 'Well, where did he steal that from?' really a strange attitude towards them. And I didn't know any of that was wrong. My father, he treated his staff fairly well. He wasn't cruel to them. But he did used to shout at them. When he asked them to do something and they didn't do it, he would shout at them and tell them they're idiots and things like that. And my mother sort of had this deep thing against them as well.

Implying that she learned racism from her parents, she related two particularly unpleasant episodes. One involved her mother throwing a brick at a maid who either stole or borrowed an item of clothing and returned it unwashed, with 'a quite distinct African smell'. The other described an incident when one of the maids came running to the house saying she had been raped. Diane said her father 'allowed' the woman to stay overnight in a store-room but refused to give her a blanket, and just threw in a few old sacks. For the newly converted Diane, this was a revelatory moment:

> That actually hurts me *so* deeply, because he wouldn't give her a blanket, you know, *no way*! They can't use one of our blankets. We've got a few old sacks to give her . . . And I realised my dad doesn't know they are [embarrassed laugh] human.

The performative nature of her narrative with its exclamations, emphases and nervous laughter gave some of her anecdotes the emotional charge of a confession. It was the kind of story she might have told at a Pentecostal meeting or therapy session. Switching to the first person plural, to indicate that she was now part of a body of Christians, she offered furthered evidence of conversion:

> That's when I started to realise that this is so wrong. I mean these are people. They may be different from us but they are . . . they are people. I think with the whole Christian aspect that God loves, that Jesus gave his life for everybody so the whole world could be saved and no one is any different. We are all just people who need a God. We're all just people who God loves and God loves everybody. And that's when it started coming home to me that I was actually deeply racist. Because I think once we actually tried to reach out to a family and went and had a meal in their house; and I mean in my family [pause] you just wouldn't drink out of the same cups. It's like they are less than human. You wouldn't drink out of the same cups – it's absolutely unheard of. They had their own tin cups kept outside.

Now that Diane had rejected the racist language of her upbringing, she found herself struggling for words. The act of sharing a meal was momentous, but she still could not name her fellow black Zimbabweans, referring to them as 'they' or as 'these people'. She welcomed the fact that in later life her mother, too, had a change of heart – 'she eventually just began to appreciate these people and realise that they are human as well'. Switching to the discourse of colonial missionaries, she now saw black Zimbabweans as peasants in need of charity:

> These are people that took our farm and yet I'm feeling like I still want to be there to help them, you know. That was my mother's sort of legacy. She just wanted to help people. She started accepting them. She forgave them for taking the land and she just wanted to help them, you know.

In this language of acceptance and forgiveness, Diane sets her mother in a Christ-like role while her neighbours are thieves who stole her land. There is no suggestion here that her mother might also seek forgiveness for the colonial past and the injuries she personally caused.

Diane's brother Ian was the family member I met who had most day-to-day contact with black Zimbabweans, including the board of directors responsible for his state-owned farm, 'Hightop'. I stayed there for a couple of days and witnessed his easy interaction with the team of agricultural workers who helped run the chicken houses and look after the cattle, though it was clear that the relationship that mattered most to him was with the land, not the people, and that his tolerance of others was directly linked to their professional competence. Although he served in the Rhodesian army during the war of independence, he distanced himself from the objective of maintaining white rule, saying that he was called up for national service in 1979:

> Obviously we were really sort of brainwashed as white children by the Smith government and our government of the time that we were fighting communism – that that was what we were fighting against. It wasn't so much, you know, freedom fighters or Rhodesian or Zimbabwean blacks who wanted to take control of the country; it was more of a communist threat that we were fighting against.

Similarly, he presented the farm 'invasions' of 2000 as a political struggle not a racial one:

> We were getting along fine with fellow Zimbabweans. I don't think there was a big black-white racial issue. It was just really over land and, of course, Mugabe politics. It was about power. What it was all about was hanging on to power.

Ian's livelihood depended on making an accommodation with those in authority and he presented himself as a survivor who adapted to changing circumstances in order to maintain his connection to Zimbabwean soil. In his life story, an account recorded 'publicly' via the microphone, he avoided any comments that might be considered racist, but his conversations off-tape were less guarded. He represented his workers as innately untrustworthy, in need of teaching and careful monitoring, while those black Zimbabweans who had positions of power were lazy and corrupt.[72]

In contrast to the older generation, Diane and Ian's children had been educated at mixed-race schools in a post-colonial environment. Becky and Nicola made no reference to skin colour at all,

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[72] As a researcher, I here experienced what Crapanzano calls 'moral claustrophobia', in that I was caught between the desire to be true to myself as an individual with moral values and the need to maintain a neutral stance so that my participants should feel free to express themselves honestly. This seems to be a common ethical dilemma for 'liberal' anthropologists working with 'white' post-colonial societies in Africa. See CRAPANZANO, V. 1985. *Waiting; the Whites of South Africa,* London, Granada Publishing..

even when describing the occupation of their farm, talking instead about 'war vets' or 'these men with machetes'. When I asked Nicola about the racial mix of her friends in Cape Town, she said firmly, 'My group is all mixed and you don't even think about that'. Their cousin Lisa's denial was equally emphatic when I asked if the take-over of 'Reflections' made her look at black people any differently:

> Nope. Definitely not. Definitely not, 'cause obviously, um, Tembeni was our maid of the moment, at that time, and she'd been my granny's maid for as long as I can remember and obviously she was working for us but she was so lovely, she was like a second mother … I'd just follow her round.

The image of the warm black nanny may itself be a sterotype but Lisa's remembered affection was sincere. Her brother Jonathan was the only member of their generation who willingly engaged with the issue of racial difference, although he presented himself as a victim rather than privileged.

> I've had lots of friends who were black so I never felt like, you know, I was at odds with them because of my colour. I fully understand now the differences that were between the whites and the blacks and the history they have. I mean I was at the receiving end of a lot of,um, racism in my school. Now I used to call it for a while reverse racism because they were trying to get their own back. I was bullied quite a lot sometimes in terms of kids that had a thing against white, you know, white guys. But it's just racism as a whole isn't it.

By alluding to history, Jonathan showed that he was fully aware of the causes of the discrimination he suffered, though it did not lessen the hurt. He went on to describe an incident which culminated in another boy (presumably black) swearing at him and hitting him over the head with a book. Furthermore he believed a (presumably black) teacher treated him harshly because he could not speak proper Shona:

> Maybe one of the Shona teachers had a thing against me because I just didn't get the language.

His resistence to the language and the teacher's reaction signified an undercurrent of racial tension. Even if unspoken, the issue of race dominates this family's narrative. In the following section, I will explore the way it also frames their interpretation of Zimbabwe's 'crisis'.

6.5   Losing control

Although, like the other families, Diane and her relatives frame their life stories in the context of historic events, they concentrate almost exclusively on turmoil within their 'white' community, reflecting a somewhat monchrome view of Zimbabwe's 'crisis'. Within these narratives there is no

mention of a breakdown in public services, the HIV epidemic and election campaigns marred by violence. Even the economic crash takes a back seat in the drama of white displacement. Since independence, when the white Rhodesian government lost power, the community gradually felt itself increasingly vulnerable and the government's fast track land reform launched in 2000, accompanied by an increasingly nationalistic and racist rhetoric (Raftopoulos, 2004, Blair, 2003), was yet a further tipping point for white Zimbabweans. Those members of Diane's family who were still in Zimbabwe had to decide whether to cling on in the hope that things would improve, or renounce their claims to belong. In comparison to Shona and Ndebele participants, they tended to base that decision on individual needs or the needs of the nuclear family unit rather than the interest of the *extended* family and were less reliant on family support. Although the response to crisis was gendered and generational, in that wives and young children followed in their husbands' and parents' slipstream, there was not the same level of consultation or practical and financial assistance within the wider family network. In exploring their response, I will look first at the experience of rural dwellers – Diane and her immediate family and Ian's family, and then at the view from the city as seen by their cousin Pat and Ian's daughter Becky and her husband.

6.5.1 Out of Africa: Diane and her children

Diane is a zig-zag migrant who moves back and forth between Zimbabwe and the UK, never certain where and when her journey will end. Her story, related in two sessions on either side of a six month visit to Zimbabwe, was principally one of an on-going battle for ownership in which she, the white female settler, was pitched against a black male claimant who sent 'invaders' onto her land. This was not, however, the initial reason for her migration, which began before she inherited 'Reflections' and which can be divided into four stages – leaving Zimbabwe in 2003; returning to 'Reflections' with Lisa in 2007; going back to Britain two years later; and finally, battling for the farm.

Leaving Zimbabwe

 Diane's first experience of 'crisis' was during the independence struggle which, like most white Zimbabweans, she called the 'bush war'[73]. 'Reflections' was a long way from the border so not 'a hot area' but on the drive to and from school in town she was always aware of the possibility of an ambush:

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[73] The term has racial undertones that are 'implicitly dismissive of the struggle for independence'. See PILOSSOF, R. 2012. Unbearable Whiteness of Being: Farmers' Voices from Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe: Weaver Press.

> You know, you're driving to school, you can't see sort of marks in the road or anything and there were like shadows across the road from the trees and one of my biggest fears was, are we going to hit a landmine?

When she left school, she wanted to study nursing in Harare but her parents insisted she go to South Africa instead. She said, 'I think the whole thing was the blacks taking over; it was the reason they didn't want me to go there'. That was the period when she still 'hated blacks', and she recalled kicking a cupboard in fury when she heard that Robert Mugabe was to be the country's prime minister:

> I was very upset that Rhodesia was going down the tubes. We just thought that – going down the tubes.

For many white Rhodesians who shared this view, the independence election of 1980 was a tipping point and two thirds of them migrated overseas. However, Diane never considered leaving. She completed her studies in South Africa, married and started missionary work which eventually took her back to Zimbabwe. At the start of the millenium, she was a nurse and her husband a teacher at a Christian school in the Midlands. It was the combination of personal and public 'crisis' that led them to leave Zimbabwe, spurred on by her mother who was still farming at 'Reflections':

> I still had a job but my mum wanted us to go. She said, 'There's no future here, you know. Just go . . . I don't want you to stay here because there's no future here'. That was when all the farms starting getting taken over.

In this section of her life story, Diane dwelt at some length on her marital difficulties, presenting events such as farm take-overs and economic decline as the public reflection of inner turmoil:

> …but then things in Zimbabwe were getting worse – the economy, the whole economy. That was just at the start of the farm takeovers and there was all this unsettled feeling in Zimbabwe and that was when he decided to come over here to England because he was British-born. So he came over to here to make a way, to see if there was a pathway for us to come and whether it would be better for us to bring up our kids here in England. And, when he left, that was like a wonderful relief for all of us. The kids and myself just had this sense of relief and it was just *us*. We felt, you know, it was just wonderful.

Diane, who described her younger self as quiet and timid, laughed as she recalled the sense of liberation. The 'crisis' offered her the chance to break away from conventions demanded by society, and in particular her church, just as it released Fungai from the obligation to nurse her sick husband. She did not explain her husband's reasons for leaving, but Jonathan said he understood his father wanted to give them 'a better life' and 'a solid education' because he saw things were 'in decline'. He also thought his father might have been in trouble at school for expressing political views that upset some pupils – 'sons and daughters of high ranking ZANU-PF members'. Even though the nuclear family was not directly affected by the first wave of farm

occupations, they watched their tight-knit social circle unravel. Lisa, who was about six or seven, remembered visiting friends whose parents were packing to leave for New Zealand. From a child's viewpoint, it was leaving beloved pets that signified loss:

> The day they went their pets were being picked up by other people so they were all very sad and crying. It was very sad.

In 2003, a year after Diane's husband left for the UK, she decided to give the marriage another chance and follow him. In preparation she sold the accumulation of their life in Zimbabwe at a garage sale – 'all our bits and pieces and all our, you know, wedding presents and just our whole life really', presenting this as a more definite break with the past than Fungai or Dwana's departure, which they described as a temporary solution. In Britain, her application for legal status was relatively quickly resolved – 'I had to fight for my right to stay here because they wanted to send me back and I won the battle'; but like the other key participants in this research she was short of money, forced to do shift work and confined to a small rented flat:

> It was such a stressful time. Families having to leave Zimbabwe and coming to the UK; some of us not used to the weather, the closed-in feeling, the claustrophobic sort of feeling; all trying to find some sort of happiness . . .

She found new friends at church and among other white Zimbabwean exiles and managed to get a nursing job but her marriage continued to collapse and she was treated for depression. As a migrant, Diane experienced a crisis of identity and did not know where she belonged. In this she was similar to Fungai and Dwana, but without the added dimension of a prolonged asylum procedure and discriminatory environment.

Journeying to and fro

Diane may have journeyed across physical space, but emotionally she was still in Zimbabwe and in 2007, when she inherited 'Reflections' on the death of her mother, she decided to return to farm taking Lisa but leaving Jonathan and his older brother with their father. Again, events at a macro level combined with the micro to create a tipping point. Zimbabwe was by now experiencing hyperinflation – 'very, very tough times', and even with help from her brother Ian, Diane found it almost impossible to support herself. She was also missing her sons, who were finding life with their father extremely difficult and were only occasionally allowed to make a long distance call to her. Jonathan, who was a teenager, presented this period as one of desolation:

> I struggled through my mum moving back to Africa and my dad moving back in again . . . I was quite close to my mum then, not as close as I am now. It was better when Mum was there. My dad had to work too much and I was left to my own devices a lot at the time and I didn't handle that well at all and I think I needed the influence of my mum

more than my dad. I understand that now but back then I didn't know then what was going on, so I secluded myself from a lot of things including generally socialising with a lot of people. I became a real big introvert and started playing too many games, started not really caring much for school or work or anything.

The combination of his age, his parents' split-up and his mother's return migration produced Jonathan's personal 'crisis'. Eventually, after 'a particularly horrible argument' with his father, he sent a long email to Diane, 'crying almost' and telling her how much he hated the place where he was living, which precipitated her decision to give Britain another go.

In making her sons happy by returning, Diane now upset her daughter Lisa and had to cope with the child's anger at being uprooted once more. Lisa, whose memory of 'crisis' was seeing an army truck go by 'and loads of guys in the back with guns', and having school lessons disrupted by power cuts, enjoyed being 'home' and begged her mother not to go back to England, eliciting a promise – subsequently broken – that it would only be for two years. As before, she expressed the sorrow of parting through a description of leaving her dog – 'which was very bad'. In the UK, she suffered the same culture shock that the younger generation in Fungai's family experienced and could not believe how pupils could be so rude to teachers. Children at school asked why she was white when she claimed to be Zimbabwean, and nicknamed her 'Africa'. When Diane left her to complete her secondary education, returning to Zimbabwe to fight for possession of 'Reflections', Lisa felt betrayed and became too depressed to go out.

When I first met her, she had finished her exams and was applying for a place at a Zimbabwean missionary college. Her Southampton bedroom was full of mementos from Zimbabwe, including two flags and an election banner she had cut from a tree on a visit in 2013. She said she wanted a Zimbabwean passport but it would mean giving up her British passport, which would be 'tricky' because it was a safety-net if something went wrong. Admitting that she used to 'hate' England and blamed the country for her parents' divorce, she said, 'I don't want just a sticker in my British passport which says I can live in that country. I want a passport which says I'm *from* that country'. Unlike her brother, who said he felt 'British' and intended to stay, Lisa identified herself with the land of her birth, yet realised she could lose that connection.

> It's where I was born. It's where I want to live. It's where I grew up. And I'm like at the point now where I think I'm fifty/fifty and however much longer I stay here is meaning I've spent more time in this country than that country and I don't want that.

Born 17 years after independence with no memories of Rhodesia, Lisa's emotional connection was not only to the landscape of Zimbabwe but to an idealised 'nation', represented by its flag and passport and, far from embracing her 'hybrid' migrant identity, she dreaded losing that sense of belonging.

Fighting for 'Reflections'

Diane's 'crisis' continued to unfold during the research period. When I first interviewed her in March 2014, she was reeling from news that the claimant, whom she did not name, had sent his men to occupy the farm. On the other hand, encouraged by the support of 'villagers' who had chased off the invaders, she felt she had a good chance of challenging him in the courts. I then met her briefly in Harare where she was was less optimistic, telling me that the government was now pursuing her for unlawful seizure of her own property. At our final meeting in September, 2015, she described returning to find 'squatters' on the land and then being confronted by a truck-load of police:

> They came and they were very intimidating. They had been very intimidating. They had guns and it was very intimidating. They came roaring up to the gates with a white truck and hooting really loudly with six policemen on the back and guns, just holding guns, you know, but that was very scary, very scary. I did not like that at all.

Diane's account leaves us to assume that 'they' refer to unnamed, black, Zimbabweans with a claim on the land. Her fear was alleviated when she realised they were not 'coming for' her, but were defending the squatters from a group of local youths who had tried to chase them away. Her reluctance or inability to identify individuals by name makes for confused reading of the narrative, for suddenly it appears there are two 'theys' – those who want to take her land, and those who are supporting her claim. The aggressors are the ones who intimidate, while the defenders are youths who 'just threatened':

> These youths had come the night before to threaten them, to say they must leave and they must leave by tomorrow otherwise they were going to – they just gave them threats. They didn't do anything violent or say anything, you know, very bad. They just told them it's not their place and they shouldn't be there.

She thus attributes moral rectitude to the youths, who were apparently local people from the village, while those who support the claimant are shown to be violent, even though they are 'just holding guns' rather than using them. At the time, Diane was alone with her housekeeper Rose, 'the lady who's always been there':

> I was inside the house all the time. I just locked all the doors, closed all the curtains and, and then it was also the man who had put the squatters there, now he's supposed to be the so called future owner of the farm, so he was there as well. He's a very tall intimidating man. And they came and knocked on the door, you know, really loudly and very intimidating, and they really wanted to speak to me but Rose went out full of courage. She went out and she talked to them and [hesitating] they were just . . . they *did* want to speak to me. They had come for the youths but they did actually want to come and intimidate me. The youths weren't there. They'd taken off all over the place. They'd gone very far.

Her hesitation shows uncertainty about the nature of the threat but, in portraying herself as a (white) woman in a domestic space,cowering behind drawn curtains while a tall intimidating (black) man knocks on the door, she could be drawing from any number of colonial narratives about the violation of white women. The memory of these must have increased her fear.

Although there was no conclusion to Diane's account in that the court case was ongoing, she fulfilled the demands of conventional story-telling by ending with a moral victory over her assailant. Echoing the lessons she taught as a missionary, she said she had began to give food to one of the squatters who confided in Rose that he was not being paid and his family was going hungry:

> We actually started giving them a little bit of vegetables and, when we had chickens, we'd give them a chicken, just because I believe the scripture, in the Bible that says you should bless your enemies. Also he's not the one that's the real enemy. He was working for the guy who's the enemy and we just needed to be kind to him.

Naming him for the first time, she then described how she won round the man claiming the land – her 'enemy' – by giving him food from the garden:

> I don't know, it was amazing really. I think really strength from the Lord because also one day he came there and I also just picked a whole lot of spinach and vegetables and whatever I had in the garden and I gave it to him and [laugh] he was so happy. And actually his whole attitude towards me changed. He stopped being aggressive and we would just talk, you know, and we didn't talk much about whose farm it is and who's going to win and whatever; we didn't do that but I was just pleasant to him and anyway eventually he just stopped coming around. He stopped the intimidation.

If Diane's story were fiction not fact, this moment of reconciliation would mark the end of her spiritual and emotional struggle but, although he stopped visiting her, the man continued with his claim.

Caught between two worlds

Towards the end of our final meeting, which took place in Southampton shortly before Jonathan's wedding, Diane's narrative turned into a dialogue first with herself and then with Lisa who had been stretched out on a settee, silently listening. It was almost as if they were looking to me for guidance, putting me in a role I could not possibly fulfill. The issue being discussed was whether they should buy one-way or return tickets to Zimbabwe. Lisa had been living with her mother at 'Reflections' and had then taken a live-in job on a safari park, where she felt under-valued and lonely. Zimbabwe was no longer the site of nostalgic imagining but a 'tough' place for the young, where white people suffered discrimination: 'There's this sort of stigma. You're white. You're part of the blame in a way'. Although she was still reluctant to give up her African identity, life in England now seemed more attractive:

I've changed. I don't say horrible things about England any more. I'm grateful for some
of my time here and I've got my brothers and family here. There's good things here and
bad things here. There's good things in Zimbabwe and bad things in Zimbabwe.

Diane, too, felt less certain about her future in Zimbabwe. She had been finding it hard to turn
'Reflections' into a viable commercial venture, even with Ian's help, and admitted to being very
lonely without Nigel, who was unwilling to give up his job and leave his family to join her in a
potentially unsustainable venture.

She ran through the pros and cons – 'It would be easier just to live here and find a job here. I think
I'd be bored though'; and listed all the problems she had been facing on the farm before adding,
'I've got so much of a farmer inside of me. I just want to be out there in the wild'. There seemed
no answer to her dilemma:

> [Sigh] It's hard. Jonathan and G are getting married - when am I going to see them
> again? And it's very hard; it's really [sigh] you know, having to leave because of what,
> what happened in that country, what Robert Mugabe did, you know. He just sent people
> all over the whole world and I suppose that's what your whole thesis is about – crisis –
> and just look what it's doing to us. It's heartbreaking. I hate leaving my kids and yet I just
> think maybe one day they're all going to end up back there [Zimbabwe] because there
> won't be any jobs in the world or they might not have jobs.

Diane embodied Zimbabwe's 'crisis' in the figure of the president, and interpreted its impact in
terms of relationships within the nuclear family unit. This was just the latest in a series of tipping
points and was unlikely to be the last. She and Lisa subsequently bought their one-way tickets to
Zimbabwe but there was no knowing whether or not this would be the end of their zig-zag
migratory journey. The way Diane framed her dilemma seemed to offer no possibility of a
perfectly happy ending.

6.5.2   Staying on: Ian and Claire and their children

Diane's brother, Ian, related his life-story on the terrace of a large colonial farmhouse called
'Hightop', looking out at grassy fields of cattle bound by a horizon of uninterrupted forest.
Although he had spent a decade in South Africa where his children were born and where two of
them now lived, he identified himself strongly as a Zimbabwean, starting his life story by naming
the nursing home in Gweru where he and his siblings were born. After 20 years running the farm,
which he regarded as home, his tenure was now in doubt.

Throughout his narrative, he presented himself as a born and bred farmer who could envisage no
other sort of life. In contrast to his more inward-looking sister, he appeared anxious to be a
dispassionate witness to public events, using his own experience to illuminate the plight of all
white farmers. He interpreted Zimbabwe's 'crisis' as a collapse in its agricultural base, contrasting

the break-up of commercial farms with the previous halcyon years of the mid 1990s, when 'the

whole country was on a high':

> It was on an upward slope. Everything was on its way up. A lot of farmers were getting
> into export crops so busy bringing foreign currency into the country. Growing flowers
> was really a big thing. Horticulture was taking off and there was a huge amount of
> production going on around the country and investment into agriculture, irrigation
> schemes and drip irrigation and things like that.

In this 'development' discourse, commonly used by Zimbabwe's white farmers (Pilossof, 2012),

Ian justified his hold on the land – the fruits of hard labour and commitment. He maintained that

the country's success depended on white farmers' long term investment, which was then

recklessly undone in a single day:

> We had what was called Black Friday where it was suddenly announced that the war
> veterans would get 50,000 dollars each as a one-off payment and the US dollar/
> Zimbabwe dollar exchange rate just went from, I think it was 7 to 1 to like 15 to 1
> overnight and that's when inflation really started to become a problem.

The economy, which figured so large in the Shona narratives, was an important but secondary

feature in Ian's depiction of 'crisis'. As a farmer producing 'a primary product', he could at least

adjust his prices but, when inflation was at its worst, 'It was an incredibly tough, tough time'. He

was working all hours and travelling to South Africa every three months to buy groceries and fuel:

> Families started disappearing all over the world and obviously farmers they got kicked
> off their farms. Some lost land and still had their home farms so they still carried on.
> Others lost their home farms and then had to leave or get involved in something else.
> Businesses in town were just not able to cope with inflation so either it closed or sold on
> to somebody else – to a local Zimbabwean or something . . . and, and they left. They
> could see the writing on the wall . . . People realized, oh well the standard of education
> is going to drop drastically, so they left … weren't prepared to have their children's
> education affected. And others with young children realised, OK, the standard of
> education isn't going to improve or it's going to drop so let's leave and go to a place
> where we know we can have good education.

It was not only Ian and other white Zimbabweans who referred to a decline in standards – we

heard similar complaints from Fungai's Shona family. However, in Ian's 'development' discourse,

the suggestion is that things automatically fall apart when the black man, dismissively described

as 'a local Zimbabwean *or something'*[my emphasis], takes over.

When I visited his ex-wife Claire and her second husband Roger, another displaced farmer, in their

bungalow in Bulawayo, she described the impact of 'crisis' on the family, focussing mainly on her

own blood relatives. They began to disperse in the 1980s, when her parents left for South Africa:

> Then my one sister in South Africa she decided she's going to *Australia* and my brother
> left for New Zealand so the family split. About *five* times the family has split up and each
> time we've gone further and further apart. And so now we try and meet, you know, and

then they never come back. They have said they'll never come here to Zimbabwe so they never even come and visit me.

Stretching out the word 'Australia' to indicate physical distance and emphasising 'five', Claire expressed anger at being left behind - 'stuck', as she put it, in Zimbabwe. Whereas Roger seemed reluctant to leave, she seemed convinced that a better life existed elsewhere.

The requisition list

The year 2001 was when the land question, according to Ian, 'started raising its ugly head'. The government published lists of farms that would be compulsorily requisitioned –' a very tense time'. When 'Reflections' and adjoining farms were included, he was devastated - 'You realise your whole future is, you know, at a Y-junction basically' – but immediately asserted his power to control events, using the family mantra of 'making a plan'. In the initial stages of the government's land distribution policy, there was a chance to negotiate and he and his brother, who managed a tobacco farm in another part of the country, agreed to relinquish two thousand acres of ranchland as long as their elderly mother could keep 'Reflections' with its 170 acres. Ian subsequently arranged to lease back some of that land from the settlers in exchange for cattle. He also had a chicken house and three hectares of crops, so for months on end he spent Sundays working there and the rest of the week at 'Hightop'.

The government was satisfying the demands of war veterans but, like many white farmers, Ian was sceptical about the new land owners, telling me 'some' of the settlers were war vets or were 'supposed to be war vets'. Although 'a lot of people just walked out with the clothes on their back and had to make a run for it', he said in his district they were more fortunate:

> It wasn't very violent. They [settlers] just arrived and government officials would come with them and just peg out – they would just literally walk around with an axe, chop down trees to make pegs, put them in the ground and say, 'Alright, that's your boundary, da-da-da'.

> (See Appendix H for longer extract)

There were frightening moments, however. On one occasion, a settler confronted him demanding compensation. He said one of Ian's cows had damaged his crops and, when Ian queried the extent of the damage, he struck him on the head with a pole leaving a wound that required seven stitches. Ian added that this was '*one* of the incidents when he was beaten' [my emphasis]. When I asked him if he felt he was in danger during that period, his response was immediate: 'Oh yeah. There was that threat that it could get out of hand'. Throughout this section of his narrative, he never mentioned his wife and children so I asked him what effect this had on his family. It led to a moment of self-reflection:

Yeah, it was a very stressful time. And of course I was busy here all week and then I'd go over there on Sundays so in a way I look back on it and think perhaps I should have spent more time here with my children because it was at a critical time in their lives – they were in their early teenage years. I really wasn't around much for them and we didn't do much as a family, so I do regret that quite a lot, because in the end, you know, whatever I did there, I really didn't gain much from it.

Ian's sense of regret was greater because, as he intimated, it ended in failure. By 2005 he was squeezed off the land and in 2009 'Reflections' was also under threat.

Although he had supported Diane's battle to keep the farm, he doubted she would succeed. When we visited 'Reflections' together, he pointed out how dry and small it was. He was clearly irritated by his sister's struggle to cling to the farm against all the odds:

Now the sewerage systems in Gweru have all gone to pot and there's more settlement along the side of the river, so you've got all that coming down the river, cannot use that as safe drinking water; and she's got all these settlers all around her who are encroaching more and more on the farm. They're chopping down her trees. Her wood supply's diminishing. She's having to actually lease grazing next door to run her small herd of cattle. The small herd of cattle that she has, it's not enough to sustain her at all. I've just said to her, 'Economically, you know, it's just not going to work out'.

The language of contamination and depletion is not dissimilar to that used by some of Fungai's relatives when describing Zimbabwe's 'crisis' but, where they focussed their anger on the figure of Robert Mugabe, Ian's was directed at an anonymous group of black settlers.

Invasion at 'Hightop'

There was one major incident which Ian did not mention yet figured prominently in the stories told by his ex-wife Claire and daughters, Becky and Nicola. It was the day they arrived home at 'Hightop' to find war veterans on the property. None of them was able to put a date on it but it must have been around 2001 when Becky, the oldest sibling, was still at school. She described them standing at the gate 'with their big machetes':

Eventually they let us in, but they all, they all just, they had been in the house and when we actually drove in you could see them just scatter. They just ran out the house and they were all over the yard, so they'd been in the house and that was quite scary because Dad wasn't there you know. We had no one there. It was just me, my mum and my younger brother and sister. So they came in the house and I, I ended up just staying in a bedroom with my brother and sister. So they interrogated my mum quite a bit, and the foreman that was there. And they were trying to get hold of the weapons from the gun cabinet and that, which we didn't have keys for because Dad had them. And they eventually agreed to let us off so we literally, we packed what we could pack and we left.

In this breathless account, Becky re-lived the terror of this black invasion of white space. Newspapers at the time were full of reports of white farmers being attacked and killed and, with this in mind, she described it as 'my most terrifying experience out of the whole farm invasions

and things like that'. In Nicola's version, Becky appeared in a heroic role, pushing her little sister down in the car as they drove through the gate so she could not be seen, and trying to keep her calm. Nicola also described being pushed into a room while their mother was asked a lot of questions and then hearing a big commotion outside:

> The dogs were obviously barking at them and I remember them shouting that they're going to kill our dogs, so that was kind of traumatic.

Their mother Claire, who described 'invaders . . . dotted around the fence line' and 'snooping around', said she was allowed to make one phone call as a result of which two neighbours came and escorted her and the children off the farm. They took refuge at 'Reflections'. Claire thought this would be the tipping point that would force Ian to leave:

> I think secretly [laugh] I was hoping that this would be it, that Ian would see the light, and say, 'This is it. We cannot bring our children up like this. We cannot have our family tormented like this and put under that kind of stress. It's just – not - worth it. Let's take what we've got, and just say goodbye. We're not losing anything. If we go back to South Africa we're not losing anything'. 'Oh! But what about the promise of my *land* from my dad? What about that promise?' And I kept saying, 'If that was going to happen, it would have happened.' 'But what about this land that's been left to us? What about this? What about …?' And I thought, you know what? It's going to get . . . you know, it . . . [laugh] What happens if they come here and do the same thing?

In performing an imagined dialogue, Claire confused her own voice with that of her husband, literally putting words in his mouth. As far as she was concerned, Ian was sacrificing his own family out of an obstinate attachment to the land. She laughed in the knowledge that eventually she was to be proved right and 'Reflections' would be also be invaded.

In her life-story, Claire presented herself as the victim of other people's decisions. As a wife and mother, she was not a free agent and perhaps this added to her sense of bitterness about the consequences of this and previous 'crises' affecting Zimbabwe's white community. When the government's land acquistion policy threatened Ian's livelihood, she fleetingly saw it as an opportunity for escape, but was quickly disappointed when he negotiated with the new owners to keep his job as farm manager. In her narrative she resumed the conversation she would like to have had with Ian:

> You held on to something really great but . . . you held onto something but your marriage finished. Your children split all over the place. Your family split all over the place. Diane's sitting in England where she really doesn't want to be. So you know what? When do you . . . when do you stop and count your losses?

This halting account, with questions left unfinished and unanswered, gives little prospect of a resolution to Claire's personal crisis but her bitterness about the 'split' in her family perhaps says more about her own situation than theirs. While she felt 'stuck', Becky and Nicola were getting on

with their lives elsewhere, Becky in Harare and her other three children in South Africa, where they had chosen to study and work. Although Nicola missed the 'friendliness of Zimbabwe', her South African passport made her feel equally entitled to live south of the border. She was not looking backwards but planning to quit work in Cape Town and travel overseas:

> I think when you grow up and you grow older you have to start thinking about … not necessarily yourself . . . but you've got your own things to deal with and sometimes family issues you know they happen and you're like, well, you know what? I'm not there at the moment and it's not affecting me right now and you kind of have to like move on.

Nicola's philosophy, valuing the individual over the community, placed her firmly in a Western tradition and was in strong contrast to that of Shona and Ndebele participants of the same generation. Even if they questioned ties of obligation that could not be reciprocated, Dwana's daughter and Fungai's children and their cousins saw the extended family as central to their well-being.

Losing his stake in Zimbabwe

While I was Ian's guest at 'Hightop' he showed me the nearby dam and club house where he and other white farmers used to socialise at weekends, but which was now empty. He and Sally, whom he married in 2012, were the only white people within miles but put a brave face on their isolation. We cycled down the track from the farm where they pointed out land occupied by A1[74] settlers – 'peasant type farmers', according to Ian, who were each given five hectares and a communal grazing area. They wanted to show me the neighbouring dairy farm once occupied by white friends but now in the hands of a government minister – one of the A2 settlers, or 'guys that have a little bit more financial backing or are connected'. It had an abandoned air, yet there were brand new trucks and a harvester in the yard which the resident farm manager said were never used. In the discourse of the Zimbabwean government, sites like this have been rightfully handed back to 'the people', but for the white farming community they signify the destruction of years of development and proof of a new 'croneyism'.

After twenty years living and working at the farm, Ian was beginning to feel extremely vulnerable. He said one of his employees was a government spy and feared his own contract would not be renewed. Towards the end of his interview, after talking about his son Robert's successful career in medical research in South Africa, he abandoned emotional restraint to recount a conversation

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[74]The Accelerated Land Reform and Resettlement Implementation Plan launched in 2000 initially involved 5 million hectares which was to be divided between A1 settlers, who were allocated self-contained units for small-scale farming, and A2 settlers who would farm commercially on a medium or large scale. More land was allocated in 2003. See ibid.

they had on the phone in 2012 after he heard that 'Hightop' had been allocated to a state

institution and he was charged with occupying it illegally:

> . . . Just talking to Robert, I just suddenly had a serious breakdown and, yeah, just
> emotionally I think all the emotions came out and I said, 'I'm, I'm sorry Robert'. I was
> apologising to him that the farm had been taken now because, you know, he could
> never come back and have a stake in it. And, and he said, you know he said, 'Yeah, I
> always thought that maybe some day I would come back and get involved in the farm',
> you know. So, yeah, I felt that that was it, you know, he'd never have that opportunity.
> You know I always thought he would probably carry on his work that he was doing there
> but may be, as I was getting to an older age, may be later on in life that he would come
> back and be sort of an understudy to me and eventually take over the farm. And that's
> now been taken away from us. He can never do that.

Ian was better able to express his son's disappointment than his own and it was left to Sally to tell

me how he broke down in tears and later collapsed and was hospitalised. Although he said he was

lucky in that the new owners bought his farm machinery and cattle, he lost money he had

invested in buildings and improvement. More importantly, the farm acquistion cut off his last link

to the land, threatening his identity as a Zimbabwean. Losing it was tantamount to moral failure, a

breach of the settler's promise to pass land down through the generations. He rounded off his life

story by expressing determination to stay in the country as long as his health and the economy

allowed, using language that reflected a kind of seige mentality:

> Being born and brought up here, this is my home . . . Come hell or high water we are
> doing everything we can to stay here.

6.5.3   View from the capital: Pat, Becky and Mike

Much of the international news about Zimbabwe's 'crisis' was dominated by the plight of white

farmers, overlooking the situation of the black majority and also of white city-dwellers who were

not directly affected by the redistribution of land. Diane and Ian's cousin Pat, for instance, worked

in Harare's central business district and Ian's daughter Becky was a teacher in the capital before

becoming a full time mother while her husband Mike worked in the transport sector. Although

their family background was in farming, their livelihoods did not depend on a piece of land. In

their accounts of the period they focussed on the economic downturn and its impact on their

professional and social lives, presenting 'crisis' in a way that reflected differences of age and

generation.

A Rhodesian perspective

At the end of my visit to Pat, she insisted I take away a copy of the 1982 *Zimbabwe Agricultural and Economic Review,* full of charts of growth and output showing just how important and productive a country it was at the start of Robert Mugabe's leadership. She wanted to impress on me the extent of Zimbabwe's decline since then – the result, as she saw it, of black majority rule and white flight. Like her younger cousin Ian, she presented herself as a reliable and well-informed commentator on public affairs, concentrating on her professional life as an accountant and tax expert:

> We were completely self contained within our area in 1980. Ten years later, the disintegration had taken place and we were not what we should have been. Things were starting to break down and that's when people were leaving and when we lost most of our, our, I'd say our, um, our brain, our brain matter. Guys with background left. The people who knew how to fix things left. And the comment made by the African was, 'Ah! Can't fix it!'.

Her narrative, driven by the assumption of racial superiority, was full of metaphors of broken machinery, squandered resources and examples of 'African' incompetence. In this scenario, land redstribution hardly got a mention. Although her parents owned a farm near 'Reflections' and as the only child she was the sole inheritor, she said she had no regrets when it was taken:

> When the farm was designated I felt it to be a great relief. Seriously! Because I didn't want to go and farm. I didn't want to go and farm on my own. And they were forced to have to leave the farm and, as dad said to me years ago, he said 'Well, if *you* don't go farming, I'll leave it to the government'. That was way, way back. So I come from a different brand of thinking to most people I'm afraid.

Far from regretting her independence of thought, it was a characteristic she emphasised in the course of her life story, pointing out that she was one of the only members of the wider family who stayed behind while others left for South Africa and beyond. When 'the economy just went haywire', she supplemented her income for a while by running a restaurant, buying food at one of Harare's markets – formerly a no-go area for whites. Like Ian, she believed survival was a matter of adapting to the new environment, not being 'outspokenly controversial'. 'You just accept it', she said.

With no children to look after her and a diminishing circle of white friends, Pat kept herself busy with charity work and outings in and around Harare. Since her retirement two years earlier, she had rented out her house in the suburbs and moved to a retirement complex on the other side of town, giving her the option of full-time care if she needed it. Most of her savings had 'drifted out the window' as the result of the 'crisis', but her years as a tax inspector meant she had a small government pension so she did not feel 'hard done-by'. Her only real concern was 'medical

security' because her insurance was not enough to cover an emergency: 'If I were a fool and broke a leg, my hip were to go, then I would be in terrible trouble'.

In many ways, she was the most settled member of her family, secure in her national identity:

> I keep saying to people until such time as you turn round and say, 'I'm proud to be a Zimbabwean', this country will be nothing. Because Rhodesia was made because people were proud of being Rhodesians and now that we've moved over to Zimbabwe we've got to make this a country that we're proud of. I said, 'You guys have got to work to it. I'm now at the other end of the scale but I'd still like to say I'm a Zimbabwean and proud to be a Zimbabwean'.

In the manner of many elderly people, Pat used her life story to pass on the wisdom of age and experience, as if she were addressing not just one solitary researcher but a wider audience. Although, like the rest of her white community, she had lost her entitlement to certain privileges, she had not lost her sense of authority. Perhaps her insistence on lecturing her fellow Zimbabweans about how to behave also indicated an inherent optimism about its future.

Building a home

Ian's oldest daughter Becky and her husband Mike live in a house he owns in Harare, in the same suburb as Pat. They had just put their three small children to bed and were eating hamburgers in the kitchen when I arrived. Their interview, which was a double-act occasionally interrupted by the crying six-month old whom they took turns to comfort, focussed on the difficulties of bringing up a young family in the midst of economic crisis. Unlike Pat, they had always been educated and worked alongside black Zimbabweans and made no overt reference to racial differences.

Becky left home during her parents' separation and said little about her life before marriage. Mike on the other hand presented himself as part of a 'huge family' who had always lived and worked in the same areas in Zimbabwe and 'always remained close to each other', and he worried that his children would never have that sense of security. Between 1999 and 2003, his generation of cousins began to drift to the UK on working visas, looking for 'a life experience' and, when the British economic climate became more difficult, they moved further afield:

> It's been quite tough having them scattered all over the place and the only way we can communicate is with Facebook, keep the odd picture going, sort of getting the memories going you know. It's just a pity that our kids won't be able to experience that, that kind of life that we had growing up as kids, having a close community and extended family as your support structure and means of being able to entertain yourselves as well.

The internet, which did not become widely available in Harare till 2007, had been a life-line in a situation which he described as 'tragic':

> Personally, as a personal loss it was tragic that there's your family going, but at the same time you're thinking, what other choice do they have? There's nothing for them here . . . if the circumstances were different in Zim [sic] and opportunity was there for them to be able to remain here, there's no ways they would have left, no ways.

Mike and Becky were both committed Christians and felt that 'God's hand' protected them. Mike said he never considered leaving the country – 'I always felt my place was here'. Something always turned up to enable him to stay and 'keep my roots strongly based on the ground'. In fact at the start of the 'crisis', he was working for a transport company earning 'forex' (foreign exchange) and doing exceptionally well: 'We were starting to live like a king'. After re-dollarisation[75], however, everything changed. Although Becky was teaching and he was working '24/7' in a 'really cut throat' business, they had to supplement their income by selling eggs from her father's farm. Becky said friends grouped together to barter goods and share whatever they had. Using the language of survivors, the couple talked of 'battling', of always 'making a plan', of making the best of a 'crazy' situation. When I asked about the 2008 election campaign which had been particularly violent in Harare, they both jumped in with the word 'scary'. Becky said there were days when teachers were told not to go to work because of riots. Mike added:

> Mike: I'd go to work and I'd be working on the outskirts of Harare and you'd hear the group coming running, chanting and everything. And my staff would say to me, 'Boss just go and sit in your office! Don't come out until they've gone!'
>
> Jenny: Black staff would say that to you because you were white?
>
> Mike: Yes. If they see you, there'll be trouble! So I'd be told, 'Go to the office and stay till they're gone'. So once I'd hear they'd passed I would come back down and resume duties … because we worked in the open, wide open yard in the transport company and the fencing that went around was just normal fencing[76].

Mike was thought to be in danger because of his skin colour, but he would not have said this without my intervention. Like other members of his generation in this family, he avoided explicitly referring to 'race' while at the same time assuming I would know that the men who called him 'boss' were black.

All the participants in this study living in Zimbabwe stressed the fact that the 'crisis' was on-going and complained about the lack of opportunity. In 2010 when the Government of National Unity

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[75] In 2009, Zimbabwe abandoned its local currency and introduced a basket of foreign currencies dominated by the US dollar. See BONGA, W. G. & DHORO, N. L. 2014. Currency Substitution, Dollarisation and Possibility of De-Dollarisation inZimbabwe. Available: http://www.academia.edu/7567198/CURRENCY_SUBSTITUTION_DOLLARISATION_AND_POSSIBILITY_OF_D E-DOLLARISATION_IN_ZIMBABWE [Accessed 28 Jan 2016].

[76] Among the visible signs of 'crisis' in Zimbabwe are the stretches of barbed wire fencing, the steel shutters and electric gates guarding domestic properties. A fencing business was one of the ventures that contributed to Fungai's rich uncle Steven's success.

was formed and the situation improved somewhat, Mike's company moved to South Africa, throwing him out of work in the week his first son was born – 'an unnerving sort of situation in our life'. He started working as a handyman, and again Ian helped out by employing him at 'Hightop' to service tractors. He then found a job running a vehicle spares shop, though the business climate remained dire:

> Mike: I think the real negative effect of the whole situation for me is being sheltered to some degree because you end up feeling you're just working day by day, living day by day. And you've always got to be in a position to seize the opportunity when it comes because, if you're not there, you're not going to get the opportunity again. So, yeah, it's just hanging in there. But it has affected us badly. It's probably held us back to some degree, sheltering us.
>
> Becky: Or I think restricting us is a better word

On my second brief visit to the couple's home, Becky was feeding the baby and Mike was playing with the two older children in a small swimming pool in the garden. It was a picture of domestic happiness but nothing like the family adventures Mike remembered having with his cousins, exploring rivers, looking for game and bunny-hopping[77] at night. Both he and Becky had been brought up to expect this kind of freedom, at least in their holidays and leisure time, but now they were struggling to save money for their own house and restricted by the needs of a young family:

> Mike: That's where you feel you're just working for school fees and I think life's a bit more than just that – work. It's about having an experience in life.
>
> Becky: And building a future.
>
> Mike: and building a future.

The frustration of sensing that life was passing them by was common to 'stayers' of their generation and life-stage, irrespective of social or ethnic group. Although Becky and Mike differed from older and migrant members of their white family in that their entitlement to belong in Zimbabwe was not directly threatened, their narratives were threaded with hints of anxiety. They were acutely aware that their own children would not enjoy the privileges they once had.

6.6   Conclusion

Settler status made Diane's family self-consciously Zimbabwean. In other words, it was not an identity that could be taken for granted as it was for the other two families in the study and indeed it was severely challenged by the government's land reform and indigenisation laws. As a result, they used life stories to lay out their 'African' credentials, repeatedly emphasising their

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[77] Bunny-hopping is riding a bike over bumps and ditches.

attachment to the land and productive role in its development. Those whose livelihoods were bound up with the countryside were dramatically affected by the take-over of white-owned commercial farms, not only financially but psychologically, and their narratives generated a sense of uprootedness and displacement. City dwellers were more exposed to the collapse of the Zimbabwean dollar and expressed concerns about the future. Both implicitly dated the country's problems to the fall of the Rhodesian government and the mass exodus of white professionals.

There was a striking contrast between the discourse of the younger generation born after independence and older family members who felt a greater sense of entitlement to privilege and watched it gradually diminish. However guarded their speech, particularly in the presence of a microphone, Diane and Ian's generation viewed the 'crisis' in terms of 'us' and 'them', white people versus black. They displayed an essentialist and stereotypical portrait of 'the others', finding it difficult even to give them a name. Nevertheless, Diane and Ian used their narratives to present themselves as willing to adapt to new circumstances; in fact Diane presented herself as the repentant wrongdoer who rejected the racist views of her youth. Their children avoided discriminatory language, though were far from colour-blind. Because the family settled in South Africa before coming to Zimbabwe, and some members had South African passports, they did not present migration as a border crossing into foreign territory. Although Nicola and her grandmother delivered nostalgic accounts of the Zimbabwe they once knew, they felt equally entitled to a home across the border. As a Zimbabwean citizen, Diane had to apply for leave to remain in the UK but unlike other participants she related this as a fairly straightforward procedure and was not left so long in a position of abjection, perhaps because her husband had a British passport. However, both she and her children initially suffered the same claustrophobia and culture shock as other migrants and she remained adrift, uncertain where she belonged.

Apart from Claire and Mike, the 'in-laws', participants did not identify themselves with an African extended family but operated in independent units of parents and children. Ian helped both his sister and daughter through the 'crisis' but little mention was made of favours received and returned. Thus the extended family played a less significant role in members' response to 'crisis', even though they all regretted its dispersal. On the other hand, the shortage of thick reciprocal ties increased dependency on extra-familial relationships and they identified strongly with Zimbabwe's white community. Therefore, when whites began to flee the country from the 1980s onwards, they lost an important source of support and were increasingly isolated and beleaguered. Another consequence of this more western-style, individualistic approach was that, although the younger generation communicated with each other by Facebook, there was little inter-generational contact apart from the parent/child relationship. Diane, Ian and their children occupied a transnational space in that they communicated and cared for each other across

borders but they were not part of the complex circuit of duties and obligations that is a feature of many transnational migrant families, including that of Fungai and Dwana. Whereas black participants remained sure of their roots in the rural birthplace, Diane and her daughter, Lisa, and Ian and his former wife, Claire, were left wondering whether there was anywhere they could call 'home'. This collapse of confidence was performed in their narratives, which situated me the researcher as a witness to their unappiness and an arbiter in their internal debate about the 'best' course of action. It was as if the gradual erosion of privilege since independence, culminating in a loss of entitlement to land, had made them uncertain of their continuing identity.

Chapter 7:   Discussion

In setting out on this research journey, I wanted to find out how people caught up in tumultous national events interpreted and responded to them and what factors influenced them to take such different courses of action. Although the term 'crisis' is over-used in contemporary discourse, I believe it reflects the exceptional and life-changing nature of the situation in Zimbabwe but, as well as using it to describe a historic set of events, I have broadened the concept to include moments of existential 'crisis', a loss of bearings, in an individual life. In order to understand why and at what point the macro 'crisis' turns into an internal ontological 'crisis', I have placed participant life-stories in the context of the wider family with its particular history and culture, a process which reveals the interaction of three time frames – the historical setting, the individual's life-course and that of the family itself. Furthermore, by focussing on the family and siting my research in Zimbabwe, South Africa and the UK, I have explored the way ties of affection and obligation have been renegotiated in a transnational space. After presenting a detailed account of each of the three families, I will now discuss points of comparison and contrast that shed further light on these issues.

 Although participants lived through the same period of national turmoil, experiencing moments of existential threat, their perception of events was widely divergent, determined in part by their family's cutural and historic legacy. Thus, while the Ndebele family viewed 'crisis' through the prism of ethnic conflict, highlighting political violence, the white family saw it as a racial battle between black and white Zimbabweans over land; where the Shona and white families saw obstacles to progress and loss of privilege, the Ndebele family saw discrimination and confirmation of their victim status. At an individual level too, memories of the past combined with circumstances in the here and now to colour a participant's view of crisis. As the last three chapters have shown, migration was a common strategy for survival, almost invariably seen by participants as a temporary measure, and the family with its shared moral values and thick ties of trust was an important resource. Nevertheless, family members did not operate 'as one' in times of 'crisis', however strong the bonds that tied them together. In addition to family and community resources, resilience and agency depended on individual characteristics, which were in turn contingent on status within the family, gender, age and life-stage.

The linked narratives indicated striking cultural differences between families, but within each of them was a network of individuals whose particularity made them almost impossible to represent in a thematic way. Take, for example, the case of Fungai's sister, Vimbo. Her membership of the majority Shona group, family's social position, education and status as a married woman would

suggest a greater resilience than other Zimbabweans facing 'crisis', yet she presented herself as having little control over her migration journey, travelling in the slipstream of her husband on a zig-zag route across borders and returning to poverty. Was her comparitively disadvantaged position in the family simply a matter of gender or the result of a submissive nature, as her sisters indicated? Was it a consequence of criss-crossing borders, thereby reducing the chance of creating a new support network? Would she have done better if she had not returned to Zimbabwe? The complexity of these stories challenges any scholarly and bureaucratic desire to label and categorise migrants.

In this chapter I will argue that whatever paths family members took and however complex the factors that drove them to act in the way they did, 'crisis' defines their migration and re-shapes the family in a way that makes their experience substantially different from that of 'economic' migrants. While resisting the impulse to generalise from such a small sample, I will now discuss a number of themes and issues emerging from this family perspective on 'crisis migration'. I look at the way individuals incorporate exceptional, threatening events into a coherent narrative; cultural and historic factors that make them more or less resilient in the face of danger and the gendered nature of their experience. I then explore the extended family's role in migration and the consequent re-shaping of transnational family networks. Finally, I discuss the implications of participants' continuing insecurity before highlighting some of the pitfalls and rewards of this type of family-centered research.

7.1 Making sense of 'crisis' – variations in narrative style

The participants in my research have constructed life stories in which they are situated within a network of relationships, mostly of blood or marriage, and through their biographies we can observe how they negotiate 'crisis' and give it meaning. Rather than treating narratives as accurate records of experience, I have drawn on techniques of narrative and textual analysis to look beyond the words themselves to underlying layers of meaning. In other words, I see them as means by which the narrators 'bring experience into social and psychological focus' (Ochs, 2006, p.276). Their personal accounts of a life are set within a collective story, a foundational myth, which serves both as a reference point, helping them to explain how they responded to 'crisis', and a moral compass to guide them into the future. These narratives, then, are chronologically three-dimensional – drawing us into the past, present and future.

Through the act of story-telling, participants gave order to events that in public discourse were seen as chaotic or out of control. Headline phrases like 'economic meltdown', 'bloody violence' and 'mass migration' were translated into the mundane practicalities of physical and economic

survival and key moments or fragments of experience were highlighted with anecdotes about empty supermarket shelves, gangs of armed youths and war veterans at the gates. Perhaps by avoiding any acknowledgement of the scale of physical and psychological violence that became commonplace,[78] they were hoping to control its impact on their lives. Shared values of resourcefulness and self-sufficiency led participants to play down their vulnerability through the use of understatement and euphemism or innuendo; so for instance they talked of things 'going bad', being 'tough' or 'tense' or 'taking a wrong turn' and of people threatening to do 'really horrible things'. Emotion was often expressed non-verbally through tone of voice, gesture or facial expression.

Narrative styles varied greatly according to the three distinct cultures in which they were embedded. In general, Ndebele and Shona participants echoed moral tales, presenting their lives as a series of troubles that had to be endured with Christian fortitude – 'You have to forge ahead', 'Keep your head down and do what you have to', 'It was one day at a time', 'If God provides, God provided.' Members of the white family were more inclined to describe 'crisis' in terms of their own emotional and psychological state – 'It's been very lonely', 'I'd be very, very upset', 'I just suddenly had a serious breakdown'. Migrants in the UK, who were exposed to a more individualistic culture, were more likely to explore their emotions than relatives in Zimbabwe. The age of a participant was also significant in that older participants did not make clear boundaries between past and present or stick to the narrative convention of beginning, middle and end, whereas the middle and younger generations followed a clear chronological pattern. The younger generation also related their stories as a progression from carefree childhood to the responsibilities of adult life, using questions and exclamations to draw me, the mature interlocutor, into their process of self-discovery. Past events were re-shaped in the light of present circumstances; so, for instance, there was a marked contrast between what people in the UK talked about and those in Zimbabwe and South Africa were prepared to say, as if distance provided some security. Those who stayed in Zimbabwe tended to deliver their stories in a flatter more linear style, avoiding parenthesis and personal anecdote, as if 'crisis' was so routine as to be unremarkable. In contrast, migrants in the UK used reported speech, the present tense, changes of pitch and tone and other rhetorical flourishes to perform moments of 'crisis' or present current moral dilemmas, perhaps feeling freer to express themselves without fear of being overheard or challenged. Futhermore they were more likely to identify key moments of change, dividing their

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[78] A study on a government-led reconciliation project in one area of Zimbabwe post 2010 reveals that 'both physical and psychological violence were normalised as mechanisms for thwarting political opposition' with 'instances of sexual assault, imprisonment without charge, torture, beatings, and murder'. See TARUSARIRA, J. & MANYENA, B. 2016. Reconciliation in Zimbabwe: Building Resilient Communities or Unsafe Conditons? *Journal of Conflict Transformation & Security,* 5**,** 53-74.

stories into a before and after departure. Far from being the defining moment of rupture, however, the migration journey itself was often dismissed in a sentence, overshadowed by further moments of 'crisis' when their selfhood was threatened. Such experiences were related through stories of fear, exclusion and humiliation in the host country, often involving confrontations with immigration officials and racist managers, though the narrator usually emerged defiant and ultimately victorious.

As we saw in Chapter 5, silence had become a habit for Ndebele participants, in part because of fear, in part because their experience of 'epistemic injustice' (Fricker, 2007) led them to mistrust the power of testimony. In the accounts of the other families there were similar gaps, evasions and obfuscation, whether through fear of reprisal, a psychological denial of unpleasant truths, or the fact that some events were too traumatic to incorporate into a life story. For example Ian, the white farmer, failed to mention the invasion of 'Hightop' and Fungai's Shona sister Tatenda avoided references to her estranged son who was now living as an illegal migrant in London. Embarrasment or shame may also have been a reason for silence. April, for instance, avoided discussion of the situation in Zimbabwe, perhaps because she had not personally suffered like other family members or because her political affiliations were different.

Another distinctive feature of these narratives is the lack of a resolution. Unlike historians and journalists who bracket Zimbabwe's 'crisis' in a time-frame, the three families presented a series of unfolding events with no clear beginning or end. Older members saw it as a continuation of problems rooted in history. Fungai's father Herbert, Dwana's father Ken and Diane's brother Ian, who all experienced violence at first hand, tended to confuse and elide time periods so that it was difficult to unravel more recent events from those of the past.[79] Thus, what all these life histories reveal is the interplay of past, present and future. Experiences recounted from the past were intertwined with what was happening now, changing expectations for the future. The insecure nature of individual circumstances led to self-questioning and a focus on some imagined but contested end-point.

7.2   Resilience in the face of 'crisis'

A participant's place in the family hierarchy and in the wider social field – dependent on race or ethnic group, class, gender and to a lesser extent generation – had an important bearing on his/her capacity to withstand the impact of economic downturn, social breakdown and political

[79] Psychologists recognise this 'time collapse' as a response to shared trauma, in which 'people may intellectually separate the past event from the present one, but emotionally the two are merged'. See VOLKAN, V. 1997. *Bloodlines: From Ethnic Pride to Ethnic Terrorism,* USA, Westview Press.

violence. At the turn of the millenium, Fungai's large and 'close' Shona family was in many ways the most secure of the three, both materially and ontologically, with a confidence born of majority ethnic status. Although they did not use the word 'class', it was clear from their family history and the childhood stories related by the older generation that they saw themselves as part of an educated élite, who had prospered under colonial rule and maintained their privileges after independence. Another sign of social status was their mobility and familiarity with urban as well as rural environments. Even before the 'crisis', they situated themselves in a global space outside the confines of their rural home and were used to moving to find work. As a result, when 'crisis' hit, they were better placed than other Zimbabweans to take evasive action.

The affluence and success of individual members were used to support those who were weaker or in difficulties and this network of reciprocal ties gave the family a distinct advantage when the state began to collapse and political tensions increased. Helping each other out was a way of maintaining status. Fungai's aged aunt Grace was financially dependent on younger family members but maintained her status as the family's spiritual guide and, when Fungai was at her lowest ebb, reduced to penury as an asylum seeker in Britain, she continued to command the respect of her family because of her role as eldest sibling and care-giver. In all these stories, sending remittances to relatives back home was shown to be an important part of maintaining status and thus confirming a participant's ability to withstand hardship.

Faced with a threat to upward mobility, Fungai and her relatives had more resources at their disposal and a greater range of choice about the actions they took than Dwana's Ndebele family, who saw themselves as second-class citizens in Zimbabwean society. Whereas Fungai's father and uncle boasted about doing deals with the white colonialists and she and her siblings regarded themselves as equal to any white person, Dwana's father Ken situated himself as an oppressed subordinate and his children remained wary of white Zimbabweans and even perhaps me as a white researcher. Even within the Ndebele-speaking community, they lacked the social connections and mobility that would have increased their status and helped them in troubled times. Although they had a family home in Bulawayo, they valued historic roots in the countryside above urban culture and mobility and, with the exception of Zinhle, who went to university in Harare, they stayed in Matabeleland until 'crisis' forced them to move. Thus, Dwana's relatives tended to be inward-looking, rooted in the physical and imaginary space of the rural homeland and locked in memories of its troubled past. Rather than interpreting the public 'crisis' as economic collapse, which could be mitigated by action, these participants saw it as an existential threat. Individually they showed courage and determination but collectively their stories revealed an underlying fear born of deep-seated insecurity. Although there were individuals in both families who were politically at risk and had to act fast, Fungai's brother and father received help

from her pioneering aunt Celia in the UK whereas Dwana and her siblings had to make their own way alone.

The colour of their skin gave Diane and her family superior status, accompanied by mobility and privileged access to resources, which protected them from some of the worst effects of Zimbabwe's economic collapse, even though it threw them into collision with President Mugabe's government. Unlike black Zimbabweans, some had dual nationality and could cross borders and continents with relative ease. However, they lost their secure footing when Rhodesia ceased to exist and with it went an important part of their identity. Whereas Shona and Ndebele families took nationality for granted, they protested their attachment to Zimbabwe as if laying claim to the land, framing 'crisis' as a battle to resist dispossession and thus save the country from economic ruin. Although they presented themselves as outnumbered and threatened by the black majority, the narratives of older members reflected an innate sense of racial superiority, as if their status as 'whites' protected them from ultimate defeat. They compensated for lack of extended family ties by situating themselves within the white community so that, for instance, Susan and her children were quickly able to summon neighbours when they found intruders on their farm and Becky and Mike pooled resources with friends to survive the worst of the economic downturn. Despite their innate resilience, however, the family was fundamentally shaken by political change. Members literally had the ground swept from beneath their feet.

7.3   A gendered view of 'crisis'

Viewed in the framework of 'gendered geographies of power' (Mahler and Pessar, 2006, 2001), the variation in participants' response to 'crisis' can be explained by the different locations they occupied in family, social and structural hierachies and the extent of their social agency. In other words, their experience as 'crisis migrants' depended on mutually constituted attributes of class, race and ethnicity, and gender. The increasing feminisation of Zimbabwean migration is reflected in my own research in which women took a central role,[80] often travelling independently of men in order to support themselves and their families and subsequently acting as kin-keepers in a new transnational space. I am aware of the pitfalls of making comparisons with the smaller number of male participants. Given that caveat however, there were clear stylistic differences between the narratives of male family members, who tended to present themselves as sole actors on a political stage and economic providers for the family, and women who placed themselves and their actions in relation to others, assuming responsibility for children and family members as part

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[80] As I explained in Chapter 3, *Methodology*, this is partly happenstance – the fact that my three key participants are all women, and partly the result of my own bias as a female researcher.

of their identity. In all three cases, narratives showed a consistency of gender constructions and stereotypes, placing men in a public domain and women in the home.

The patriarchy of Shona, Ndebele and white culture was reinforced by the Christian teaching that all three women grew up with. Their narratives reflect gendered social and moral values of (masculine) 'reputation' and (feminine) 'respectability' (Olwig, 2007); male 'strength' and female 'vulnerability'. So despite being strong characters who accentuated their agency Fungai, Dwana and Diane presented themselves as subordinate to the men around them and their stories were threaded with the threat of physical and structural violence, often gendered as male. Dwana told the story of soldiers raping girls in her school dormitory, her own narrow escapes when fighters came to the homestead and her mother's vicious beating. She also dwelt at length on the physical abuse she endured throughout her marriage and expressed concern that this was witnessed by her daughter. It was little wonder that a later interview with a British immigration official – 'a tall man, big build' – made her speechless with fear. Diane's description of her father's emotional bullying and husband's volatile moods were similarly echoed in her intimidating encounters with the man who claimed her farm. Perhaps adopting a lesson she had learned as daughter and wife, she chose to counter his aggression with a conciliatory gesture, offering him vegetables from her garden. All three women conformed to the cultural norm of dutiful wife. Diane gave her husband a second chance by following him to Britain; Dwana endured her husband's beatings for ten years; Fungai agreed to take back her sick husband and nurse him. Eventually, however, they set themselves free, though neither Dwana nor Fungai could escape the pain and stigma of HIV status, which they attributed to their husbands' infidelity. Their gendered social position was a key factor in tipping them into a state of 'crisis'.

It also had a bearing on their response. When recounting life turning points, women participants invariably referred to family responsibilities – an important source of moral value but one that was threatened by 'crisis' at both a personal and political level. Those with husbands, like Fungai's sisters Vimbo and Rukudzo, Diane and her sister-in-law Claire, followed their men's wishes with varying degrees of reluctance. In Claire's case this meant staying with her second husband in Zimbabwe. Motherhood was a further complication in that their wellbeing was closely bound up with that of their children. Dwana was reduced to despair by long separation from Molly, while her sister Zinhle felt that leaving her young son irreparably damaged their relationship. Diane was torn between her longing for 'Reflections', where she could perhaps achieve the self-actualisation she hoped for, and concerns about her sons in Britain. Fungai's happiness at being reunited with her daughters in Britain was dampened by her inability to match their previously comfortable life-style, while her sister Tatenda agonised about estrangment from her renegade son.

As far as Shona participants were concerned, disadvantages of gender were partially overcome by a family culture that valued equal education for girls and boys, ensuring that women in each generation were economically independent and able to control their own movements. The exception was Vimbo, who presented herself as subordinate to her husband and obliged to follow in his footsteps whether or not she liked the direction of travel. Fungai's sister Tatenda and cousin April were the only participants who saw in 'crisis' an opportunity for advancement and April's business acumen gave her enhanced status with the family. Faced with Zimbabwe's economic collapse, migration was a way of maintaining their breadwinning role. Fungai was one of thousands of Zimbabwean women who supported their families by cross-border trade in the informal sector and would have continued successfully if her health had allowed. In the UK, however, her options were extremely limited and she took work in the care industry, joining the ranks of 'British bum cleaners' or 'BBCs', a phrase coined by Mugabe and his ministers. Pasura (2008, 2010b, 2014) has noted that men in the diaspora suffer a crisis of masculinity when forced to take low-paid 'femininised' jobs, while women relish the opportunity to work outside the home even if they complain that they still take most of the domestic duties. However, the stories of the Shona sisters reveal an equivalent identity 'crisis'. Fungai joked about being 'Jane', her maid, while Tatenda felt degraded and sickened by carework and Rukudzo, formerly a travel agent, resented doing menial tasks from dawn to dusk. It was not the duty of caring for strangers they resented so much as the loss of social status – represented in anecdotes about patronising, even racist attitude of managers who were less well educated than them. Both Fungai and Dwana had difficulty convincing the UK authorities that they needed protection and felt intimidated and humiliated by confrontations with immigration officers. Here, too, gender put them at a disadvantage in a system which has repeatedly been shown to marginalise women, treating them as dependents or 'followers' of men, less likely to be politically active and therefore at risk of violence or persecution and, as a consequence, less likely to be granted asylum (O'Neill, 2010).

Despite their lowly status as black female immigrants in Britain, however, Shona and Ndebele women in this research were similar to those in McDuff's study (2015) in that they embraced the opportunity to break free from a traditionally patriarchal culture. Dwana now questioned paternal dominance in her childhood home and Fungai criticised her father's treatment of her late mother. Both expressed feminist views, disparaging Zimbabwean wives whom they described as domestic drudges who put up with their partners' infidelity. In contrast, women I met in Zimbabwe often sucked their teeth when describing men's behaviour, particularly the culture of the 'small house', but gave the impression that it was something they had to live with. Diane, on the other hand, who had re-married after migrating to the UK, presented herself as emotionally dependent on her

husband. Her physical and psychological isolation in Zimbabwe perhaps made her more dependent on married status.

7.4   Dispersal

There is no doubt that the dispersal of these families in traumatic circumstances within a short period of time had a profound and largely unwelcome impact, forcing them to re-negotiate and re-evaluate ties of affection and duty in a transnational space. Unlike the transnational families in other studies, who tend to be 'economic' migrants, their scattering was un-planned and haphazard. Depending on 'mobilisation of resources or different endowments of various forms of capital' (Van Hear, 2012, p.11), they either moved internally in Zimbabwe, crossed the border into neighbouring countries or went further afield. Some managed to get work or student visas while others travelled without documentation or sought asylum. Participants who drew family maps made negative comparisons between the way their family was shaped now and how it had been before 'crisis'. On the other hand, as a strategy for survival, dispersal perhaps saved the group from further disintegration. What these narratives show is that, just as family history affects people's views of 'crisis', so it impacts on their response and attitude to migration. Thus we can observe significant differences between each family's ability to maintain its identity, both as a cohesive unit and as generator of shared moral values.

Diane's white Zimbabwean family traced their roots via South Africa to Britain and a number were legally entitled to live elsewhere. They started to scatter twenty years before the period of this study, laying trails to Commonwealth countries like New Zealand and Canada for others to follow. Although deeply attached to the place, Zimbabwe, nationality was a weaker point of identification than skin colour and 'whiteness' served as a passport to parts of the world that were less accessible to black Zimbabweans. Natalie and Susan easily blended into South Africa's white community but Sam and Zinhle had to disguise their identity and, whereas Diane could pass unnoticed in Britain, Fungai and her relatives encountered racist attitudes. The individualistic nature of a culture rooted in Europe differentiated the white family's experience of dispersal. Focussing on the parent-child and sibling triangle, they had fewer reciprocal obligations and a smaller moral investment in the extended family and were therefore less bothered by its scattering – hence Pat could remark, 'We've never been very close' without any sense of moral failure. Unlike Shona and Ndebele families who regard children as dependent until they marry, white Zimbabweans expect late teenagers to spread their wings, so Natalie took it for granted that in adulthood she would 'leave the family behind'. On the other hand, Diane's relatives mourned the break-up of the white farming community. To a large extent this alternative family was their safety net in earlier 'crises' but it quickly fragmented leaving those in Zimbabwe like Ian,

Claire and Becky extremely isolated. After migration, each nuclear unit stayed in touch but there was only intermittent communication and little interchange of duties within the extended family so transnational connections made no significant difference to the day-to-day operation of family life.

Fungai's Shona family on the other hand presented itself as typical of the African ideal – large, interdependent and 'very close', operating as both resource and safety net. Members viewed migration as a collective survival strategy and to a large extent their bonds held firm within a transnational space. Whereas Dwana's parents were dismayed when some of their children 'disappeared' without warning, Fungai's aunt wished more of her children would leave the country to support those back home. After a period of painful readjustment, one could almost say the reconstituted family looked much the same as it had before. In South Africa, April continued to bestow favours on those who were less fortunate. In Britain, Fungai resumed her role as kin-keeper, ensuring a constant circulation of family news, while her uncle Anesu maintained the Zimbabwean 'home'. Relatives of all ages were in daily contact via What's App or Facebook and those migrants who could afford it spent long holidays in Zimbabwe. Some invested in property and two members of the youngest generation, Bella and Rumbi, hoped to set up businesses there. Thus, of all the families, this one appeared most fortified by its new transnational identity.

Dwana's Ndebele family were perhaps the most fragmented by 'crisis', as if it had widened existing cracks in the edifice. Although mid-generation siblings professed a strong sense of loyalty to each other, there were internal rifts and jealousies; so, for instance, Dwana talked of divisions on account of skin tone, and said she resented her oldest sister for failing to protect Molly. These rifts were all the more painful because the extended family was small. Mistrustful of the rest of the world, members only had each other to rely on. Not only was there no-one to smooth the path for them when they suddenly needed to escape, but lack of social capital reduced their choices and increased the risks. Unlike Fungai's cousin April, who was cushioned by her high social status, Sam and Zinhle lived in fear of xenophobic attacks in South Africa. Dwana was alone in the UK and, because she had no passport, could not return 'home' even for a short visit. Within their narratives, silence surrounding the brother who deserted from the army and went into hiding in South Africa spoke of a hole at the heart of this family. Instead of a circulatory flow of duties and favours, communication tended to follow tramlines with few crossing points. This was partly because of the cost and availability of technology, partly a sense of mistrust; for, as a number of them pointed out, without face-to-face contact words can be overhead by the wrong people or misunderstood. As keeper of the rural home, Dwana's father Ken was a more isolated and vulnerable figure than Fungai's uncle Anesu. Even though both men received financial support

from their children, Ken had nothing but regret for their dispersal whereas Anesu presented it in a positive light.

These differences are visualised in the maps people have drawn of their 'post-crisis' families. Those of Dwana, her daughter Molly and sister Zinhle, are tentative and restrained with a maximum of ten names from the immediate family, each isolated in a white space. In contrast, Fungai, her daughters and two of her sisters fill their pages with extended family members that spread confidently across the page, making liberal use of colour to distinguish them by 'closeness' or location[81] – a clear indication of the family's continuing solidarity. Her sister Vimbo and Vimbo's daughter Mercy, who have been constantly on the move, include more friends and fellow church-goers than family. The maps of Diane's family are more diverse. Pat attempts a conventional family tree, emphasising the four 'settler' generations; Diane clusters her own family and friends and her husband's relatives in nuclear family units; Becky and Lisa include more contemporaries than older relatives. [For a sample of family maps, see Appendix C.]

7.5   A ' fragmented diaspora'

Family members who now live outside their home country do not see themselves as 'transnational', preferring to describe themselves as part of the 'diaspora'. When used by Zimbabweans, the term often has political connotations, implying opposition to President Robert Mugabe. Zimbabwean politicians either call on the 'diaspora' for support, or berate them for abandoning the country. Some Shona and Ndebele family members who remained in Zimbabwe stressed their dependence on and gratitude for remittances from the 'diaspora', with just a hint of rebuke for those who had somehow escaped the worst effects of 'crisis'. In this study, however, I have avoided the label 'diaspora' as a description of their migration experience. One of the weaknesses of a term which turns individuals into a homogenous body is that it suggests they share 'a memory and myth' of the homeland (Cohen, 2008) whereas, in the case of the families in my study, this is clearly far from the truth. The former Rhodesia mythologised by Diane's white family is far removed from the independent nation that Fungai's relatives hold so dear and, as Dwana pointed out in one of our conversations, Zimbabwe is a Shona word and forever linked in her imagination with memories of the Gukurahundi killings. The context of crisis-related mobility further challenges notions of home and belonging, for 'crisis' can shatter real and imagined

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[81] The only exception is Munashe's family map. Like male participants in the pilot study he resisted the idea of taking up pencil and crayons and hurriedly wrote a short list of names – his wife and children in red at the top followed by his mother Fungai, his half-sisters and some aunts and uncles. Fungai's daughter Annette, who was the most critical of the 'African' communitarian culture, drew her map in a flamboyant style but included fewer names than her mother and sister.

worlds. As Ndlovu (Ndlovu, 2010) suggests, Zimbabweans have varied conceptions of 'home', which can become a place that constricts, endangers and even kills. Al-Ali, Black and Koser (2001a, 2001b) noted a similar ambivalence among Eritrean and Bosnian refugees in Europe who curtailed their transnational activities because they were disillusioned with the political climate there and feared discrimination or retribution if they were to return. In my own study, participants from the majority Shona group were beginning to travel back to Zimbabwe when they could, visiting tourist landmarks like Victoria Falls and posting holiday snaps on Facebook; Ndebele migrants, on the other hand, visited surreptiously, if at all, and then stayed close to relatives, limiting the 'home' of their imagination to the rural area where they grew up. Furthermore, Fungai and her sisters often talked about 'going home' when they retired, and indeed Vimbo had already done so; whereas Dwana and her siblings thought return was impossible as long as ZANU-PF was in power. Interestingly, Diane and her brother Ian seemed the most eager to declare their identification with the nation-state, emphasising their attachment to the land as a sign of their 'belonging', perhaps because it was politically contested.

The youngest generation of the three families, meanwhile, displayed the same ambivalence about 'home' as second-generation migrants in many other transnational studies although here again the context of 'crisis' overshadowed their experience. As Olwig (2007) and Levitt (2006) noted, although many migrant children play down their 'otherness' in the face of discrimination, others use it to affirm their identity. This is a more nuanced strategy for the young adults in my study. The continuing volatility of the situation in Zimbabwe and its international reputation as a dysfunctional state reduce its usefulness as a badge of pride. The on-going nature of the country's 'crisis' also dampens any sense of idealism and dreams of return. Even Bella and her cousin Rumbi, who harboured ambitions to set up business in Zimbabwe, were not prepared to commit themselves yet; and Lisa, who clung to her Zimbabwean passport and who returned there during the course of my research, was quickly disillusioned and began to feel fonder of Britain. This is not to say that young migrants were not proud of their national identity but those who lived in the UK were even more doubtful than their mothers about the possibility of a future in Zimbabwe.

7.6   Living with uncertainty

A distinguishing feature of these families is their unsettled state. Many migrant and transnational studies focus on members of relatively established immigrant communities who have gained a sense of temporary permanence, even if they describe themselves as being 'neither here nor there'. This research, however, caught people in a state of flux. Stayers and returnees in Zimbabwe faced continuing political and economic instability and worried that they might yet be forced to leave. For the same reason migrants were frightened of going back, yet were not

integrated in South African and British communities because of increasing hostility to 'outsiders'. In the course of my research, Fungai's son Munashe left Zimbabwe for Canada but has subsequently returned because his asylum application was refused. Dwana's sister Zinhle moved from South Africa to Botswana because of her fear of xenophobic attacks and Diane was constantly moving between the UK and Zimbabwe. Variations in the way the three families interpreted national events made them more or less optimistic about eventual recovery. The Shona family, for whom 'crisis' was embodied in the figure of Robert Mugabe, could envisage better times after his demise, while the Ndebele participants feared they would remain victimised by a Shona majority and the white family knew they would never regain entitlement under 'black' rule. Consequently, Fungai and her sisters still nurtured hopes of return to Zimbabwe but Dwana never mentioned the possibility of more than a brief visit, and her brother Sam could only return from South Africa clandestinely. Diane, meanwhile, seemed likely to zig-zag between Britain and Zimbabwe on a journey without end while her brother Ian feared imminent displacement.

The state of uncertainty was intensified by immigration policies in South Africa and the UK, which divided members of the same family into different legal categories. As a wealthy businesswoman, Fungai's cousin April was welcomed by the South African authorities and could move freely across borders, thus retaining her privileged position in the social field. Meanwhile, Fungai struggled for seven years to gain legal status in the UK, a period of social abjection in which she was unable to support herself financially yet could not return 'home'. Fungai's daughters Annette and Bella, who were eventually granted asylum, enjoyed the benefits of higher education but their cousin Fungisai, who had only temporary leave to remain in the UK, was unable to access a university course.[82] Dwana's siblings, Sam and Zinhle, were reasonably financially secure in South Africa but, as an 'illegal' migrant, their 'missing' brother was an outcast, while in Britain Dwana had no passport and relied for several years on 'charity'. These structural differences caused personal stress and rifts within families that undermined their capacity to operate in a mutually supportive way.

From the researcher's point of view, the fact that the 'crisis' is unresolved leaves a number of unanswered questions. For instance, will the web of ties that bind these families together and continue to sustain them eventually loosen? Will families break up into nuclear units in Zimbabwe as well as outside its borders and will family life continue to be performed transnationally or become transnational in name only? Without a further longitudinal study, it is impossible to reach any conclusions but the life stories provide some clues. Financial and psychological insecurity and

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[82] Without permanent residence in the UK, Fungisai would be charged international student fees which were well beyond the family's reach.

loss of status made migrants in the UK more inclined to focus on the immediate needs of parents and children. Although both Fungai and Dwana's families maintained the 'circulation of care' (Baldassar and Merla, 2014), the younger generation showed signs of frustration with the expectations and demands of the extended family. Annette was critical of this aspect of her Shona culture and other migrants remarked on a growing 'materialism' among relatives in Zimbabwe, who saw them as a source of income.[83] This suggests the generation who reached adulthood in Britain may choose more individualistic lifestyles in which family life is organised in a nuclear pattern. Furthermore, the arrival of grandchildren may cause their parents to re-think plans for post-retirement return. If this happens, the necessity for transnational activity is bound to diminish. For now, however, families are keeping their options open, hopeful of some resolution to Zimbabwe's problems but resigned to the prospect of a long wait.

7.7   Journeying with the family

In my own movements from one participant to another in the UK, Zimbabwe and South Africa, I enacted the re-frontiering of the families, tracing the pattern of their 'crisis migration'. This multi-sited method, 'empirically following the thread of a cultural process', was advocated by Marcus (1995, p.97), who suggested ethnographers should follow the 'connections, association, and putative relationships' of their subjects. It allows the researcher to make simultaneous comparisons, for instance between stayers and migrants, providing insights into the complexity of transnational lives (Amelina and Faist, 2012, Falzon, 2012, Marcus, 1995, Mazzucato, 2008).[84] Each key participant in my own research stressed that I should visit the ancestral home as if this, more than anything, would unlock the essence of her identity. In Dwana's case, my subsequent journey was all the more poignant because it was one she had been unable to make for the last twelve years. The experience, which I captured for her benefit in photographs and video clips, added a new dimension to our relationship, increasing the information she was prepared to share. Similarly, my visit to Diane's farm 'Reflections' was an important starting point for our second meeting, eliciting her emotional account of taking a stone from the site where her grandmother established a home. Fungai's father Herbert had been unwilling to meet me until I

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[83] Madziva and Zontini note that economic and political instability in Zimbabwe has led to a situation of 'survival of the fittest', where individuals are preoccupied with their own children's protection and survival. MADZIVA, R. & ZONTINI, E. 2012. Transnational mothering and forced migration: Understanding the experiences of Zimbabwean mothers in the UK. *European Journal of Women's Studies,* 19**,** 428-443.
[84] Multi-sited ethnography has been criticised for sacrificing the depth of 'thick' descriptions to breadth. However, Falzon suggests we apply the economist's term 'satisficing', which means choosing a course of action that both satisfies and suffices and is 'good enough'. FALZON, M. A. 2012. *Introduction: Multi–sited ethnography: Theory, praxis and locality in contemporary research,* Farnham, Ashgate Publishing Ltd.

came back from Zimbabwe having seen his brother in the village where they were born, after which he welcomed me cordially. Each new meeting started with an explanation of whom I had already seen and where, as if this were proof of my entitlement to enter the person's home requesting a life story.

Undoubtedly my own positionality as researcher had a bearing on the willingness of family members to participate and the nature of their story-telling. As a liberal white woman, I was more inclined to be sympathetic to black than white participants, while at the same time less able to cross the cultural divide. Diane's white family assumed that I was 'on their side' and shared their cultural values, leaving me in a state of discomfort. Black participants, on the other hand, may have regarded me with a degree of either suspicion or curiosity, as someone tainted with colonialism. Conversely, they may have viewed me as someone who had influence and could be of some help if their personal circumstances deteriorated. As it turned out, Shona family members were easier to approach and more likely to participate than members of the other two families. Perhaps this was the result of Fungai's influence as gate-keeper or because taking part in an academic project with a British university added to their social capital. I had considerably more difficulty making contact with Dwana's relatives. Again, Dwana's isolation within the family was a contributing factor, but so was my high visibility as a white British woman in Matabeleland or South Africa. This was the cause of discomfort if not danger for people who feared state authorities and wanted to keep a low profile and it either led them to refuse to take part, as in Dundwana's case, or contributed to the silences and gaps in their narratives.

My position in relation to each generation of both Shona and Ndebele families was also different. I was aware that with older family members, who grew up under colonial rule, I was unduly accorded a kind of respect that was happily absent from encounters with people of my own generation. I suspected that the senior generation tailored their narratives in order to satisfy or please me. At the other end of the age spectrum, some participants, who were young enough to be my children, openly expressed their thoughts and feelings as if seeking advice or approval. As I discussed in Chapter 3 on methodology, other factors that affected the nature of story-telling were the location, timing and circumstances of each meeting. Narratives were longer and more fluent if they took place in a participant's own home, without the pressure of time. In Zimbabwe, I sometimes relied on a third party – another family member - to take me to see a participant and, even if the intermediary left us alone, we were conscious of a background presence. For instance, I sat with Fungai's youngest sister, Rutendo, at the table while her husband ate his supper and other relatives drifted in and out of the room to watch television. Perhaps not surprisingly, Rutendo was reticent and I found myself prompting her for more detail. Similarly my

conversation with April's daughter Rumbi in Johannesburg took place in the reception of her mother's office and was frequently interrupted by telephone calls.

As I accumulated more information, I was increasingly aware of things that were not being said and, as I became more embedded in each family and attuned to its undercurrent of favouritism, rivalry and resentment, so the task of analysing their narratives and presenting my findings became more daunting. The challenge of dealing with complexity and contradiction, however, was richly compensated by the benefits of family-centred research, seeing individual lives 'illuminate and reflect upon each other like the gems on a necklace' (Bertaux and Delcroix, 2000, p.74). For example, I was better able to understand Fungai's emphasis on self-reliance after meeting her aunt Celia and hearing the story of her great-grandmother; it was only by watching the easy interaction of Dwana's sisters in Zimbabwe that I realised the full extent of her isolation in Britain; and it was Ian's ex-wife Claire who highlighted the negative consequences for others of his determination to stay in Zimbabwe. A focus on the linked narratives of these 'embodied, emotional, interactive' selves (Plummer, 2001), adds a human dimension to theories of 'crisis migration', setting its consequences in the context of a whole life trajectory and a social group.

Chapter 8:   Conclusion

While drawing on several academic disciplines, this qualitative, ethnographic research is rooted in the field of transnationalism and transnational family studies. The concept of transnationalism has been contested and will no doubt continue to be so if world leaders persist with their current exclusionary policies and retreat further behind national borders. However, it has illuminated a previously neglected area – the lived experience and agency of migrants and those they leave behind. These families occupy a transnational space criss-crossed by personal transactions and communications, where individuals are bound together by common meanings and myths, memories and expectations (Faist, 2004). Physically dispersed, they re-configure, or 'relativise', the family, establishing, maintaining or curtailing ties (Bryceson and Vuorela, 2002), engaging in an asymmetrical exchange of duties and favours and continuing to care, and care <u>for</u> each other (Baldassar, 2008, Baldassar and Baldock, 2000, Baldassar et al., 2007, Baldassar and Merla, 2014, Bonizzoni and Boccagni, 2014). Individuals are positioned hierarchically in this space according to class, race and ethnicity, generation and gender (Ehrenreich and Hochschild, 2002, Levitt and Schiller, 2004, Mahler and Pessar, 2001, Parreñas, 2005, Zontini, 2010). As well as operating in a transnational social field, there are moments and contexts in which they consciously lay claim to it – ways of 'being' and 'belonging' (Levitt and Schiller, 2004).

Most empirical studies of transnational families are rooted in a host-country (mainly the USA and Canada; Australia and New Zealand; and European countries), focussing on migrants who are relatively well-established, such as Mexicans and Vietnamese migrants in the US, African-Caribbeans and Bengalis in the UK, Italians and Dutch in Australia. There are fewer scholars who focus on what Koser (2003a, 2003b) calls Africa's 'new diasporas' and, although the Zimbabwean 'crisis' is the subject of a number of recent studies, these have not foregrounded the extended family. For the most part, transnational family studies concentrate on the nuclear family, exploring for instance the ways in which mothers and to a lesser extent fathers continue to care for children and elderly parents despite physical separation. Stressing the moral implications of these family obligations and their link to social status, scholars suggest that a failure to meet them results in a sense of shame which often leads to the severing of ties (Baldassar, 2008, Dreby, 2006b, Kankonde, 2010, Worby, 2010, Madziva, 2010, Madziva and Zontini, 2012, Moorhouse and Cunningham, 2012). Others consider the tensions between marital partners as they cope with the demands and expectations of a new culture (Dreby, 2009, McGregor, 2010a, Pasura, 2008, Zontini, 2010). It is often assumed in these studies that assimilation in the host country is an important goal and many scholars are anxious to point out that this is not incompatible with transnationalism. Foregrounding concepts of home and belonging, they dwell on the hybridity of

migrants who are ''half there, half here' (Boehm, 2012) and suggest that the second generation are likely to identify with their parents' homeland or the host country at different stages of their life (Levitt, 2006, Wessendorf, 2008, Wessendorf, 2013). A few scholars extend the focus beyond the host country and nuclear family to consider a wider network of grandparents, aunts and uncles and siblings in the place of origin and immigration (Chamberlain, 1999, Levitt, 2001, Olwig, 2007). Olwig (2007), in her longitudinal study of African-Caribbean families, dwells on notions of relatedness among families who share the same place of origin and foundational myths.

The Zimbabweans in my study are similar in many ways to the settled immigrant communities that dominate the literature. They too are engaged in, and sustained by, a circular exchange of money and goods and care across borders. However, the precariousnesss of their situation as 'crisis migrants' is a constraining factor. Extreme examples are Dwana's absent brother in South Africa and Tatenda's renegade son in Britain, both of whom live in the twilight world of illegal migrants, cut off even from other family members. When Dwana's application for asylum was rejected she was destitute and could not send money to her daughter Molly, and Fungai had a period as an asylum seeker when she had to stop sending remittances to Zimbabwe. What is more, in the current climate of hostility to migrants, none of the Shona or Ndebele participants presented themselves as settled in either the UK or South Africa and those without full refugee status or permanent leave to remain were particularly insecure. As Hammond (2013) demonstrates through the example of Somali migrants, the lack of legal stability reduces capacity for transnational engagement. Perhaps not surprisingly, therefore, most participants in my study limited their cross-border communication to the intimate circle of family and friends. Insecurity also had a bearing on their notions of 'home' and belonging. Continuing instability in Zimbabwe and its reputation as a dysfunctional state reduced the potency of its place in myths of 'home' yet, without a permanent right to remain in the host country, even the youngest generation who grew up there found it difficult to say they 'belonged'. Without a longitudinal study it is impossible to say whether these families will maintain their transnational ties, whether these are the thick emotional ties indicated in their family maps with bold colours and strong lines, or the thinner ties of duty rather than affection. I suggest that the prolonged nature of 'crisis' may make this problematic. As well as constraints on individual capacity, the lack of return migration on a significant scale and the difficulty of conducting business and development activities in Zimbabwe reduce opportunities for transnational engagement.

It would be impossible to generalise from such a small sample and the way is open for further research with a greater number of families, encompassing other ethnic and social groups and perhaps making more systematic use of family mapping. Nevertheless, I suggest that this close-up, nuanced and subject-centred study identifies a range of responses to the country's economic,

social and political collapse. Moreover, an approach that links the biographies of extended family members in three locations reveals 'crisis' as a family process, an intrinsic part of its construction and reconstruction, negotiated and experienced differently by each individual in that it may be discursively expressed or silenced, may enhance or reduce social and moral status, re-inforce or weaken existing ties, according to differences of gender, generation and geography. This view of 'crisis' as a relational category informs the ethnographer's understanding of transnational migration, highlighting the variations in migrants' response and the ways in which they situate themselves within historic events, which become embedded in family myths and culture.

The study also has to be read in the context of an increasingly alarmist public discourse about migration. Since the onset of turmoil which caused almost a quarter of Zimbabwe's population to cross national borders in the first decade of this millennium, there has been a series of complex emergencies which have pushed the issue of migration to the forefront of the global political agenda. Resulting patterns of movement are commonly described as an uncontrolled mass or flow, a horde of invaders, and immigration policy in northern countries is based on a binary of 'forced migration' on the one hand, and 'voluntary migration' on the other. Unless people can prove that they have fled war, genocide or persecution – in which case they are granted refugee status – they are considered to be moving for economic reasons and are not entitled to special protection. In order to explain this mass movement and argue for a more tailored humanitarian response, scholars have recently developed the notion of survival or 'crisis migration'(Betts, 2010, 2013a, 2013b, 2014, Martin et al., 2013, 2014, Zetter, 2007, 2015), arguing that environmental, social and political changes on a global level mean that people will continue to move in order to survive. They highlight the structural processes that erode people's capacity to cope, causing tipping points that eventually lead to mass migration. Taking a contrastingly bottom-up approach, Lindley interviewed people who had fled Mogadishu in a two-year period during Somalia's civil war to analyse the interface between conflict and mobility. She identified 'the more directly personal, proximate or precipitating causes of migration' (2010, p.5), such as the death of a family member or the destruction of someone's home. Van Hear advocates the further development of forced migration studies to include extended families on the grounds that this may reveal 'a range of kinds of dispersal and categories involving flight from conflict settings' (2012, p.11).

By taking up this suggestion and extending it to a situation that is conflictual but does not involve war, I have illustrated the different predicaments people have faced and choices they have made – from immediate flight to planned departure, a decision to stay put or to zig-zag from one country to another, to migrate and settle or move and then return. I argue that for a theoretical understanding of 'crisis migration', we need to take into account an individual's status within the family, generation and gender, as well as family history and culture because there are personal

and historic factors which may not be directly associated with 'crisis' yet determine people's response. As well as highlighting human agency and thus dispelling notions of migrants as a homogenous mass of 'victims', the stories recounted in this study counter the common representation of Zimbabwe's 'crisis' as a singular series of events in a limited time-frame. An intergenerational family perspective and the use of linked biographies sets 'crisis' firmly in its social and historic context, helping us access 'the relationship between larger historical issues and the particularity of lived lives' (Armbruster, 2014, p.470). It sheds light on the complex interaction between structural change and the ebb and flow of individual life-trajectories. At a given point, this confluence of macro and micro forces the person to take avoiding action in order to survive. Whereas most scholars treat migration as the culmination of such turning points, the evidence of my study is that participants experience a series of life-changing moments and that 'crisis' in its ontological sense continues beyond the point of departure from 'home'. Although one might expect migration to be the point of disjuncture of time and place, when familial ties are broken – 'crisis' and home are the past, while the future is settlement in a new country – these narratives and family 'maps' show that migration is just one part of an on-going survival strategy and the family quickly re-groups in a transnational space, even if it is now a different shape.

They clearly indicate that 'crisis migration' is significantly different from so-called 'economic migration', which is usually pre-planned. Although the label 'forced migrant' seems more appropriate, in that most Zimbabweans would not have left their country had they felt they could continue to feed and protect themselves and their families by staying, on the whole they had more choices than the victims of war or persecution, whose need for protection is universally recognised. As 'crisis migrants', whose own state has failed to protect them, those who fled Zimbabwe needed humanitarian protection but, instead, many have fallen into the grey area between refugees and voluntary economic migrants. This, I believe, has made their experience of migration and 'settlement' particularly difficult. Instead of reinforcing their intrinsic capacities, immigration policies in host countries have undermined them by imposing rigid categories, causing many participants to feel humiliated and stigmatised. In South Africa, which has been criticised for its unjust and incompetent asylum system,[85] Zimbabweans are liable to be rounded up, detained and deported. Asylum seekers in the UK are dispersed across the country, where they are forbidden to work,[86] while those who are refused asylum or overstay their visas become

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[85] Researchers found 'persistent bias and incapacity in South African refugee status determination'. See AMIT, R. 2012a. All Roads Lead to Rejection. Johannesburg: The African Centre for Migration & Society (ACMS).

[86] Aslyum seekers are only allowed to work in exceptional circumstances. They receive benefits of approximately £5 a day. GREAT BRITAIN. HOME OFFICE. 2016. *Asylum Support* [Online]. London: The Stationery Office. Available: https://www.gov.uk/asylum-support/what-youll-get [Accessed 29 July 2016],

'illegals'or social outcasts. As well as reducing their ability to integrate with the wider community, this makes it harder for them to maintain family obligations and breaks up families. Only those with working visas or indefinite leave to remain can seek reunion with dependent[87] relatives and the cost is likely to be prohibitive. In both countries, public attitudes have become ever more hostile leading governments to introduce tougher rules. Britain's new asylum model introduced in 2005 replaced 'indefinite leave to remain' with temporary status for five years to those granted asylum, reducing their access to public funds and leaving them in a state of uncertainty. In some cases, the result of these policies has been to deny Zimbabweans the chance to regain a sense of ontological security, thus prolonging and intensifying 'crisis'.

In a world where civic unrest, ethnic and social conflict, economic collapse and environmental degradation are all potential causes of mass movement, we need to look beyond simple categories of forced and unforced migration and re-visit humanitarian policies and procedures put in place in the 20th century in response to two world wars. I believe the life stories of Fungai, Dwana, Diane and their relatives add weight to arguments for a new form of humanitarian protection which takes into account the multiplicity of individual circumstances and the increasing feminisation of migration, as well as the resources of migrants themselves.

GREAT BRITAIN. HOME OFFICE. 2014. *Asylum Policy Instruction: Permission to Work* [Online]. London: The Stationery Office. Available: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/299415/Permission_to_Work_Asy_v6_0.pdf [Accessed 29 July 2016].

[87] The Home Office defines dependents as children under the age of 18 or grandparents over 65 years. GREAT BRITAIN. HOME OFFICE. *Apply to join family living permanently in the UK* [Online]. London: The Stationery Office. Available: https://www.gov.uk/join-family-in-uk/eligibility [Accessed 29 July 2016].

Appendix A **Timeline of Zimbabwe's 'crisis'**

Although, as this thesis will show, there is neither a clear beginning nor end to Zimbabwe's 'crisis', some of the worst years were undoubtedly between 1997, when the economy crashed, and 2010, when the Government of National Unity was formed. What follows is a timeline of key events during that period, taken from a variety of sources.[88]

1997 War veterans pressurise the government into paying them unbudgeted gratuities resulting in a crash in the value of the Zimbabwean dollar. The HIV/AIDS epidemic reaches its peak.

1998 Widespread rioting in Harare and other cities following a steep rise in prices. Zimbabwe sends troops to the Democratic Republic of Congo.

1999 Economic crisis persists. Zimbabwe's military involvement in DR Congo's civil war becomes increasingly unpopular. The opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) is formed. HIV/AIDs epidemic is declared a national disaster.

2000 Government suffers defeat in referendum on draft constitution. Launch of the the 'Third Chimurenga' ['violent struggle'] – the seizure of white-owned farms in a fast track land reform programme. General elections held against background of intimidation and violence leading to a narrow victory for ZANU-PF.

2002 Parliament passes a law limiting media freedom. The European Union imposes sanctions on Zimbabwe. Amidst high levels of violence, Mugabe is re-elected in presidential elections which are condemned as seriously flawed by the opposition and foreign observers. The Commonwealth suspends Zimbabwe from its councils for a year. A state of disaster is declared as worsening food shortages threaten famine. The Land-acquisition law leads to a 45-day countdown for about 2,900 white farmers to leave their land.

2003 General strike is followed by arrests and beatings. MDC leader Morgan Tsvangirai is arrested twice during a week of opposition protests and charged with treason. Zimbabwe pulls out of the Commonwealth after the organisation's decision to suspend the country indefinitely.

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[88] The principal sources are: RAFTOPOULOS, B. & MLAMBO, A. S. 2009. *Becoming Zimbabwe: a history from the pre-colonial period to 2008,* Harare & Johannesburg, Weaver Press, BBC NEWS. 2011. Zimbabwe profile. Available: http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-14113618 [Accessed 20 April 2012], PATEL, D. 2000. A national disaster: a social analysis of AIDS in Zimbabwe. Jun 2000 ed. US National Library of Medicine: PubMed.gov.

Appendix A

2005 The US labels Zimbabwe one of the world's six 'outposts of tyranny' but Zimbabwe rejects the statement. Ruling ZANU-PF party wins two-thirds of votes in parliamentary polls but is accused of vote rigging by the MDC. Tens of thousands of urban dwellers across Zimbabwe are evicted and their properties destroyed during the government's 'Operation Murambatsvina' ['Clear the Filth']. Prosecutors drop treason charges against Morgan Tsvangirai. ZANU-PF wins an overwhelming majority of seats in a newly created upper house of parliament, the Senate. The opposition MDC splits over its leader's decision to boycott the poll. UN humanitarian chief Jan Egeland says Zimbabwe is in 'meltdown'.

2006 Hyperinflation as year-on-year inflation exceeds 1,000 percent. New banknotes introduced with three noughts deleted from their value. Riot police disrupt a planned demonstration against the government's handling of the economic crisis, leading to arrests and allegations of torture. ZANU-PF approves a plan which effectively extends President Mugabe's rule by two years.

2007 Rallies and demonstrations are banned. MDC leader Morgan Tsvangirai is hospitalised after his arrest at a rally. Widespread power shortages while electricity is diverted towards agriculture.

2008 MDC wins parliamentary majority in March elections. Tsvangirai claims victory in first round of presidential election but Mugabe claims victory in re-run after violent campaign in which Tsvangirai pulls out complaining of intimidation. EU and US widen sanctions against Zimbabwe's leaders. In September, Mugabe and Tsvangirai sign a power-sharing agreement but argue over allocation of key ministerial posts. In December, Zimbabwe declares national emergency over a cholera epidemic and the collapse of its health care system.

2009 Government allows use of foreign currencies to try to stem hyperinflation. Tsvangirai is sworn in as prime minister of a government of National Unity. A month later he is injured and his wife killed in a car crash. Retail prices fall for the first time after years of hyperinflation. Constitutional review begins.

2010 New rules force foreign-owned businesses to sell majority stakes to locals. Commercial farmers say they are under a renewed wave of attacks. Zimbabwe resumes official diamond sales amid controversy over reported rights abuses at the Marange diamond fields. Prime Minister Tsvangirai accuses ruling party of instigating violence at public consultations on the new constitution. ZANU-PF nominates President Mugabe for next presidential race.

Appendix B Participant forms

UNIVERSITY OF
Southampton

Participant Information Sheet

Study Title: The impact of crisis migration on Zimbabwean extended families

Researcher: Jenny Cuffe   **Ethics number**: 12381

Please read this information carefully before deciding to take part in this research. If you are happy to participate you will be asked to sign a consent form.

What is the research about?

This research is for a doctoral thesis sponsored by the University of Southampton and funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council in Britain. The aim is to reach a better understanding of the impact of the recent political and economic upheaval in Zimbabwe on Zimbabwean extended families who have been scattered across country borders. In order to achieve this aim, I am selecting a small number of families in the hope of meeting and talking to as many family members as I can, whether they are in Zimbabwe, the UK, or elsewhere.

Why have I been chosen?

You are being approached because you already know me, or because a family member has suggested that you may be willing to take part.

What will happen to me if I take part?

Before giving your consent, we will meet so that I can answer any questions you may have. I will meet you at your home or a location of your choice and record your life story. I will bring paper and drawing materials and ask you to draw a family map. If you agree, I may take photographs of items that are important to you because they are associated with home or family.

You will have an opportunity to stop the interview at any time and your contribution will be anonymous.

I may ask you to put me in touch with other members of your family so that I can approach them for an interview but everything you have said in your interview will remain confidential.

Are there any benefits in my taking part?

There will be no direct benefit to you but I hope to make the interview an enjoyable and interesting experience.

Are there any risks involved?

Prior to the interview, I will ask you if there are aspects of life that you would like to avoid discussing and will abide by any boundaries that you set. Even so, talking about your life story may invoke memories that are painful or make you feel sad and you should feel free to stop the recording at any time during the process.

UNIVERSITY OF Southampton

CONSENT FORM

Study title: The impact of crisis migration on Zimbabwean extended families

Researcher name: Jenny Cuffe
Staff/Student number: 25207717
ERGO reference number:12381

Please initial the box(es) if you agree with the statement(s):

I have read and understood the information sheet and have had
the opportunity to ask questions about the study.

I agree to take part in this research project and agree for my
data to be used for the purpose of this study

I understand my participation is voluntary and I may withdraw at
any time without my legal rights being affected
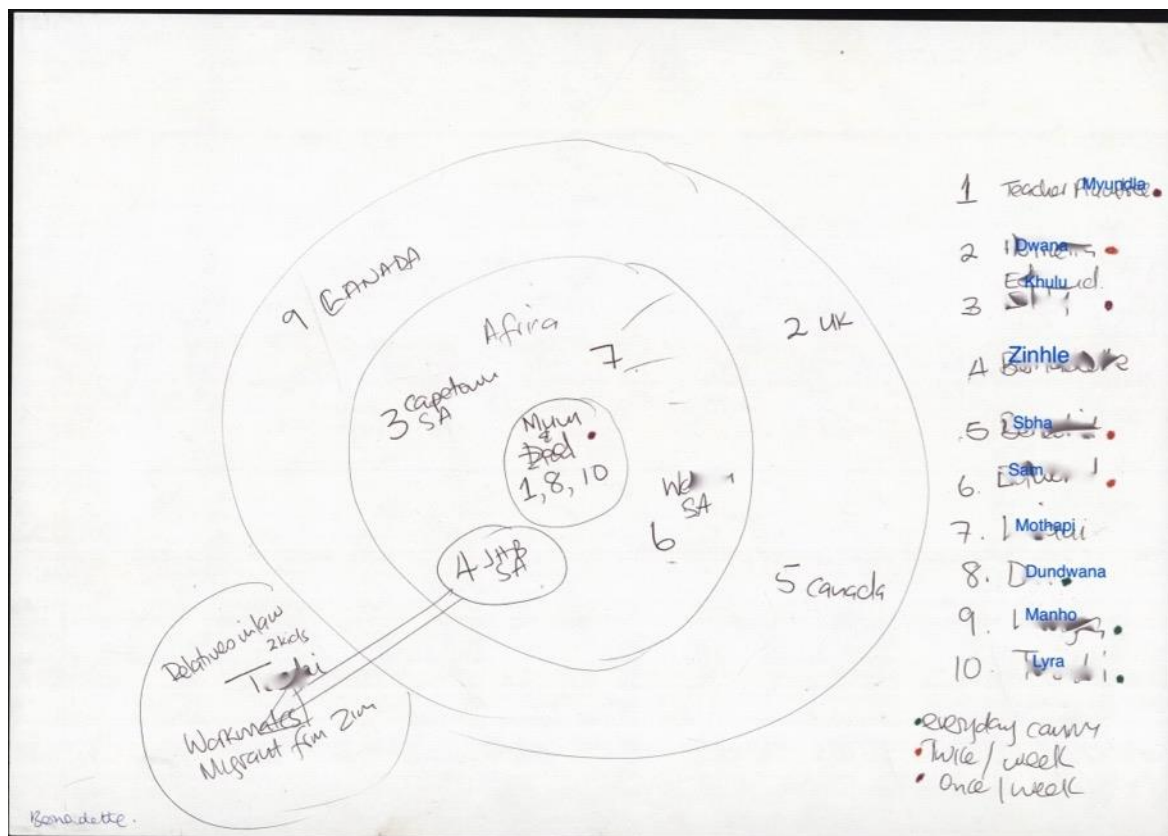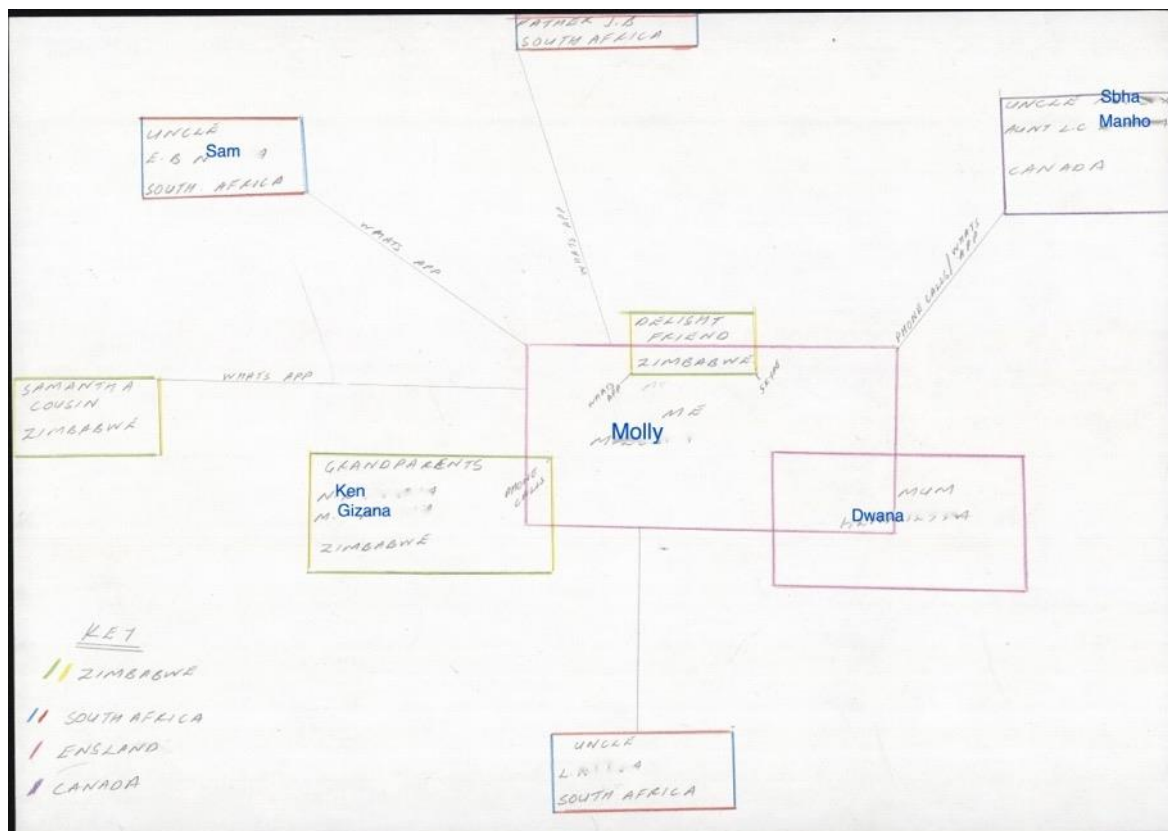
Data Protection
I understand that information collected about me during my participation in this
study will be stored on a password protected computer and that this information will
only be used for the purpose of this study. All files containing any personal data will
be made anonymous.

Name of participant (print name)..
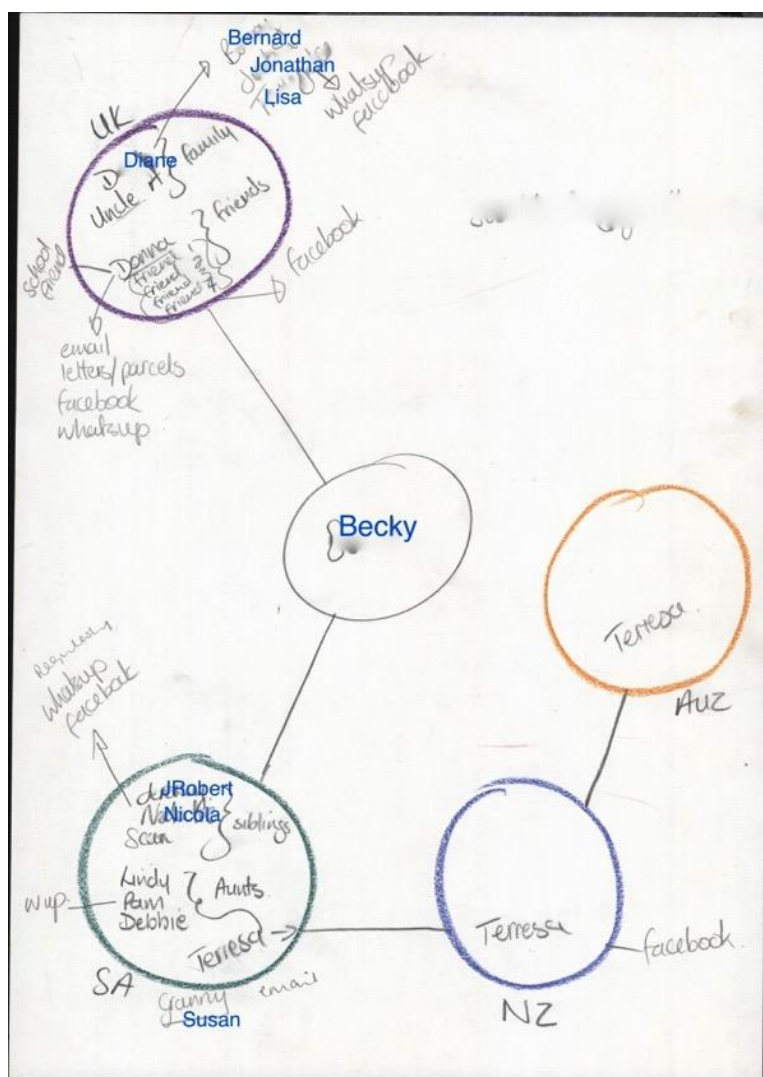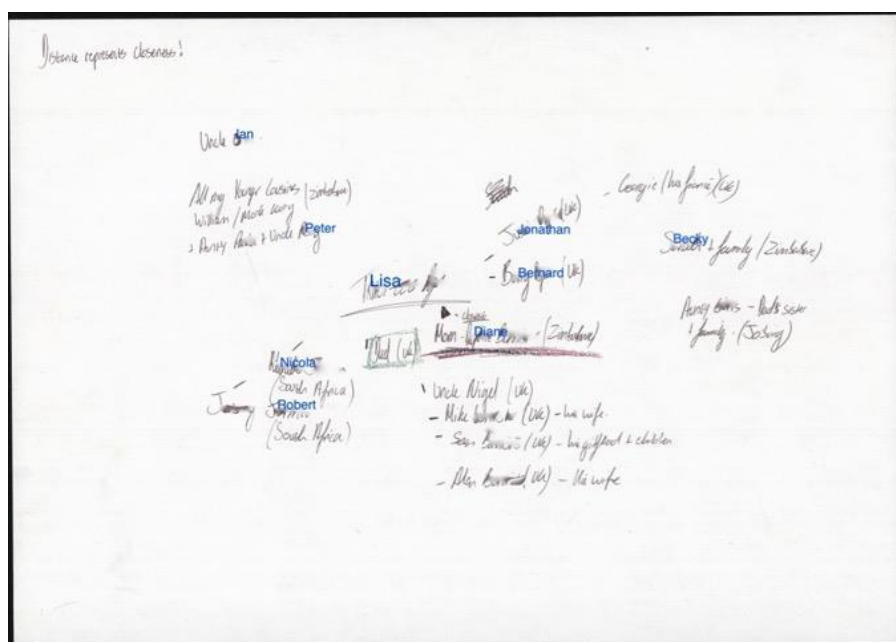
Signature of participant…………………………………………………....…..…..

Date……………………………………………………………………………

Appendix C **Samples of family maps**

C.1   **Shona family**

C.2 Ndebele family

C.3   White family

Appendix D **Participant details**

Table 1 Shona family

Name	Date of birth	Left Zimbabwe	Migration journey	Legal status on arrival	Current legal status
ANESU	1930		Stayed		
GRACE	1933		Stayed		
HERBERT	1935	2002	One-way to UK	Asylum	Permanent
CELIA	1950	1969	One-way to UK	Student	Permanent
APRIL	1964	2003	One-way to South Africa	Business	
FUNGAI	1962	2001	One-way to UK	Asylum	Permanent
VIMBO	1964	1997	Zig-zag to Botswana & Sudan	Dependent	Returned to Zimbabwe
PAUL	1963	2000	One-way to UK	Student	Permanent
RUKUDZO	1966	2002	One-way to UK	Dependent	Temporary
TATENDA	1975	2000	One-way to UK	Visitor	Permanent
RUTENDO	1980		Stayed		
MUNASHE	1980	2001	Zig-zag to UK, US & Canada	Business/ asylum	Temporary
ANNETTE	1988	2002	One-way to UK	Dependent	Permanent
BELLA	1990	2002	One-way to UK	Dependent	Permanent
RUMBI	1989	2003	One-way to SA	Dependent	Temporary

Appendix D

| Name	Date of birth	Left Zimbabwe	Migration journey	Legal status on arrival	Current legal status
MERCY	1993	2008	Zig-zag to Uganda & Sudan	Student/ Dependent	Returned
FUNGISAI	1995	2002	One-way to UK	Dependent	Temporary
DONNA	1990	2002	One-way to UK	Dependent	Permanent

Table 2 Ndebele family

Name	Date of birth	Left Zimbabwe	Migration journey	Legal status on arrival	Current legal status
KEN	1937		Stayed		
ZINHLE	1969	1999	Zig-zag to SA & Botswana		Temporary
DWANA	1965	2003	One-way to UK via S.Africa	Asylum	Permanent
SAM	1974	2001	One-way to S.Africa	Asylum	Permanent
LYRA	1986		Stayed		
MOLLY	1989	2014	One-way to UK	Dependent	Permanent

Table 3 White family

SUSAN	1936	1987	One-way to S.Africa	S.African passport	Permanent
PAT	1944		Stayed		
CLAIRE	1964		Stayed		
IAN	1960		Stayed		
DIANE	1962	2003	To and fro – UK and Zimbabwe	Asylum	Returned
BECKY	1979		Stayed		
MIKE	1984		Stayed		
NICOLA	1992	2010	One-way to S.Africa	S.African passport	
JONATHAN	1992	2003	One-way to UK	Dependent	Permanent
LISA	1997	2003	To and fro – UK and Zimbabwe	Zimbabwean passport	Returned

Appendix E **Whiteboard**
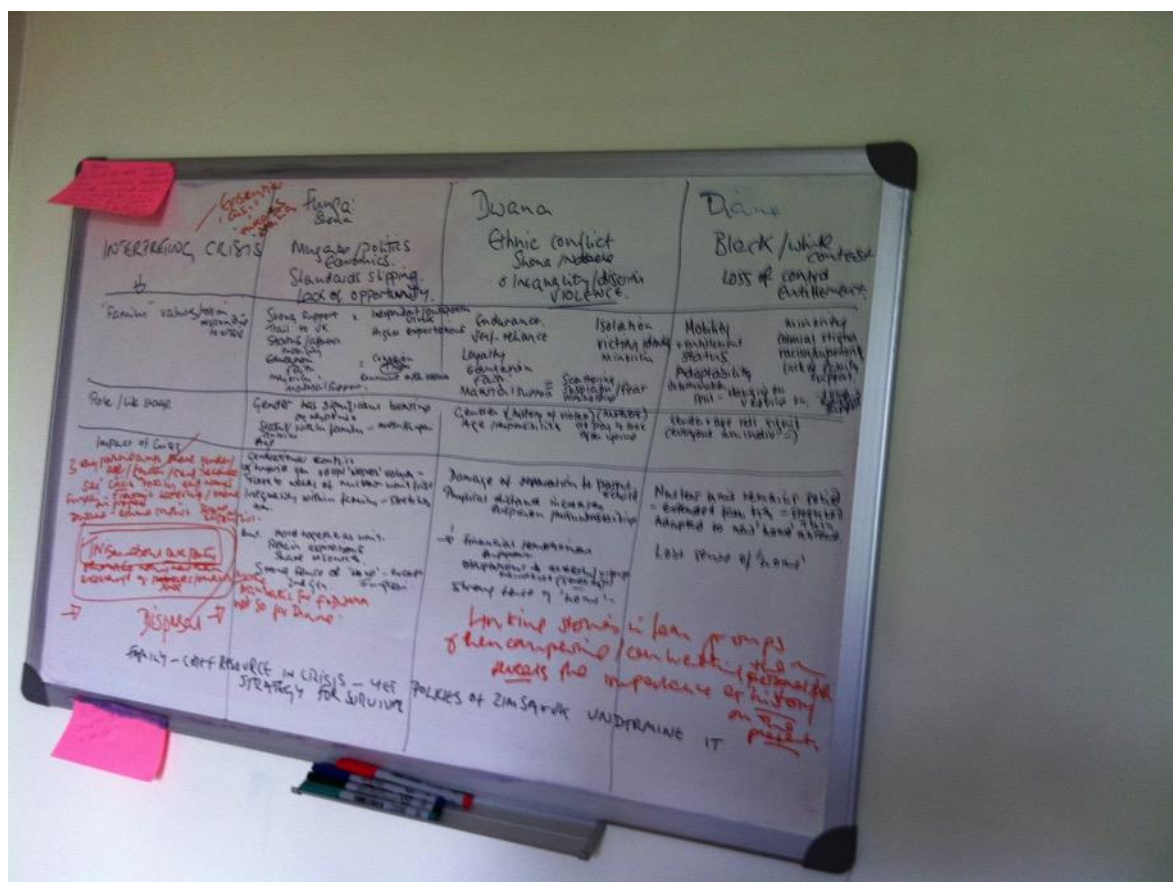
Appendix F   **Extract from Fungai's transcript**

I was very poor

You weren't working now?

I wasn't working/ I was very poor

Were you given vouchers?

Then / by then we had a little card/

The Azure card?

Yeah so you would go to the post office and collect your money every week so mine was £50 less [sighing]

How many times did you eat in a day – the children had free school meals perhaps?

They had free school meals but [Bella] was just saying/ what did she hate when I wanted to cook for them/ apple crumble/ and she's / now she eats it/ she said it's because the only apple crumble I had ever known was from school/ when I wanted to cook them apple crumble in the house/ they said NO/ they said those dinners were bad/ they said they were eating junk

And what about uniforms?

There were grants for school uniforms/ and then

And what did you do in the day? because you'd been working

I then started going to college /doing endless courses/ I have a diploma in catering / what else could I do/

To keep your mind busy

Keep my mind busy and stave off the temptation to go to work/ [she laughs] I remember / oh god yes you asked me how poor we were/ when I started my catering course/ in the larder when we were preparing some of the food/ because the college had a restaurant/ there were certain cuts of chickens they didn't use/ I would bring these home to eat with my children/ like all the carcass the bones what have you/ then we would make a stew out of that and life would carry on

You are obviously a survivor/ you were still in Rochdale/ were you meeting people you liked / were there lots of Zimbabweans there?

Appendix F

Yeah there were quite lot of Zimbabweans/ I made quite a few friends/ I still have friends I go back and see in Rochdale now/ and also I belonged to a church in Rochdale which was good

Did you meet white churchgoers as well?

Yeah/ yeah / I went to a church that was like British based which had all / all sorts of people from different backgrounds and different nationalities

How do you socialize?/ there are lot of pubs and clubs for Zimbabwean men/ but you don't have that as a woman/so you're more isolated in the house

1.30.35 Yes I could say that but also being involved in a church/ that makes a difference/ although now I haven't found a church I really like in Preston/ I'm still searching but when I was still in Rochdale I had a church and I was in Bradford/ from Rochdale I went to Bradford actually/ I was going to start at Bradford college

so when did your appeal happen?

Right/ the appeal/ I had these appeals and because my solicitor was in London and the case started when I was in London I had to be trotting down to London for those court cases/ I had a barrister/ he didn't work/ and then they just flatly refused/ and do you know what attitude I adopted/ I said 'You know what/ one day they will give me leave to remain/ at the moment I'm not bothered/ I've got a roof over my head/ I've got my children now going to school and I just pray that when my children need to go to university/ when it's time for them to go to uni I will have leave to remain'/ what happened when [Annette] finished her health studies when she was preparing to go to uni we still didn't have the papers / that's when I was doing the catering and my child was at the verge of depression/ I said you know what [Annette]/ you are what 19/ that was 2007/ why don't you just go to college and enroll for any course/ she enrolled for holistic therapist course then/ that was 2006 into 2007/ 2007 into 2008 so that this was 2007/2008 academic year so she enrolled in that course so I was going to Dallas Court in Eccles to report once every month/ so December 2007 I get to Dallas court as usual to report/ I get to the counter/ the gentleman who was serving me was so pleasant and he goes/ have you got a solicitor/ I said not now they have since dropped me off because they said the Home Office said I had not legal argument/ I remember on my way to reporting I was reading in the paper/ I was reading in the paper where it was saying the Home Office is giving people a lot of amnesty in a subtle way/ so I was saying/ why are the newspapers blabbing like that/ they want to mess the whole thing for us/ we won't get leave to remain now/ so I was on my way to report/ so when this gentleman asked me 'have you got a solicitor?' I just said to myself/ it's either they want to lock me in OR I've got my papers now [she chuckles]/ just conversing in my head/ and then they said Glaserdale are in

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London and I said yes they've dropped me/ they said/ 'oh/ anyway from today on you don't have to come and report you've been granted indefinite leave to remain/ you know'/ I went to the toilet/ I was shaking / ah/ah/ they said your documents were sent on the 17th of December //no I went to report on the 17th Dec and the documents had been sent a few days before/ I said/ no they haven't even contacted me/ right/ ah/ for quite some time I was shaking / trying to text my children that we've/ now we are home and dry [emphasising words]/ and er my daughter says mama/ [Bella] she says mama are you joking?/ I said I don't joke on such things/ and she said later/ do you know on that day I was coming from college and I saw one of these blue vans/ I weed on myself/ that's how bad it was/ just seeing those blue vans/ and we have actually seen people taken from where we lived like in the early hours of the morning/ you are turned into a criminal just because you are trying to survive/ therefore you are a criminal for wanting to live a life/ I remember I was doing my access course/ we were in this class/ it was a social policy lesson/ so what did I do/ I / we were asked to research on different topics/ I decided to do immigration and then I just gave them a lot of information they didn't have/ and one guy said / oh/ so why is it our fault/ why should peole come/ I said/ hold your horses/ you must read your history/ if you / your ancestors had left us alone we would probably be going around in our animal skins and content/ / they opened the way they came and they showed us the way here/ and then/ so/ then the teacher started asking why each person came to the UK/ I said economic migration because that's what it is//why beat about the bush/ and then they were like/ there are some people/ what is it/ I said/ excuse me/ I want to put you in this scenario/ suppose you were in a place where may be you were about to die/ I just speak it figuratively but I'm meaning myself/ and you know if I get medication and go somewhere I'll survive/ would you just stay and wait to die?/ and they tried to wriggle out of it/ I said/ well we are here to stay/ it's not our fault/ it's the system/ that's what we call a global village/ how did it all start/ but the problem/ it's not their fault/ nobody educates these people/ nobody tells them the history/ and one thing they have really messed up/ this cradle to grave thing/ it's not working is it? And people just think they've got a RIGHT/ I don't think so [emphasising words] I want to work for whatever I'm eating/ it just doesn't make sense// as a result/ you know/ I feel so sorry for people like they're in their old age they've got houses and everything and then the social workers are telling them if you don't sell your house/ eh/ you won't get/ /but where's that money coming from that we all want/ there's no bottomless pit of money is there//I don't know

But when you say yeah it's just economic migration but then you say it's life or death /suppose there hadn't been the HIV thing but you'd been struggling in Zimbabwe

I'd probably just have came because the way things were going I could have came/ at that time what was paramount was HIV but there was a combination of factors/ well I probably said

economic migration because I didn't want to tell the people in class a particular reason/ but most people I tell them/ you know what/ I got on the plane because I wanted to live// I was/ I landed at Gatwick on Saturday/ Monday I was at the HIV clinic because that's what I came for/ all these other things/ when I look at it/ all these other things are just / er / fringe benefits/ what I really came for to the UK was to see my son grow up/ and I've often said to my friends/ if I die today I will die a very happy woman/ it doesn't matter my son's not an adult/ if I die today i will die a very happy woman/ because there was a time I thought I would not see him turn ten/ and / er/ when I was/ remember I told you when I was in Zimbabwe I was kind of afraid to get him tested because I was thinking/ if he's positive then what?/ then I later did it when I was here and thank god it's negative and [Bella]/ when they came/ because I had breast fed [Bella] till she was two and a half years/ I didn't know when I got infected/ I said we've got to go and get you tested/ she was negative/ so I've got a lot to thank god for / a lot

Appendix G **Extract from Milly's transcript**

Um/ like now/ I'm // When I first got here it was like I was living with a stranger and I would want to call my granny every weekend and/ but now I'm starting to/ well now we <u>are</u> friends with my mum and I think we've got that mother and daughter thing/ of course the getting to know each other and my weakness is I'm not open/ I'm reserved/ I don't talk about things/ I just keep quiet/ but I think my mother doesn't understand that because at times she tells me about her health /I don't know what to say/but it does hurt me and I wish I could help but I just don't know what to say to her so I just tend to keep quiet and I think she takes it the hard way that ok maybe she doesn't care but it's not the case but I'm not/ er/ brave enough to tell her what I have to say but this is me/ I / I don't talk that much

At boarding school – were you aware of what was going on in Zimbabwe? Your mum coming here and not coming back – did you have any sense of what was happening?

[Shaking her head] It passed me by

What about people not having money or kids having their parents take them away cos they couldn't afford schooling?

I remember one time when I was sent back home because there was no money for my school fees and I stayed at home for two months and my grandparents tried to get money and all that and before I knew it I was back at school but I was told there was no money for my fees/ that was when jmy mum was here [UK]

Did she send you things?

No 'cos/ um/ it was hard to post things at that time /even now it's expensive to send anything over but there was a time when she sent me some clothes from here/ I think it was Crhistmas/ I think someone she knew here was coming to Zim

How long did this go on?

It lasted all my secondary education/ six years/then after that I went to Bulawayo for some time/ that's when I was studying at Spaces College/ further education college

That was big transition – going away from grandarents

Yeah/ I would go and visit them every/ once a month/ but they would come and visit me/ like/ my grandmum would visit the most/ she would come with one weekend so almost every other weekend I would see them/ if I'm not going they would come

I was with [Lyra]/ there's only four years difference/ no five/

Were you close?

Yeah it was good

And being independent girls in town/ was that exciting?

Yeah in a way but I still missed my grandmum/I would ring her every day if I I have credit on my phone/if I don't she would ring me and she would ask me how is school/ what did you eat/ what are you doing?

When you left Zimbabwe you were leaving your grandmother

and my grand-dad/ it was very bad/ I remember //the day I had to go and say goodbye to them/ it was raining heavily in Plumtree so there's a river that you have to go cross/ it was full/ you can't even go past// day two it got worse /day three/ and I didn't have day four to go back/ so day three I was like I <u>need</u> to see my grandparents and I went early in the morning/ I remember I left Bulawayo at 5. a.m. in the morning because in Bulawayo it wasn't raining that much so I went there and from Plumtree to where my grandparents live I got a lift from this guy who drove a tractor// big as a tractor is we thought we would go past but the driver was like /no/ so I had to wait/ and we waited and waited and waited and waited because he said ah the rain has stopped now so the water should/you know go down/ the level of water should go down/ so I think we were there for about six hours / and I had to go back on the same day and it was getting late so yeah and then finally we managed to cross/ I went and /because I wanted to spend the night with them but I couldn't/ then I had to say my goodbyes/ it was really hard to say goodbye /because my grandmother started crying before I did/so it was a bit//and my granddad's voice just went all - / I'm like/ ohh / then I had to bid my goodbyes and went back/ it wasn't easy but [sighing]

how had that come about/ was this after your visit to South Africa where you all met and your mum came over/

when did that happen?

I was just about to go to college or was it my first year in college/ I don't remember the dates very well but I think during that period/ I was about or it was my first year I don't remember/ I remember seeing my mum for the first time/ I cried because they were pushing her in a wheel chair/and I was like the last time when I saw her she was able to walk/ I didn't know what to say to her and she just looked at me and started crying / I'm like/ oh gosh/ yeah-

I didn't know what to say

It must have been such an amazing thing for her to be united yet for you it was more complicated wasn't it?

Appendix G

[Whispering] Very complicated/ yeah/ very complicated

you would have been more in touch then when you had a phone/Did she ring you every day or text?

we would text every day but calls/ she would call once a week because she said it was expensive to call every day

And did you feel close on the phone?

No/ no

So when she got excited about the reunion/ I wander how complicated it was?

It was complicated but by then I had been told why she had gone away for so long/ so I was just feeling guilty that she left home because she wanted to take care of me/ because she couldn't afford to do that when she was in Zimbabwe with her family and everyone/ I felt bad because I thought she left on my own account and she was far from family and everybody else because of me

When did you get that impression/when did you start hearing that?

This was what I thought/ I never heard it from anyone/ I put two and two together

There were other people coming back at that party/like [Sbha]

They felt like strangers to me/ and I was just always sat next to my granny/ I never used to interact very much with everyone

You obviously felt very separate/

I guess I've always been like that

After that you must have known the plan was to bring you over, how did you feel about that?

When I first heard about it I had mixed feelings/ because I just thought I won't be seeing my granny whenever I want to see her/ I won't be seeing my granddad whenever I want to see her/ I'm moving to another place with someone I barely know/ /so- yeah /and I spoke to my grandmum about it and I told her how I felt and she said/ no /it'll be fine/ we'll come and visit you and we will be there for you/ you can call us every day/ and then she said and when you get there/make sure you work and buy me a phone and I can see you/ we can skype and we can do that and all that/ so / whenever you want to talk to me/ you switch on your skype and I can see you and you can see me/ I promise we'll talk every day and you can call me any time so then I was like OK so it's not that bad after all/ let me just go/ and I just thought yeah I would be able to help my mum as well because she couldn't do some of the things/ whatever she needs help in / because I can be there to giver her a hand/ and yeah/ start a new life with her and make up for all those lost years

And you knew some of the difficulties she had/ the legal difficulties in getting you over?

I didn't know all about them until I got home and she told me/ I think my grandparents knew but I didn't/ so// I didn't have a clue of what was going on when I was back in Zim/ until I got here

So how much warning did you have about coming/ was it quite sudden in the end?

Appendix G

I was told / I think it took four years for it to happen/ I was told you will go/ I got excited/ well I had mixed feelings/ then I got excited/ then I was told I was denied a visa and my levels of excitement dropped/ and then I was told oh they've made an appeal do this time you'll get it and you 'll be going soon/ and there I was thinking oh it's just going to happen like that/ and there was a time when I just gave up and that was the time when I got the visa so/ it came as a shock/ oh finally I've got it and now I'm really going

What year was this

That was last year

Appendix H **Extract from Ian's transcript**

Yes it was going OK/ my mum was running the place well and we had the cattle going/ we had a nice herd of cattle and it was only of course '99 or 97/98 the land question started raising its ugly head and the war veterans were demanding these pensions and /and land/ and it was I can't remember the actual year we had what was called Black Friday where it was suddenly announced that the war veterans would get 50,000 dollars each as a one-off payment and the US dollar/ Zimbabwe dollar exchange rate just went from I think it was 7 to 1 to like 15 to 1 overnight/ and that's when inflation really started to become a problem

how many war veterans were there?

I don't know the number but it was substantial/ it made a big dent on the economy//but then we carried on farming and then the first/ er/ I think we've got some magazines here of the first lists of farms that came out for compulsory acquisition and it was / you'd get a section 5 notice which would be the first notice to come and then you'd get a section 8 notice which confirmed basically the acquisition of your farm/ and then you could appeal and there was a process through the courts at that stage

On what could you appeal

I think if you agreed to give up some land and not contest it then you would be left with some land or if you had multiple farms/ if you agreed to not contest some of the farms then they would leave you with your home farm/ things like that so I think it was round 2001/2002 K. [*name of his farm*] was identified as on the list/ and of course whenever these lists were coming out the first thing you'd do is go through the list and see if your farm was on/ it was a very tense time/ so we were still on the farm and the new settlers were coming in and being settled/

Did it happen quickly and did you contest it?

Yes we did/ yeah/ I've got a whole paper trail of how we contested the dates and things like that/ and um/ anyway we did contest it and we said OK we won't contest K.1 and 2 as long as you leave us with Reflections/ that went to court/ went through our lawyers/ went to court and through the administration court and we were successful and we got a court order that Reflections would be removed from the list provided we didn't contest K. 1 and 2//so we lost 2,300 acres and we were supposedly being left with the whole of Reflections which was 1,600 acres//they then took the

balance of Reflections and just settled people anyway/ in spite of the court order/ and left us with the 170 acres or whatever it equates to in acres which was the title deed that [Diane] inherited

So you get this news and this is your land that you've had for / since the 30s

1930s yes/ which my grandmother had purchased for like £5,000/ you know in those days £5,000 was a lot of money and she didn't have money to invest in the/ in the farm/ so she only had enough capital to purchase the land/ she didn't have any money to buy tractors and equipment or cattle and so on to get it established/ so what she used to do/ she was/ bearing in mind she was already in her 60s at that stage when she bought that farm/ there was no development on it whatsoever/ no internal fences/ there was only a boundary fence/ a ring fence/ she would go to the neighbouring farmers who in those days were all white and she noticed that their oxen weren't ploughing very straight so she'd say to them / look I'll train your oxen and give them back to you and then we can change them onto the next lot of oxen and so on/ so she would get their oxen and use them to plough her fields/ by hand of course with an ox-plough/ herself and one black worker and then they would plant the fields/ train these oxen how to plough in straight lines and plant crops and harvest a crop from that and from that she was slowly able to start buying a few cattle for herself and start up a herd / so that's how/ how difficult it was to start/can you imagine a 60 year old woman out in the hot sun ploughing along/ holding a hot plough/ it would not have been easy

what was your father doing?

he was very young at this time/ just in his 20s/and he got work on the chrome mines in Selouqui so he worked underground for a while and he had health problems/ I think from the dust and so on and perhaps a bit of asthma and things and he was told by a doctor to come out from underground so they gave him a position above ground/ so he worked there for many years and I think he had a whale of a life in those days because S. *[name of town]* was a /a happening town and it was full of people and they would constantly have parties and there was a lot of sport on the go/ he loved his sport and played tennis and golf in those days and things like that so/ yeah/ they / he managed to buy a car/ he had a 1936 Ford V8 and he would be transporting people round in his car so he had quite a lot of fun but he would also go home at weekends and help his mother on the farm/ and then when she died he gave up his job and came back to the farm permanently himself

so when you read that list/ I can't imagine what goes through your -

of course it's devastating and you realize your whole future is/ you know/ at a Y junction basically and you decide what are you going to do/ do you try to carry on/ do you try to make a plan/ so/

yheah/ we / ur/ managed to move some of the herd to my aunt's farm not far away from here and she was an old lady at that stage in an old age home in Gweru/ so she had her cattle there/ and the deal was I managed her cattle as well and run our own cattle so that worked well for a few years until that farm was identified and taken/ um/ I then made an agreement with the new farmers that were coming on to lease back their sections of the farm/ in return I would pay them not in cash but with cattle/ so two or three weaner heifers every year would go to them and that helped establish their herds of cattle/ they didn't have any money to buy cattle at that stage so it helped them to get aa herd established/ so we carried on for a number of years until their herds now got bigger and more of the land allocated to more farmers and eventually I got squeezed out of there as well

and when the settlers arrived on their farm/ how did they come and how many and who were they?

yes some were war vets / or they all/ you know/ supposed to be war vets/ um/ it wasn't very violent/ they just arrived and governemtn officials would come with them and just peg out/ they would just literally walk around with an axe/ chop down trees to make pegs/ know them in the ground and say alright/ that's your boundary da da da/ each one would get like 5 hectares and then the balance of the farm would be communal grazing area for them and that's how it happened and they would just follow a road and usually peg on both sides of the road /where it was convenient to build right next to a road/ then the riest of the farm would be left as communal grazing area/ so on K.1 and 2 all the plots were pegged close to the road and then the back end of the farm was left alone and none of them had cattle at that stage so they agreed to let us use that part of the farm and we were allowed to carry on grazing cattle there / until of course it got to a stage where there lots more people moving around and gates would be left open and cattle would get out and then cattle would graze their crops and sometimes in a bit of a dry year it would be deliberate/ our cattle would be pushed into the crops and then they'd claim compensation/ so you'd get this call/ [*imitating Shona accent*] 'ah/ your cattle have eaten my crops / so you go along there now to assess the damage and try and make a deal with the person/ if he didn't agree then he would go to Agritex/ the department in Gweru/and they would supposedly come out and do an assessment of the damage to the crop and then they'd hit you with this big bill saying you know you owe them 5 tonnes a hectare/ whereas in general the communal farmers or these/ um/ peasant farmers' crop yields are usually only half a tonne a hectare so it would be just a way of/ really / squeezing money out of you

When they pegged out the land/ were you there standing watching?

No/ no I wasn't there because I was also working here at the time/ so I'd only be aware of it when we went there over the weekends/ because I'd work every weekend over there/ every Sunday and I was here Monday to Saturday and Sundays I'd be across there because I had my chicken house there/ I had this bit of cropping/ I had three hectares of birds eye chillis/ was growing those and they'd be picked and dried on racks and packed into bags for export//yeah / I mean one of the incidents when I got one of these calls about crop damage/ and went across there to go and assess the damage/ er and then I said to the guy/ well there's not much damage and a lot of the maize had only had the top couple of leaves bitten off and I said you know these will recover/ these plants will recover/ *[imitating accent]* 'ah do you think I am stupid" and he was busy building a hut at that stage and he picked up a pole that he was busy building with and he came towards me you know as if to hit me and I thought well he's not going to hit me/ the next thing Whack on the top of my head and you know so I was knocked right down completely and I got up and I thought well I'm not going to stick around here/ he's got a great big pole in his hands/ so I took off/ and/ er/ yeah you know I can still feel a dent in my head to this day/ I had seven stitches put in there/ so that was one of the incidents when I was beaten up

One of how many?

Yeah I was beaten again on this place/ it was quite violent yeah

Did you feel very much in danger during that period?

Oh yea there was that threat that it could get out of hand

So why didn't you leave?

Er/ I suppose/the fear of the unknown to a large extent/ although we had lived in South Africa so I knew I could probably go back there and carry on/ I really wanted to carry on farming and to stay here/ and this farm seemed to be fairly secure/ we thought well they won't take this one/ but in the end four fifths of this farm was taken but then we were left with this main section here

You were in a minority because most people were leaving werent' they?

A lot of people were leaving and in the north of the country a lot of the farm takeovers were very violent and very sudden/ a lot of people just walked out with the clothes on their back and had to make a run for it/ the Doma trashings were a case in point there / and others they were given basically four hours to get off and had to leave a lot of equipment behind/ so much equipment was just stolen where it was supposed to be/you were allowed to take your moveables off the property by law but it just depended on who was taking your farm/ and they'd just take it whether you liked it or not/ so yeah it was very violent in a lot of places but general the Midlands

was not/ was not violent and I think it was a lot to do with the governor at the time/ he seemed to be a fairly reasonable man/ I don't think he was fully in favour of the way things were being done so I think he kept a lid on things as far as violent takeovers were concerned/ and seemed to be quite reasonable where you had multiple farms/ some were taken and you were left with the main farm

Did you feel it was all to do with land/ did you feel you just weren't wanted in this country?

No I think in general/ er/ we were getting along fine with fellow Zimbabweans/ I don't think there was a big black white racial issue/ it was just really over land and of course/ Mugabe politics/ it was about power/ what it was all about was hanging on to power/ so you know that was/ er/ in the late '90s was when the first/ when the MDC was formed/ it was felt this was a challenge to his power/ it was the first credible party that was formed so it was all about power

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