



# **BUILDING SOCIAL CAPITAL FOR PEACE : A CASE OF ZIMBABWEAN YOUTH IN DURBAN.**

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of a degree of Master  
of Public Administration – Peace Studies in the Faculty of Management  
Sciences at Durban University of Technology

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**NOVEMBER 2021**

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4 April 2022

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4 April 2022

## DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis herewith submitted for the Master's in Public Administration – Peace Studies at the Durban University of Technology (DUT) is my original work and has not been previously submitted for a degree at any other university.

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Runyararo Evelyn E. Marima

We agree to the submission of this thesis for examination

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## **ABSTRACT**

The Zimbabwean youth have grown up in a politically polarized and violent environment. For the youth, and indeed most citizens, the challenges have been further increased by the economic turmoil that the country is experiencing. As a result, frustration and the need to ensure their survival have led to the youth becoming more self-centered, lacking a sense of community and becoming intolerant of diversity. The youth have a weak social capital, which manifests itself as violence and a contempt of social and political authorities. This study, therefore, sought to encourage and strengthen social capital among youths and strengthen their sense of community. The study focused on young Zimbabwean migrants living in Durban, South Africa. The study sample comprised of both young men and women, who are studying, formally and informally and employed and others that were not employed. A qualitative research approach was employed to provide a comprehensive knowledge of youth experiences in the pursuit of social cohesion and change. In-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and participant observation were all part of the exploratory study design. Thematic analysis was used in this study to qualify and analyze data collected from participants. While interpreting what was being said and giving evidence to support these interpretations. The researcher was able to identify new patterns, code them, and generate themes.

According to the study, the primary issues faced by young Zimbabwean migrants in their experience of living in South Africa include discrimination, mounting pressure to marry, unemployment, and a restrictive documentation framework. The study identified mistrust, competitiveness, and failed and superficial social networks as barriers to (re)building social capital.

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this work to my parents Mr. Stanford Marima and my mother Rev. Eunice Marima.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisors, Dr Simone Plug and Professor Geoffrey Harris, for their tremendous, consistent, and unwavering support and input throughout my studies at DUT. It was a journey with ups and downs, but you remained consistent and supportive. This is something I will be truly grateful for. I am grateful to Mr. Crispin Hemson, the director of the International Centre for Nonviolence (ICON), who also played a supporting role and pushed me to persevere in the face of adversity. I consider myself extremely fortunate to have had all three of you as a support system not just in my studies but also in my personal and professional journey. You are all icons in your own right, and you all walk the talk! I would also want to thank Dr Sylvia Kaye, Brightness Nonkosi Nyawose, and Prashna Hansjee from the ICON team for their assistance. I am also grateful to Durban University of Technology for providing me with the chance to study as well as financial support.

My research would not have been a success if Zimbabwean youth had not volunteered to take part in it. Their willingness to devote their time and lives to this research was a gesture that I will cherish for the rest of my life. I learnt so many things from the time we spent together and will always look back fondly. I am glad to be a part of this community of young Zimbabweans in Durban. I would want to thank all of my friends who have been patient with me during this journey. The following people deserve special recognition. Tinotenda Murapa, Cosmas Chingwena, Tessa Shambare, Qinisani Bhebhe, Phatsimo Phidah, Kristena Doorsamy, Farai Makasi, and Tafadzwa Ndadziyira thank you my fellow villagers!

My heartfelt thanks go to my parents, Mr. and Rev. Marima. They allowed me to achieve my academic goals while providing unconditional support. Thank you, Daddy for leveraging your male privilege to empower the women in your life. Mama, thank you for demonstrating that it is possible and thank you for your prayers, Mfundisi. I am grateful to my beautiful sisters Zvikomborero and Tinotenda for allowing me to abdicate part of my "big sister" duties and for filling in for me. I wish you both the best in your respective endeavors. Your big sis has returned and will be cheering you on till the very end!

To Bright Mukwedeya, my husband I am at a loss for words, thank you for being there for me when I needed it the most. You have endured so much especially in the last stages of this journey. Thank you for remaining extremely patient and present amid it

all. Vhramavi, I love you samusha and look forward to many more adventures together.

More importantly, I am eternally grateful to the almighty God. Without God, I would have never got this opportunity to study, endure it all and meet the individuals mentioned above who constitute my support system. MUNEZVOSE!!

***The Lord will accomplish that which concerns me ...***

***Psalms 138: 8***

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## **List of Acronyms**

AFDB	African Development Bank
AIPPA	Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act
ANC	African National Congress
CBD	Central Business District
CFU	Commercial Farmers Union
DHA	Department of Home Affairs
FRELIMO	Mozambique Liberation Front
GNU	Government of National Unity
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IOM	International Organization for Migration
ISO	International Socialist Organization
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change
NCA	National Constitutional Assembly
PHD	Prophetic Healing and Deliverance Ministries
POSA	Public Order and Security Act
RAU	Research and Advocacy Unit
SAPS	South African Police Service
SWAPO	South West Africa People's Organization
UFIC	United Family International Church
UN	United Nations
YIDEZ	Youth Initiative for Democracy in Zimbabwe Trust
ZANU PF	Zimbabwe African National Union
ZAOGA	Zimbabwe Assemblies of God Africa
ZAPU	Zimbabwe African People's Union
ZCTU	Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Union
ZINASU	Zimbabwe National Students Union

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Context of the Research

Post-independent Zimbabwe has plummeted into a protracted political and socioeconomic crisis. The country is battling with access to and the distribution of resources, a compromised rule of law, and poor governance. Studies have pointed to various moments where the crisis has sparked and become a feature of Zimbabwe's trajectory (Mlambo and Raftopoulos 2010; Dzimiriri 2017; Ranga 2018). In the 1990s, the incumbent regime adopted the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) under the advisement of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. The policy required the country to democratize, devalue, and deregulate its market. It brought about high rates of inflation, increased unemployment, reduced government expenditure, and job cuts. The incumbent regime then abandoned ESAP in response to the disgruntlement of workers and ruling party supporters, mostly involving war veterans.

The war veterans were mounting pressure on the government and making demands at a time when workers were also embarking on strikes. The government conceded and offered the war veterans a gratuity of Z\$50,000 and a monthly pension payout of Z\$2,000. This was an unplanned government expenditure, which contributed to lowered investor confidence and a worsening economy (Dlamini and Schutte 2020). The war veterans had also played a role in the invasion of farms, which had led to the Fast-Track Land Reform Programme. These invasions were characterized by violent and hostile takeovers, which sparked international outrage. The reconciliation policy on which the government had embarked was abandoned. Western countries that had pledged earlier to support land reform on a willing-seller and willing-buyer principle sanctioned Zimbabwe. In response, the Zimbabwean government embarked on a "Look East" policy as an alternative.

The military's involvement in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in 1998 also placed a strain on the national purse. An estimated US\$200,000 million was spent on

the military campaign alone (Dzimiri 2017). It was a costly military operation, which saw the government withdraw troops from the DRC in 2002. By the year 2000, the country's economic situation had worsened with basic food shortages, fuel shortages, hyperinflation, increased unemployment, local and foreign currency shortages, and job losses. It was during this time that individuals began considering migrating for "greener pastures". The country experienced a wave of strikes from students and workers over the current state of the economy. The government responded with the aim of silencing dissent, which led to the arrests of many protesters. Disgruntled workers Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Union (ZCTU), civil society through National Constitutional Assembly (NCA), students Zimbabwe National Students Union (ZINASU), farmers Commercial Farmers Union (CFU), youth as Youth Initiative for Democracy in Zimbabwe Trust (YIDEZ), and academics International Socialist Organization (ISO) all came together to form a political organization to participate in the elections. This was the only way to challenge the government and hold it accountable. The establishment of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) in September 1999 was an external challenge that was dealt with using violence by Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front ZANU PF to hold onto power (Crush *et al.* 2017). As a result, the election cycles in 2000, 2002, 2005, and 2008 were characterized by high levels of political violence and intolerance. Operation Murambatsvina/Restore Order 2005 has been identified as one of the strategies used to quell the opposition, weaken its support base in the urban areas, and destroy informal livelihoods (Potts 2006; Crush *et al.* 2017; Ncube 2018).

By 2008, the country was experiencing major political and socioeconomic challenges. The economy was on the brink of collapse – inflation was reported to have been at 231 million percent, with the country having a worthless local currency (Dlamini and Schutte 2020). The prolonged crisis also affected the quality of and access to basic social services, such as education and health. The health sector was affected when there was a cholera outbreak due to a breakdown in water and sanitation infrastructure (Gukurume 2019). All of this pushed many Zimbabweans, both skilled and unskilled, to migrate to "greener pastures". Many of these Zimbabweans migrated to neighboring South Africa hoping for better employment opportunities and standards of living. As of 2019 an estimated 3 to 5 million Zimbabweans live in South Africa (IOM (2019). The



migrants were not only men, as witnessed before in the 1990s, but also youth and women who were migrating together with children (Ranga 2018).

However, the experience in South Africa has not been exactly what these migrants had hoped for upon arrival. The receiving country has its own share of problems, including unemployment and poor service delivery. While some Zimbabwean migrants have been fortunate to find employment or start their own business ventures, others have faced challenges including xenophobia, limiting their chances of being accepted into host communities. This study focuses on the experiences of Zimbabwean youth migrants who have migrated to Durban, South Africa. The study explores their expectations, investigates how the current environment has shaped their lived realities, and attempts to understand their coping mechanisms.

## **1.2 Research Problem and Aims**

The Zimbabwean youth have grown up in a politically polarized and violent environment. For the youth, and indeed most citizens, the challenges have been further increased by the economic turmoil that the country is experiencing. As a result, frustration and the need to ensure their survival have led to the youth becoming more self-centered, lacking a sense of community and becoming intolerant of diversity. The youth have a weak social capital, which manifests itself as violence and a contempt of social and political authorities. This study, therefore, seeks to encourage and strengthen social capital among youths and strengthen their sense of community. Social capital is a collective term for social relations and the norms of trust, cooperation, and reciprocity that are derived from them (Putnam 2000: 19). Narratives are an integral component of the study to facilitate the absent respect, trust, and reciprocity within the youth. These are necessary to create a peace-enabling environment founded on positive relations. This study, therefore, seeks to encourage positive relations amongst the Zimbabwean youth migrants living in Durban.

The study aimed to strengthen social capital among Zimbabwean youth in pursuit of social cohesion and transformation. This was to be achieved through the following specific objectives:

1. To explore the experiences of young Zimbabwean youth living in South Africa
2. To explore barriers to social cohesion
3. To design and implement an intervention that is based on narratives
4. To evaluate the outcome and impact of narratives in (re)establishing social capital

The above were the original objectives of the study at the start. However, due to COVID-19 and other related matters, the study could not continue with the original set objectives. The following became the new objectives of the study:

1. To explore the expectations of Zimbabwean youth before migrating to Durban and to compare these with their current lived experiences
2. To identify the barriers to social capital and the coping strategies that they have adopted

## **1.3 Research Methodology**

### **1.3.1 Research Approach**

The original plan was to follow a participatory action research (PAR) approach to engage with youths in processes that will enable them to co-exist peacefully and respectfully with other citizens. The study was to be conducted in the natural setting of the participants (social actors) through following a qualitative design. It was designed in the qualitative realm as organic, facilitating the sharing of experiences as well as allowing the participants to identify and explore their problems further and seek the appropriate means to transform them (Reason and Bradbury 2001: 122; Cammarota and Fine 2010: 35). Hopkins (2014) pointed out that action research combines a substantive act with a research procedure; it is action disciplined by enquiry, a personal attempt at understanding while engaged in a process of improvement and reform. Action research has three components: exploration, design and implementation, and evaluation. The exploration component is similar to that of conventional research. Exploration in research is carried out to gain new insights and augment knowledge. The researcher used exploration to inform the designing and implementation of an intervention that was meant to bring change.

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, the country went into lockdown on 26 March 2020. This meant that the participants would not be available for further sessions. The researcher could not design and implement an intervention to satisfy one of the original objectives (see Section 1.2). The plan was then to take an exploratory approach and develop new objectives. Collecting narratives of the participants became the main focus of the study, as per the new research objectives (see Section 1.2). Narratives are key in understanding human experiences and endeavors, making them suitable for the study. Webster and Mertova (2007: 1) posited that narratives record human experience when stories are constructed and reconstructed and suited to address complex issues due to their capacity to record and retell events that influence people.

Narratives, as well as the intervention, were used as the research method (narrative therapy). This allowed the researcher to identify recurring themes, consequences, lessons, what had been effective, vulnerability, exploring other resources and building processes for future experiences (Yoder-Wise and Kowalski 2003). All the above mentioned included the researcher on the same level as the other participants, as it was a joint research process. As with PAR, narratives allow for change during the research process. The researcher was at liberty to take and present all these changes as they occurred without following any type of model. The researcher would like to think that it made her both a researcher and a practitioner, allowing her to contribute to new knowledge. Therefore, it complemented the PAR methodology, which continued to guide the project.

### **1.3.2 Research Design**

The study made use of the qualitative research design to facilitate the generation of knowledge and meaning. It allowed the researcher to probe into the lives of Zimbabwean youth migrants and gain an understanding of their experiences, perceptions, interpretations, and interactions (Creswell and Poth 2016). Qualitative methodology was chosen because it allowed the researcher to fully explore the research problem while interacting with the youth.

### **1.3.3 Study Population**

The study population consisted of 30 Zimbabwean migrant youth (male and female) living in Durban, South Africa. Zimbabwe's constitution defines youth as persons between the ages of 15 and 35 years, which is also in line with the African Youth Charter. For the purposes of this study, the researcher worked with those who were 18 years of age and above. The study also engaged the older community members, various community leaders, and representatives of government institutions.

### **1.3.4 Sampling Procedure**

The researcher purposively selected 30 study participants from different backgrounds in terms of ethnicity, religion, level of education, language, and political affiliation. In addition, all the participants were drawn from the Durban community, and exclusion and limited opportunities and access to resources form the common thread that binds them. The following were the proposed PAR procedures:

1. Role-play exercises and games – these were used to break the ice and entertain the participants. The participants also learned and practiced interpersonal communication skills, which are necessary to build a sense of community and trust. The exercises and games facilitated the improvement of listening skills and cooperation, which are key to building positive relationships (Novek 2011: 336). These were used in each meeting in between the sessions.
2. Oral presentations – this exercise included listing, mapping, and exploration. These equipped the participants with knowledge on violence, agency, and social change. It provided a basis to assess their understanding through their responses.
3. Essay writing – not everyone is comfortable opening up about their experiences. Essay writing was helpful in this regard and helped the participants connect with their inner feelings.

The above is borrowed from “The Tree of Life”, an approach premised on the sharing of life experiences by young people facing difficult times (Ncube 2006; Denborough 2008). The empowering element of this approach makes it the most suitable to employ in this participatory study. It also helps the participants (re)establish a sense of

community (Reeler *et al.* 2009: 182) through the strengthening of social capital, making use of experience sharing. Most importantly, it provides a safe space where the participants can fully express themselves. Apart from helping acquire data, these activities equip the participants with the necessary literacies (Hickling-Hudson 2013).

### **1.3.5 Data Collection**

This study, which is steeped in the lived realities of the participants, collected data through narratives, a technique set in human experiences. It allowed the researcher to investigate the experiences of Zimbabwean youth migrants in Durban through their stories, thus allowing the study to address the complexities and subtleties of human experience in learning and teaching (Mertova and Webster 2019). The narratives, thus, worked in a twofold manner, serving as a data collection method and as the intervention in this research. The aural history methodology was also used to frame the entire project with qualitative interviews and discussions between the participants during workshops and focus group discussions. The focus group discussions were each composed of eight participants (youth). Two focus group discussions were carried out, one before and one after the intervention (see Appendix 3). Interviews were held until a point of saturation had been reached and enough data had been gathered. Focus group discussions and interviews were used for the exploration part of the study. Through participant observation, the researcher engaged with and observed how the participants related to multiple and alternative narratives during the focus group discussions. The researcher also kept detailed field notes documenting this engagement. The methodology embraced was underscored by a reflexive process of encouraging creative and honest dialogue between the participants, particularly in the context of alternative and all-encompassing narratives.

### **1.3.6 Data Analysis**

For the data analysis, the researcher followed three steps, which included coding, summarizing, and synthesizing. During the coding stage, the researcher categorized the information into two categories, namely, emic and etic. These two provided the participants and researcher's perspectives, that is, insider and outsider perspectives, and allowed easier retrieval (Saldaña 2015). This was followed by the summarizing stage where the researcher summarized the data in an organized manner. The

organized data was the basis for synthesizing any relationships, patterns, attitudes, and themes that emerged in an inductive manner (Creswell and Poth 2016). Thereafter, the themes were clustered into categories and compared with the relevant existing literature.

### **1.3.7 Limitations and Delimitations**

Despite this minor contribution, the study was not reflective of the Zimbabwean youth population in Durban due to its scope. Another disadvantage is that other age groups were not part of the sample, despite the fact that they may have assisted in conducting a comparative study. It is important to focus on what is achievable in the presence of constraints.

### **1.3.8 Validity and Reliability**

Research that is reasonable, believable, trustworthy, and defensible is referred to as being valid (Beach and Finders 1999: 199). To ensure the validity and reliability of the research data, the study conducted thorough background checks of the participants and established whether they fell under the youth demographic group. The researcher also conducted prolonged fieldwork to ensure engagement and observation checking and to prevent misinformation (Fetterman 2019). The validity of the study results was also established by comparing theoretical viewpoints on the topic of the study's field experiences, and deductions from such will assist in enhancing the validity, rigor, and dependability of the study results. To ensure dependability, the study used an audio recorder to capture the participant perspectives in order to prevent misrepresenting them. To enhance validity, the participants were asked to describe their experiences in their own words. The researcher took her findings back to them for them to validate through crosschecking the information and conclusions (Johnson and Christensen 2019).

### **1.3.9 Ethical Considerations**

The researcher informed the potential participants about the study. The participants were made aware that participation was voluntary and that they may withdraw their participation at any given time. This study was guided by all the Durban University of Technology's (DUT) ethical requirements. A consent form was issued to the

participants before they took part in the study. All material from the study was treated as confidential and stored safely. The study used pseudonyms to protect the identity and privacy of the participants.

## **1.4 Chapter Outline**

*Chapter one* gives the context of the research, research problem and aim, preliminary literature review, research methodology, and the delimitations and limitations of the study. *Chapter two* examines the relevant literature on Zimbabwe, youth, and violence. *Chapter three* looks at the theories that underpin the study. *Chapter four* outlines the research methodology and research design used in the study. *Chapter five* presents findings on the reasons for migration and the challenges that it poses. *Chapter six* is a continuation of the findings related to the Zimbabwean youth's experiences as migrants in Durban, South Africa. *Chapter seven* is an evaluation of the intervention implemented in terms of the realized outcomes. *Chapter eight* presents the summary, conclusion, and recommendations of the study.

## **1.5 Summary**

This chapter presented the context of the research and a brief outline of the research aim, methodology, limitations, and delimitations. It also gave the structure of the study. The following chapter examines the relevant literature on Zimbabwe, youth, and violence.

# CHAPTER TWO

## ZIMBABWE, YOUTH, AND VIOLENCE

*Ordinary magic* (Masten 2001: 227)

### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to explore varying definitions of the concept of youth. These definitions are influenced mainly by how the concept is being utilized in each context. This highlights the evolving nature of the concept of youth. One of the common definitions describes youth as a socialization phase, a transitional phase, and a struggle for social status. One's future is dependent on a young individual's ability to negotiate through this phase. The concept is controversial since it is a social construction and used differently in different spaces. What follows is an attempt to bring all these divergent perspectives together and highlight the useful and problematic aspects of each. The chapter also makes use of relevant literature on the youth in Zimbabwe. It aims to provide clarity on the importance of the youth in this study in relation to their experience.

### 2.2 Youth as a Transitional Stage

The stage of being a youth is regarded as a transitional stage into adulthood (Charles 2018: 13; Holmes *et al.* 2018). Physiological development is one of the dimensions of the transition. Often, when guests enter a home, the topic of the transition of young people in it is discussed. The following are some of the expressions made: "*Nhai zvawatoreba samai vako* (she is tall just like her mother)" and "*Musikana ari kukura* (she is growing)." Physical changes occur and mark that the youth are transitioning into becoming an adult. These physical changes are mostly associated with puberty and also come with accompanying emotions and attitudes, etc.

The transition enables a young individual to detach themselves from their parents and attain independence and the status of being an adult. As a child, one is solely dependent on the provision and support from one's parents, guardians, etc. However, at a certain age, the expectation is that one starts to wean oneself from the provision



and support of one's parents. One also prepares to play the same role with the younger ones around one in the future. These roles may include helping to pay fees and sometimes buying clothes for one's younger siblings. It is during the youth phase that one realizes how they are going to fend for themselves and their loved ones. In many cases, boys are expected to transition into providers, husbands, and fathers, while girls are expected to transition into wives, mothers, and homemakers when they reach adulthood.

### **2.3 Youth as a Phase of Socialization**

The concept of youth can be viewed from a sociology and social psychology lens. Socialization is a lifetime process in which children and adolescents learn to operate in society by adapting to and accepting the norms, values, behavior, and attitudes of the communities and societies that they inhabit (John *et al.* 2017: 7). Young people's behavior and identities are shaped by daily interactions at different levels with others and cultural constructs. Socialization takes place through engagement with families and peers in school, religious spaces, the media, communities (Potgieter-Gqubule and Ngcobo 2009; De Graaf 2018: 105), and places of work. For instance, in all these spaces, gender socialization takes place, and people learn what is acceptable for each gender group in each of the spaces and also how they function. The family structure is regarded as the basic unit of society Potgieter-Gqubule and Ngcobo (2009: 15). The norms, values, and rules that are observed in the family setup can be observed, by extension, in the communities in which people live. It follows that if a family observes these and internalizes them, they will apply these in their interactions with those outside their family structure. Therefore, strong family bonds can be the foundation of social cohesion. Young people have their first encounter with socialization through the family structure, when an individual is socialized into being a tolerant and individual respectful of diversity in their family. In other spaces, they are bound to connect well with others from different family backgrounds.

### **2.4 Youth as a Struggle for Social Status**

African countries had to fight against Western imperialism during the colonial era. They formed liberation movements, such as South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO), African National Congress (ANC), Zimbabwe African National Union

(ZANU), Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU), and Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO). These liberation movements were composed mostly of thousands of youths who had dedicated their lives to fighting colonial injustices. Today, most of the civil movements are led by the youth, for instance, the Arab Spring that saw a wave of violent protests. In the minds of many, the youth are destructive, anti-social, anti-establishment, ill-disciplined, and criminal elements. South Africa's Economic Freedom Fighters is a youth-led party and associated with violence.

Taking the South African context as an example, the struggles during the apartheid era included the involvement of many young people. Interestingly, they were viewed as both heroes and villains. To the oppressed majority, their actions were heroic, and their use of violence was justified. The apartheid regime treated them as villains who needed to be punished severely. Years later, another generation of youth, led by Julius Malema, finds itself at the heart of demanding solutions to South Africa's current problems. Malema's rise is attributed largely to unemployment and poor service delivery, his ability to ride on the declining legitimacy and popularity of the ANC, and his personalization of their frustrations and disappointment with the authorities (Seekings 2014; Pretorius 2021). An argument can be put forward pointing to the differences in issues that were being raised. However, the resolve to raise them is often seen as being retrogressive by the incumbent authorities. The researcher, then, had many questions, such as the following: can the use of violence be justified? Can violence be used to bring about any good in society?

The Fees Must Fall movement, which first began in October 2015, is the most recent example of youth being in a struggle for socioeconomic status (Raghuram, Breines and Gunter 2020: 95). Access to education is one of the basic rights to which an individual is entitled. However, in the case of South African youth, structural factors inhibit access to education. The movement sought to make the government facilitate access to education for youth that come from economically disadvantaged families. Youths were able to mobilize themselves in different campuses nationwide for the cause.

In most African countries, there are high levels of unemployment due to prevailing economic conditions. Despite acquiring various qualifications, young people struggle

to secure employment, often leading to frustrations leading to violence and crime, in some instances. Every young person looks forward to being economically independent after having pursued his or her studies. It weighs more heavily on Black youths who must pay “black tax”<sup>1</sup>. A lack of employment opportunities often results in youths engaging in activities that promise to deliver income. In most instances, unemployed youths have become vulnerable and susceptible to crime, violence, and prostitution, among many other social ills. Cambodia has a high level of youths involved in violence, criminal activities, and drug abuse.

#### **2.4.1 Young Women**

Gender relations remain a controversial area in contemporary society. The interaction between men and women remains strained in the contemporary community (Ncube and Tomaselli 2019: 19; Mangena 2021). A struggle for power and dominance creates a rift between the two gender groups. Young women bear the brunt of wanting to be heard in both the public and private spheres. However, the patriarchal system does not seem to make space for them. In public spaces where both men and women are present, only the older women are allowed to speak on behalf of all the women present. In women-only spaces, the emphasis is on getting married and preparing the young women to become “good wives”. Traditionally, there is a *Nhanga* serving as a room for the girls within a home (Gumbonzvanda, Gumbonzvanda and Burgess 2021: 170). It is meant to also serve as a space for young women to converse under the watchful eye of the older married women. The space has limited potential for young women to fully construct their own femininities or preferred masculinities. The presence of older women, who serve as teachers or advisors, only works to further a patriarchal system that socializes young women into servitude (Muguti and Sande 2019; Dlamini 2020). This can be linked to the occurrence of Sexual and Gender-based Violence (SGBV) and how young women are more vulnerable than their male counterparts.

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<sup>1</sup> *Black tax* is a popular South African term referring to financial support given to a family.

## **2.5 Youth as an Intrinsically Valuable Phase**

In one's daily life, one encounters people with similar, and sometimes different, backgrounds and experiences from one's own. Through one's interactions, one is allowed to teach, learn, relearn, unlearn, and experience collectively. The above speaks to how youth can contribute to everyday life scenarios in their communities. It suggests the importance of youth as integral actors in their communities. People's experiences are key in building the ideal community that they would like to achieve.

Therefore, being young does not disqualify one from making any meaningful contribution. Over the years, people have seen the emergence of young opinion leaders all over the globe, including Malala (against Islamic Fundamentalism), Nkosi (South Africa HIV/AIDS activist), Black Lives Matter, and Vusi Thembakwayo (entrepreneurship). All these young leaders have used their experiences to inspire different movements addressing certain issues affecting contemporary society.

## **2.6 Youth Participation: Is There Space? /Finding Their Space**

*Our leaders do not care about us. Our views are not considered. We are treated as if we do not exist* (Cynthia [aged 16], Nkayi District, Zimbabwe).

Earlier sections of the chapter have pointed to the importance of participation. Global players are increasingly recognizing the youths as "active agents of change" in pursuit of social development (Bandura and Cherry 2020; Naeem *et al.* 2021). Through participation, the youth have a say in determining their future and bringing about socioeconomic transformation in their communities. This study links participation to the ability of youth to raise essentially prescriptive questions around the attainment for sustainable peace. It also holds that, through social capital, youths can take a lead in facilitating social change initiatives in the pursuit of sustainable peace. Youth participation is also key in the extension of social and other capitals in communities. In the case of Zimbabwe, it has proven to be a mammoth task for youths to be active participants. This is due to a lack of an enabling environment socially, politically, and economically. A report by the Research and Advocacy Unit established the existence of a lack of interest to vote by young people (RAU 2013, 2020). In Zimbabwe, there seems to be little or no space for youths to fully engage in active participation. The

older generation has assumed the position of being more knowledgeable than the younger generation. A typical example is the low numbers of youth in leadership structures in various entities.

Young people are competent citizens and should be allowed to participate meaningfully (Checkoway 2011; Thomas, Cretney and Hayward 2019). It follows that they (the youth) are a resource from which their respective communities can benefit. In Zimbabwe, the youth are often viewed as a menace to society, and they are not given a chance to participate meaningfully. For instance, in most of the national structures, there is little or no inclusion of young people. ZANU PF's youth league is led by Pupurai Togarepi, who is 55 years old. He is, in no manner, in touch with the youth or their needs and aspirations. Young party members have been appointed to less meaningful positions. Zimbabwean youths have been reduced to passive recipients and continue to be socioeconomically deprived (Chitukutuku 2014; Kabonga *et al.* 2021). This has resulted in little or no participation of young people in initiatives due to frustration and a lack of adequate political capital. All of this has weakened the role of young people as active citizens in Zimbabwe. Little or no participation is a manifestation of weakened social capital and stands in the way of attaining sustainable peace.

Resource allocation toward youth-related initiatives serves as evidence of youths being viewed as lacking any thread of capacity to effect change. Further institutionalization of this view is witnessed by the ruling party's policy toward the youth cohort. They continue to treat the youth as a problem and mostly focus on their deficits instead of looking at them as assets (Naeem *et al.* 2021). Around the late 1990s, the government was facing immense pressure to deliver to citizens across the divide. The rate of unemployment was high, and youths were already taking to the streets. Formal spaces seemed not to allow for the engagement of the youth and were not a top priority. The government began the massive recruitment of young people into the army and deployed them to the war in the DRC (Dzimiri 2014). This was the government's way of dealing with the troublesome youth. Military conscription would help bring discipline, cultivate a sense of "patriotism," and channel their negative energy into a meaningful national cause. This study is of the view that youths should be awarded an

opportunity in proffering solutions especially to address their challenges. They are an important resource in terms of their skills and competencies.

The older Zimbabwean generations continue to assume that they are aware of issues facing the youth. To add to this, they prescribe solutions, which, in most cases, do not seem to work. They fail to acknowledge that their experiences in their younger years are not necessarily the same as those of the younger generation. Young people have not been given enough freedom to identify their issues. Without a sense of ownership, it is very difficult to meaningfully engage youth in initiatives around them. This study allows the youth participants to take full ownership of the process to yield youth participation. It is a platform for them to identify their issues by sharing personal experiences. Most importantly, they are allowed to prescribe the way forward as young people.

The current Zimbabwean situation has made young people vulnerable to all types of abuse and manipulation. During the election season, youths are part of the campaign teams for various political parties. Their involvement is often based on the political trust that they have in political leaders to turn around their misfortunes. Often, party election manifestos promise the unemployed, who are mostly the youth, prospects of employment upon being elected (Dube, Gazura and Madziwadzira 2017). Another assumption is that they are being given a seat at the table to effect change and be a part of democracy. Unfortunately, political party leaders continue to prey on the youth and use them for their political gains. They are only important during this phase as they serve the political interests of the politicians.

Education is regarded as encouraging political participation in most countries (Larreguy and Marshall 2014). This is a position assumed by well-known scholars, such as Putnam. He noted that education “is the best individual-level predictor of participation” (Putnam 1995: 68). Another scholar, Hillygus (2005), went further to postulate that increased political participation is a result of education. On the contrary, a study by Croke *et al.* (2016) found that education is a cause for deliberate disengagement in the Zimbabwean context. Over the years, Zimbabweans seem to have realized that political participation does not affect policy processes. Young people deliberately disengage to deny legitimacy to the current regime. One may see

this as a non-violent protest by young Zimbabweans. In many instances, citizens have deliberately disengaged, especially during elections, which are always contentious.

A culture of fear is also responsible for low levels of youth participation. Zimbabwean politics can be described as having high levels of intolerance, which often turn into incidents of politically motivated violence. Citizens seem to be stripped of the right to safety once they dissent, as evidenced by past abductions and arrests. One respondent, in a study by RAU (2017: 5), stated that “People are victimized for example Dzamara and Chizuze went missing because they were vocal.” It is important to note how one cannot speak about general issues around service delivery and be taunted for it. There seems to be a conflation between active citizenship and politics. Young people have been socialized into believing that expressing oneself may result in arrest, abduction, violence, and victimization. According to a study by RAU (2017b), many of the young people in Zimbabwe consider themselves as risk averse.

The condition of being risk averse also stems from the absence of citizen protection by the law and institutions. According to the Zimbabwean constitution, citizens have the right to expression and association. The introduction of Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) and Public Order and Security Act (POSA) during Prof. Jonathan Moyo’s period as a minister seemed to work against citizen participation. Where citizens have defied the provisions of POSA, the government has also responded with violence. Many young people were subject to arrests. All this has influenced the low turnouts when there have been calls for mass action by citizens. Young people would rather sit on the sidelines than put their lives at risk. The security forces are rarely held accountable for their actions when citizens take to the streets.

From the above, one can observe the little or lack of space for youth in Zimbabwe in terms of participation. In response to this, youths have moved together toward creating an alternative space. This activism by young people stems from shared diminished hopes and aspirations. Deliberate exclusion by the older generation has resulted in an increased bonding social capital of the young generation. They highly mistrust those in authority and, most importantly, are certain that they will not assist them. Opposition politics is not in touch with young people or their dreams and aspirations. This new

wave of youth activism has made the most of social media as a platform for discussion and mobilization. In the process, they are allowed to bond and form a bridge to come together despite their differences. This study, in the same vein, believes in the youth and treats them as important assets who can bring about social change.

Social media has given youths a platform to converge and share experiences. However, in some cases, it has also been a platform where youths often hurl insults at one another compromising coming together as one voice. As much as there is a new crop of activists who are young and vibrant, it seems that they have failed to distinguish themselves from the older crop of activists. Greed and individualism have repeatedly stood in the way of effective citizen activism. Activists tend to abandon the real motives for the movement and pursue personal interests. For some, it is a way to earn an income, be relevant, and gain political capital. Promise Mkhwananzi was recently fingered in the mismanagement of funds of the Tajamuka movement Voice of America (2017). In addition, the presence of funding has led to the mushrooming of various movements. Instead of having a united front, the youth come forward in fragments. Most of this is because everyone wants to be credited with the success of the movement. This Flower, This Flag, and This Gown are some of the many movements that have sprung into existence over time (Oberdorf 2017; Matsilele and Mutsvairo 2021). Personal gain at the expense of the masses is not a new phenomenon in Zimbabwean civil society. The civic space has been invaded by a group of incentivized voices. Civic leaders are only vocal when it suits them and when an opportunity for financial gain emerges. This does not encourage young people to participate in such initiatives.

The above discussion suggests that it is essential that there is an enabling, safe environment that allows young people to participate. Such an environment encourages and nurtures innovation and creativity amongst the youth. Critical youth empowerment theorists have proposed “the need for authentic, youth-determined activities that challenge youth to engage in new roles and develop new skills and insights while also engaging in critical reflection and action” (Jennings *et al.* 2006: 44). A participatory approach is followed to create, recreate, and alter experiences and establishing positive relations. This study seeks to provide an enabling, safe environment for youths by youths to engage meaningfully with one another. Most importantly, they are



allowed to be creative and innovative by co-creating a way forward freely. Additionally, it will facilitate a platform to develop increased self-worth, enhanced self-efficacy, and positive self-identity, according to Chinman and Linney (1998) cited in Tindall-Biggins (2020: 19).

## **2.7 HIV/AIDS, Substance Abuse, and the Youth**

Young people in Zimbabwe, as with many of their peers around the world, are vulnerable to HIV/AIDS and substance abuse. Various factors have influenced their vulnerability at both the community and individual levels. In the Zimbabwean context, there is a torn social fabric at a time when the country is continuously going through an economic and political decline. Reports of the first case of HIV in Zimbabwe were made in 1985 (Batisai, Dzimirir and Dzimirir 2019: 25). Young people between the ages of 15 and 24 have been identified as the most vulnerable in the world (Muchabaiwa and Mbonigaba 2019). Early sexual experimentation, economic insecurity, changes in social and urban values, and harmful cultural practices are some of the influencing factors. Issues of sexuality are entangled with power and dominance and deserve to be explored.

Economic decline has resulted in the skyrocketing of prices for basic commodities and services. This has made accessing them a difficult ordeal for most of the citizenry, especially the youth. Most of the young people have been turned into perennial dependents in their families. In some instances, not all young people can lean on parents or guardians for financial support. To satisfy their material needs, young people engage in transactional sex. The worsening economic situation has led to youth engaging in transactional sexual activities. Sex becomes a commodity upon which in return they receive money or other material items.

Urbanization has compromised the existence of support structures to assist young people as they transition into adulthood. These support structures mould the youth into responsible adults and will later guide future generations. Families are split due to the need for better prospects, making it difficult to maintain contact. According to the African adage, “a child belongs to the community”. Every member of the family (immediate and extended) has an active role in the upbringing of a child. Aunties

(*anate*) and uncles (*anasekuru*) are tasked with preparing young people for married life and, most importantly, sex education. These traditional educators (family and community) themselves have succumbed to HIV/AIDS. They tend to emphasize on sexual pleasure and reproduction rather than sexual health. Therefore, it raises questions on the quality of information existent in communities with regard to HIV/AIDS.

Despite the visible gap and weakening family ties, parents have failed to stand in the gap. Most of them still hold it as taboo to have conversations around sex with their children. Parents are of the view that intimate communication breeds familiarity and lowers the respect levels from the children. They are afraid that such conversations configure the power matrix in the parent-to-child relationship. To substantiate the claim, the study draws on the findings of a study in Mbare, Harare, by Chiweshe and Chiweshe (2017). The study looked at adults and their views on adolescents concerning their sexuality. One of their respondents gave the following response: *“How do you start talking to your daughter or son about sex? They will lose respect for you. Children need to respect their parents. We are not friends if I know you are engaging in sex then you will be punished”* (2017: 124). Such attitudes give young people room to look for information elsewhere, and they often experiment, increasing their vulnerability to HIV/AIDS.

It must be noted that parents are aware that young people are engaging in sexual exploits. There is denial due to the shame and stigma that revolves around their children being sexually active (Chiweshe and Chiweshe 2017). This is because early sexual encounters and pre-marriages are considered immoral and mischievous among the community elders. Some parents have taken it upon themselves to talk about an abstinence-only lifestyle, while others have kept the sex topic off the list. The researcher is of the view that they believe having no information around sex serves as deterrence. Statistics suggest otherwise, and, therefore, it is important to create safe spaces for such conversations. Denying young people information regarding sex increases their chances of being infected by the virus. All of this points to how misguided the older generation is regarding the younger generation and their experiences. Experiences of young people are central to this study and will help chart the way forward.

Various state and non-state actors have drawn up documentation of the ravaging effects of HIV/AIDS. In all these, no one seems to accept that they have a responsibility to deal with the problem. Adults are aware that youths are engaging in premarital sex and are reluctant to act. There is a rather troublesome notion that sexually active youths are the offspring of others and a problem to society. Present here is weakened community ties with bonding social capital within families, limiting their capability to bridge relations with others.

Cultural and religious practices also make young people vulnerable to HIV/AIDS. Young females are put at risk of contracting HIV/AIDS when they become part of polygamous marriages. African traditional religion and most of the indigenous Christian churches recognize polygamy. Particularly, apostolic sects (*mapostori*) encourage men to have many wives and girls, and, in turn, they are told that they are meeting God's expectations. The same sect instructs women who get married to non-virgins to get virgins to compensate their spouses (Vengeyi 2016). Some sects also believe in the myth that virgins cleanse one from HIV. This can be linked to incidents of rape involving older men targeting young women. Existing cultural and religious practices are not giving the much-needed support and protection young people need from sexual predators.

### **2.7.1 Youth Education, Unemployment, and Access to Resources**

The problem of unemployment, with specific attention to the youth, remains a consistent feature in post-colonial Zimbabwe. The level of unemployment is estimated to be approximately 94% (Gukurume 2017). This can be attributed to a failing economy that cannot employ its graduates (Mahiya 2016). One of the results has been a rapid informalization of the local economy. Unemployment is also an issue of great concern in other countries on the continent. Researchers have developed varying schools of thought around the problem of youth unemployment. One of them is that of the youth bulge theory, which suggests that youth may be a security threat. A youth bulge often occurs when most of the population of an area belongs to the youth cohort. According to a report by the African Development Bank (2016), the youth bulge is an important resource toward achieving economic growth and development. In the context of this

study, the youth are instrumentalized and constructed as both an opportunity and threat to social cohesion.

The findings of a report by Medina and Schneider (2018) for the IMF point to Zimbabwe having the second-largest informal economy. It is also the informal sector where jobs are being created while the formal sector remains closed. For instance, in 2008, Zimbabweans were greatly affected by hyperinflation with an estimated 60% affected by unemployment (Gukurume 2017). This has pushed young Zimbabweans to find other means of securing an income, popularly classified as a side hustle. It is their alternative way of earning an income and a survival strategy. Young people have turned to activities that will complement or create income and capital for future employment prospects. The proliferation of side hustles has resulted in the development and growth of small and medium enterprises across the country. This is in response to the economic crisis and the current regime's bad economic policies. Indigenization and empowerment policies have been shown to be anti-investment and have aided the expansion of these small and medium businesses.

The youth have taken over the informal sector due to failures to secure employment in the formal sector. Zimbabwe's formal sector is composed of 2.8 million businesses employing approximately 5.7 million, with the youth forming 4.2 million of these people (Mangudya 2017). University graduates have an alternative space to generate livelihoods in the informal sector. One can make sense of how the Zimbabwean youth deal with the problem of unemployment by using the social navigation lenses. It implies that the actors (young) are connected to their socioeconomic and political surroundings. The exercise of agency by young Zimbabweans is tactical, driven by certain possibilities and unfavorable situations. For many young individuals, navigating difficult situations and chasing imagined futures has become the norm.

The failure to secure employment comes with further problems and pressures. One escapes derogatory labels such as *rovha* (loafer), often given by society to unemployed young people. *Rovha* is an individual who is dependent on their parents or guardians for basics such as food and shelter. Gukurume (2018) posited that crime, drug and substance abuse, laziness, and violence are often associated with the state of being a *rovha*. Therefore, to escape these, young people have engaged in starting

their businesses that will generate the much-needed income. The following quote serves as evidence of the stigma toward unemployed youth:

I had to take up a job as a till operator even though I have a sociology degree. I graduated in 2010, but my frantic efforts of getting a job were in vain. People in my neighborhood started calling me names. I could not stand being called 'rovha'. People think that you are lazy, so that is why I took up this short-term contract-based job in the shop as a till operator (Gukurume (2018: 94).

The need to preserve one's dignity makes them vulnerable to exploitation as they take up whatever opportunity that presents itself. This is locally known as *kukiya kiya*, which translates into locking. For the purposes of this context, it is how one engages in income-generating initiatives. Many have had their dreams of working white-collar jobs and have joined the *kukiya kiya* wagon.

It is through *kukiya kiya mumastreets* (side hustling on the street) that young people in Zimbabwe have acquired ontological security. They feel that they have mastered and have control over uncertainties, chaos, and threatening circumstances presented by life (Vaquera, Aranda and Sousa-Rodriguez 2017). Young people can now contribute to their family income and establish their independence financially. For young men, it allows them to raise money for *lobola/roora* (bride price) and start their own families. The informal sector has allowed youths to lead meaningful and dignified lives in their respective communities. More importantly, it has catapulted their transition to the status of adulthood (Oosterom *et al.* 2016; Oosterom 2019). A lack of an income stifles or prevents their transition into becoming adults (Honwana 2014; 2019)). For some young people, it has led them to a path of crime and violence.

The politics of the day continues to influence the informal sector. There is a partisan implementation of policy and resource allocation. In Harare's central business district, certain sections allegedly belong to political youth leaders of ZANU PF. It has been suggested that the allocation of trading stalls has been used as part of their mobilization toward the election season (Oosterom 2019). One's political affiliation affects their access to an opportunity to be included in the informal sector. A member of the party's youth league is quoted as follows (Gukurume 2018: 97):

This is our stronghold; we have targeted the SME sector for our youth empowerment and indigenization programme. As the architects of youth empowerment, we, the ZANU-PF youth, are the primary beneficiaries. We give space to patriotic youth; MDC (Movement for Democratic Change) people are sell-outs, and we cannot reward sell-outs, can we?

The above is part of the divisive tactics meant to stand in the way of inclusion and social cohesion. This study provides a platform for youths across the political divide to engage and cultivate healthy positive relations of mutual benefit.

### **2.7.2 Pre- and Post-Liberation Narratives**

When Zimbabwe gained independence, the freedom fighters were at the center of matters. They were held in high regard for their contribution to the political independence of the country (Rwodzi 2021: 145). Besides the recognition, they were awarded certain benefits that would secure them a decent living. The government paid them a certain amount of money, would cater to the medical fees, and would send their children to school. Historians also kept their contributions alive in their research and the school curriculum.

To gain access to certain opportunities such as employment and access to natural resources, one had to be a freedom fighter. Most of the people serving in government entities in senior positions are war veterans. The land reform involved war veterans at the forefront of the seizures, and they benefited more (Helliker and Murisa 2020: 14). All of this speaks to the influence of the liberation rhetoric in a journey of change and continuity in a newly independent state at that time. The country's political arena is dominated by those with liberation credentials. This has frustrated any chance of having an active participation of youths and making them mere voters and party supporters. The opposition movement, in some ways, has provided an enabling platform, as discussed earlier. It went against the liberation rhetoric, encouraging the participation of all despite their liberation credentials.

## **2.8 Zimbabwean Youth and Violence**

The Zimbabwean youth are subject to many challenges that make them vulnerable to stress, frustration, and anxiety, amongst many other factors. In the face of these

challenges, resilience provides an opportunity for them to rise above unpleasant situations and go through positive development. Luthar, Lyman and Crossman (2014: 126) defined *resilience* as a “relatively positive adaptation despite experiences of significant adversity.” Implicit in this definition are two essential conditions, which are being exposed to threats or severe adversities and the attainment of positive adaptation in the face of significant strikes in the development process.

Adversity suggests that an individual is prone to a negative developmental outcome. It can be a biological risk, psychosocial risk, and experiences that are traumatic. Physical conditions, such as chronic conditions and genetic disorders, put one at a biological risk of a negative outcome. The risk may be because of the physical deficiency or the stigma and discrimination that comes with the medical condition. For example, a young woman living with albinism (Bradbury-Jones *et al.* 2018: 10) spoke of her unfortunate experience in terms of securing employment:

I managed to study up to university level and graduated in development studies... Ever since I graduated, I have never got a job. Everywhere you go, people discriminate against you. You go somewhere to request for the job, and someone underestimates you, thinking you can't do anything... most of the people still discriminate us. Some don't want to buy what we sell, just because an albino has touched the clothes.

It shows that people are not moving away from the myths and misinformation around the condition of albinism in our communities.

Psychosocial risks affect the emotional, psychological, and social well-being of an individual because of external variations. Marginalization is a psychosocial risk that encompasses discrimination and social exclusion. The political philosopher Young (1990: 53) is of the view that “marginalization is perhaps the most dangerous form of oppression. A whole category of people is expelled from useful participation in social life.” The above points to how marginalization deprives one of their dignity and rights, making them as less than their counterparts. One can be marginalized along racial lines, unemployment, gender preferences, and poverty, among many other forms. A study by Majee *et al.* (2019) established in their findings that poverty leads to young people engaging in the abuse of alcohol and drugs as well as engaging in reckless sexual activities. These negative outcomes form part of their coping mechanism in

response to their lack of material means. Due to diminished hope, many young Zimbabweans are taking drugs and alcohol as a means of coping.

Youths living in poverty are denied access to resources and prospects of bettering themselves (Majee *et al.* 2019). In Zimbabwe, this is being done methodically to ensure that they cannot access or even participate in community initiatives. The above suggests that marginalization is responsible for cutting out young Zimbabweans from community networks. The Zimbabwean youth are not able to partake in the resources that are found within the community, which are key in preventing negative outcomes. A lack of self-esteem, no sense of belonging, and diminished hope have also led to their withdrawal from these community networks. This has also been attributed to many Zimbabweans emigrating to various parts of the globe.

At present, there are high levels of internalized hate and mistrust amongst Zimbabwean migrant youths. This can be attributed to their experience with locals who are not usually cordial. In the researcher's view, it makes the task of reintegrating marginalized persons back into the community ranks difficult. At every turn in their lives, Zimbabwean youths are all bound to experience some form of marginalization. This is due to the change and continuity that seems to form their daily lives. In the face of change, one may lose their status and become part of the marginalized members of the community. Migrating to South Africa has made them part of the marginalized collective because of their foreignness.

The above substantiates earlier assertions made by other scholars. They put forward the assertion that vulnerabilities make one susceptible to negative outcomes (Van Breda 2018). Vulnerabilities may be evidence of absent or failing coping mechanisms. For instance, HIV positive adolescents tend to develop behavioral problems in the face of rejection (Betancourt *et al.* 2013). A lack of employment opportunities to secure an income makes young people vulnerable when they fail to cope or obtain the needed social support.

Often, when one is exposed to risk, the expectation is a negative outcome. Resilience, however, suggests that there is a possibility of positive adaptation. The positive adaptation relates to an outcome that surpasses what was anticipated in the face of



significant risk (Luthar, Lyman and Crossman 2014). It also refers to one's ability to withstand and/or recuperate from unsettling disturbances. The Zimbabwean government under Robert Mugabe had a scholarship facility to assist vulnerable young people. This facility had young Zimbabweans leaving home to pursue their academic journey. One would expect some of these students to exhibit violent behaviors due to the nature of their backgrounds. Most of the beneficiaries of the scholarship facilities are children of war veterans. However, due to positive adaptation, they have managed to attain good grades and engage in healthy relations with peers and university staff. This is facilitated through agency, reflexivity, and problem-solving, among many other processes. The process makes use of resources that are found in the individual, family, community, and cultural provisions (Luthar, Lyman and Crossman 2014; Wright and Masten 2015). People's ability to overcome adversity, is, therefore, highly influenced by the nature of their interactions and support rendered by those around them. The study aims to provide an environment where positive healthy relations can be established and to promote positive adaptation.

Certain literature sources point to a relationship between migration and happiness levels. Social networks and cultural affinity can be used to explain the happiness of migrants. In their study, Fanning, Haase and O'Boyle (2011) found that the economic participation of immigrants did not translate into their social integration. The same can be stated for Zimbabwean youths who have migrated to South Africa. They seem to possess a different level of social capital that influences their subjection to social exclusion. These findings suggest that immigrants and their children have cultural and social capital strengths that lead to chances of social exclusion in a given spatial space Fanning, Haase and O'Boyle (2011: 4).

The complexity of the Zimbabwean situation makes it difficult to locate and name the forces of violence. "*Don't come back anytime soon, my son. They want to decapitate you*" (Hove 2013) – these were the words of Chenjerai Hove's (late) mother to him while he was in exile. The above quote speaks to how perpetrators of violence are unseen and unknown. The study is an opportunity for the participants to share their experiences of violence. It is also an opportunity for them to own instances where they are victims and perpetrators. Over the years, the ruling party has arguably subverted the National Youth Service mandate. It has become a vehicle for physical violence

and immune from the law. What is known to ordinary Zimbabweans is the narrative of the Green Bombers associated with violence against the opposition and untouchables (Bratton and Masunungure 2008: 48). This Green Bomber narrative exemplifies resistance by individuals who are oppressed or weak. This subversion has corrupted and turned the youth into violent individuals in their communities. This qualifies the view that young people are troublesome in the community. The public policy informs the existence of the National Youth Service and involves young Zimbabweans in its operations. However, this study allows the youth to construct their narrative stemming from their lived experiences.

A culture of silence and silencing makes it difficult to identify and hold accountable individuals or institutions behind acts of violence. Fear and insecurity continue to influence the complexities that ordinary young Zimbabweans go through. This study is an attempt to provide a safe space where young people can share their experiences of violence. A safe space will allow the youth to identify the root causes of violence and establish positive, healthy relationships.

## **2.9 Migrating out of a Crisis**

*KuZimbabwe zvinhu zvanga zvapuresa, ndosaka ndakarova pasi* (Sophia 2008 cited in (Zhira 2016: 47)

The quote above summarizes how the Zimbabwean situation has pushed young people to migrate. The worsening economy, dwindling opportunities, and breakdown in the social fabric have made staying at home challenging. For most young Zimbabweans, migration has become a livelihood strategy.

Zhira (2016) made use of the motivators suggested by a certain author, Hopkins, to account for the migration of Zimbabweans. These include security, prestige, personal ambition, status, and employment change. Zhira's further exploration led him to identify additional influences, namely, social pressure, the need for adventure, a quest for peace of mind, and feeling frustrated. However, the living conditions have reduced most of the above to mere goals beyond their reach. For others, the nightmare begins from the moment that they embark on the journey to South Africa. There is a record of

looting, rape, and harassment of migrants (Dreesen and Hansen 2016). This study, therefore, pursues to engage young Zimbabweans to explore their entry and living conditions to ascertain how these have shaped their experiences away from home. It is also an opportunity, whether or not the same can be stated for young Zimbabweans, in terms of motivators regarding migration to South Africa. This is after taking note that Zhira (2016) study did not focus on a specific age group. The study focused on the youth and their narratives to explore as well as develop a transformative intervention.

Zimbabweans find themselves choosing between the lesser of two evils; staying and facing destitution or migrating despite the consequences of being labeled. The imperative to reach South Africa becomes clearer when one takes into consideration the dangers and risks associated with crossing the border between Zimbabwe and South Africa.

Migration to South Africa is a result of necessity and the constant desire to earn a decent living, better employment prospects, and access to food and basic services such as healthcare. The choice to migrate marks the beginning of one exercising their agency. In doing this, they can lessen the possible occurrences of negativity. It, therefore, is important to refer the participants to this point in their lives with regard to their agency. An opportunity is, therefore, presented to ascertain their awareness of the agency that lies within them.

Every day, young Zimbabweans must decide which of the two evils is less. The first option is enduring the situation at home and being reduced to a destitute position, while the second option involves leaving the country in pursuit of greener pastures. It makes them vulnerable to different forms of adversity.

In the past, focus has mostly been on intra- or interstate conflict. However, what is evident presently is a hybrid of social, criminal, and political forms of violence (Adams 2014). The worsening situation in Zimbabwe has led many young Zimbabweans to emigrate to different parts of the world. All of this is in search of “greener pastures” where it seems less precarious. Neighboring South Africa has many of these immigrants as it is closer to home and cost-effective. The assumption is that emigration will lead one into a life free from hassles. The continued weakening of the

state institution has resulted in violent communities, with attention given to Zimbabwe and South Africa. Young Zimbabweans have left their home country due to a politically, culturally, and structurally violent environment.

However, that has not been the case for those that choose to resettle in South Africa. Receiving communities have been xenophobic in most cases toward foreign nationals. Migrants have also been excluded and discriminated against because of their place of origin. One way to try to understand why communities become xenophobic is by considering globalization. It is greatly associated with free-flow and doing away with borders. This is a notion continuously reduced to rhetoric due to the ever-increasing clarion calls for restriction around movement and intensifying existing border controls. Distinguishing between citizens and non-citizens as well as insiders and outsiders is one of the contradictions found in globalization (Nyammojah 2013).

Scholars in the field of anthropology have brought forward several explanations for this contradiction. One of them suggests that there is a dialectical relationship that exists around “flow” and “closure”. The circulation of information, goods, and human capital is the flow. However, people live in a world where limited resources result in the tightening of borders and hostility toward migrants. Closure entails how citizenship and belonging are exploited to access resources or deny access to certain social groups (Geschiere and Meyer 1998). Modernity creates a yearning for connectivity as well as a necessity to safeguard and promote autochthony and indigeneity (Zenker 2011: 74). As a result, globalization has resurrected autochthonous exclusions and local identities.

Xenophobic tendencies in South Africa go as far back as 1994 just after its independence. Reports of the time suggest that armed youths in Alexandra township, Johannesburg, destroyed property and homes belonging to suspected illegal migrants. Four years later, in the township of Zandspruit, Johannesburg, residents burnt down shacks belonging to Zimbabwean migrants. They felt that these migrants were stealing their jobs and responsibilities for the crime in the area. Politicians fan waves of xenophobia through their public statements, which paint foreign nationals as responsible for the crime and unemployment, amongst many other social ills (Segatti and Landau 2011; Solomon and Kosaka 2014). The wave of xenophobia continues to

exist in South Africa, making the life of foreign nationals, including Zimbabweans, very difficult.

An interesting observation by Landau links xenophobia to a failed state. The scholar observed that “when state institutions failed to deliver on their promises to protect and promote a politically entitled but materially deprived citizenry, the population (or parts of it) took on the obligation to alienate and exclude those standing in its way” (Landau 2012: 3). The absence of a functioning state has necessitated the exclusion of other non-South Africans through violent means (Jearey-Graham and Böhmke 2013). South Africa is a country struggling with high levels of inequality, poverty, and unemployment. Another of the challenges that young Zimbabwean immigrants face is that of discrimination in daily interactions.

South Africa continues to see a widening gap between the rich and the poor. A fusion of exclusion, contestation over resources, and enfranchisement have contributed to hostility toward those regarded as foreigners. Young Zimbabwean migrants are a part of a large group of foreign nationals labeled as *amakwerekwere*. It is a term that speaks to them as being outsiders and not belonging to the community. The term is the beginning of subjection to an exercise of power by locals over foreigners. Adams (2014) alluded that this exercise of power is a form of violence. In this case, power is being exercised through depriving and excluding foreigners from services and opportunities. This exercise of power can be done by the foreign individuals toward each other or on themselves, that is, suicide. The latter is often related to being unable to deal with adversity and becoming or feeling powerless.

Prevailing social, economic, and political conditions continue to be a breeding ground for a continuous cycle of various forms of violence. These forms of violence tend to feed on and reproduce each other. Zimbabwean male migrants have no faith in the policing system for many reasons. Often, the police do not take the reports into serious consideration and ask them for bribes in exchange for protection. What is interesting is that they have no problem with paying the bribes. They are not happy with the way the police respond when they come forward with their concerns. Employment and acquiring a stable source of income are, thus, important. When the opportunity is not

available, or when it is one that is frustrating, the result is negative in most cases. Some young Zimbabweans have resorted to crime to secure themselves.

As much as they are subject to exclusion from locals in the host communities, young Zimbabwean migrants have limited their presence in the public sphere to secure themselves. They are constantly reminded that they do not belong, and it lingers due to labels that come with this. As a result, most of them refrain from making plans to settle permanently. Inherent is hope that matters will improve at home or that they will find another country to settle in – being mobile helps in dealing with xenophobic tendencies and feelings of not belonging. Moving from one place to another in this case must be treated as a form of agency on top of being a coping mechanism.

Previous studies have looked at the future aspirations and expectations of Zimbabwean migrants in South Africa. The situation at home has greatly influenced their movement outside their home and their chances of returning to Zimbabwe. According to a study by Crush and Chikanda (2012: 2-3), after 2005, Zimbabwean migrants preferred to stay in South Africa for the long term. They found that 46% had not returned to Zimbabwe since coming to South Africa. This points to a deteriorating situation in Zimbabwe. The absence of an opportunity to lead a decent and secure life has temporarily stripped it of being home. The notion of home is now associated with convenience and the ability to earn an income. This study provides an opportunity to establish whether the above view holds among young Zimbabweans in Durban, South Africa. It will be carried out by exploring their journeys and will lead to hearing about their future hopes and aspirations. Moreover, the study will discuss what would make staying here easy for them in addition to being part of a healthy social network.

The decision to migrate is influenced by one's social network for many Zimbabweans. Relatives and friends help facilitate the migration process (Crush and Chikanda 2012: 27). It is also these networks that help one establish their base in terms of employment, accommodation, and familiarity with the new environment. It can, therefore, be argued that migrant communities qualify to be treated as a functional social network. For instance, undocumented Zimbabweans rely on these social networks to avoid being arrested by being informed about precautionary measures. The presence of such networks are citizens providing an alternative to the incumbent regime in the face of

socioeconomic insecurity. Social capital plays an imperative role in helping young Zimbabwean migrants establish themselves in South Africa. The study aims to encourage young Zimbabweans to be a part of social networks that will help them cope and develop resilience whilst away from home.

## **2.10 Conclusion**

This chapter explored the concept of youth paying attention to useful and problematic elements within themselves. The chapter also considered literature detailing the Zimbabwean context in relation to its youth. In addition, it sought to highlight the importance of Zimbabwean youth to the study. The following chapter gives an outline of theories that underpin this research.

# CHAPTER THREE

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

*The child is the father of man* (William Wordsworth 1802)

### 3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter focused on providing the context to the study as well as looking at relevant literature. This chapter examines the major theories that inform this study, namely, the social capital theory, peace education, and transformative learning. It also makes use of empirical studies to aid the discussion.

### 3.2 What is Social Capital?

The conceptualization of social capital remains a great challenge for scholars as there is a lack of rigorous conceptualization of the concept (Krishna and Uphoff 2002). Nonetheless, over the years, researchers across disciplines, policy makers, and developmentalists have developed an increased interest in social capital and its effect on relationships in society (Fukuyama 1995; Putnam 1995). It has been the basis for various types of probes into socioeconomic development, education, health, and peacebuilding of late (Adler and Kwon 2000; Rodgers *et al.* 2019).

Social capital is considered to be at the center of integrated and cooperative communities (Herrerros and Criado 2009). According to the World Bank (1999) social capital “is not just the sum of the institutions which underpin a society – it is the glue that holds them together”, while (Bourdieu 1986: 248) postulated that “social capital is the sum of actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition... members with the backing if collectively owned capital.” Coleman (1990); Putnam (1993) supported this definition and suggested that social capital comprises trust, norms, and values. Schuller, Baron and Field (2000: 1) further defined social capital as “social networks, reciprocities that arise from them and the value of these for achieving mutual goals.” Implied is that social capital is about networks (relationships). Differently put, it is about social networks and their value,



bonding of similar people, and the bridging of diverse people and norms of reciprocity (Johnston *et al.* 2001; Uslaner 2001). This study is premised on fixing or establishing positive relationships amongst young Zimbabweans with similar and diverse backgrounds and those in positions of authority to facilitate social cohesion and is, therefore, framed using the social capital lenses.

Corruption (Hall 2015), nationalism (Galaty 2016), state authority (Vines 2018), human rights abuses (Annan 2014), and social cohesion (Brown and Zahar 2015; Langer *et al.* 2017) continue to be on the agenda of contemporary African politics. The continent seems to be moving slowly to resolve these issues. This has, however, led to the development of civil society outside of the political milieu as a form of agency by citizens to keep the government's power in check (Sommerfeldt 2013; Lewis 2018). Social capital can be used to account for the establishment and existence of civil society. It suggests that when individuals and groups establish relationships and ties, the outcome may be positive or negative. Therefore, research on civil society can be grounded in social capital as it is not normative (Suarez and Tsai 2005). Civil society is simply a manifestation of social networks and ties characterized by trust, a sense of belonging, cooperation, and harmony. High levels of bonding social capital lower or compromise the chances of the group establishing relations outside its realm. They facilitate collective intolerance to outsiders and increased cooperation within the group. Relationships with those outside their collective are key and can be facilitated by bridging social capital. This study seeks to encourage relations between people from different collectives and having a balanced, civic life that contributes to sustainable peace in their communities (Putnam 1993; Uslaner 1999). Bonding and bridging social capital are discussed in more detail later in this chapter. Civil society may be used to measure social capital by examining the number of collectives, size, and membership (Putnam 2000).

However, other scholars, such as Day (2002), Smith and Kulynych (2002), and Inkeles (2001), have opposed the use of the word "capital" in the phrase "social capital" and do not view social capital as multidimensional. However, Portes (1998: 7) revealed how social capital is like any other form of capital; "whereas economic capital is in people's bank accounts and human capital is inside their heads, social capital inheres in the structure of their relationships." This definition positions social capital at equal

standing with other forms of capital. Just as with other forms of capital, it can be invested, and returns are a possibility, convertible (Bourdieu 1986), appropriable (Coleman 1988), and need maintenance (Harpham, Grant and Thomas 2002).

Other forms of capital are present in an individual while social capital resides in relationships (Williams and Robinson 2002). In his discussion of capital, Schmid (2000) pointed out that capital is not used up in production; rather, it is used over time. Piazza-Georgi (2002) and Castle (2002a) supported his assertion. The former stated that capital is a productive resource, which is a result of the investment, and the latter suggested that it is durable and useful. Therefore, capital is a metaphor referring to a resource that relates to advantage (Allington 2013).

It is important to note that there is no cross-disciplinary definition of social capital. Most of the discussion and definition lies around its intellectual origin and diverse application (Adam and Rončević 2003). Lin, Fu and Hsung (2001: 1) have cautioned that:

[There is] a danger that we may reach a point where the term might be used in whatever way it suits the purpose at hand, and thus be rendered meaningless as a scientific concept that must meet the rigorous demands of theoretical and research validity and reliability.

Adler and Kwon (2002); Schuller, Baron and Field (2000); and Williams and Robinson (2002) have also identified that definitions vary on substance, sources, and effects of social capital. The variance in the definitions is a result of the focus on the form, source, and consequence of social capital (Grootaert and Van Bastelaer 2002). In light of this, definitional crises and the increasing relevance and currency of social capital suggestions have been put forward to discuss social capital in terms of context, discipline, and study level with an emphasis on operationalization (Group 2000).

### **3.3 The Social Capital Theory**

Social capital continues to increasingly feature in the local and global debate over social exclusion and socioeconomic development, amongst many other issues. This section is a discussion on the assumptions, dimensions, types, benefits, and downsides of the social capital theory. As mentioned earlier, social capital lacks consensus in terms of definitions and conceptualizations due to its multi-

dimensionality. It is also important to note that none of these dimensions can singularly capture the entirety of social capital. The dimensions are interwoven, and the discussion that follows will show this.

The social capital theory can be employed in trying to explain and understand human behavior. Coleman (2000) pointed out that social capital helps to resolve how microstructures generate macrostructures in society. People's actions are informed by obligations, norms, identities, and rules; this is a sociological perspective. Norms, obligations, rules, and identities constitute the cultural dimension of social capital theory and are established over some time through the interaction of individuals (Ormston *et al.* 2014; Lin 2017). Frequent interaction is responsible for learning new skills, common conventions, and knowledge (Wasko and Faraj 2005; Herrero 2018). This process is also the foundation of the continuous role-modeling process as one of the experiences of life. Growing up, the researcher had to observe her parents and their friends, extended family, and her friends behave to absorb norms. The researcher began to greet all the individuals whom she met, even if they were strangers. This was something that the researcher observed from her maternal grandmother, especially whenever the family used *makombi* (commuter omnibuses). Another way of absorbing is through narratives or experiences as these provide an insight on how to resolve problems.

Established norms may be a fragile or powerful form of social capital (Coleman 2000: 105). Norms act as a deterrent to those who wish to engage in anti-social activities such as crime or violence. They contribute to individuals feeling secure and safe in their communities. Community members also correct and sanction those who engage in activities detrimental to the well-being of their community. The acts of sanctioning and correcting constitute a mechanism of social control informally. This is a norm in African communities, especially when children and youth are concerned. There is a Shona adage that states, "*mwana ndewemunhu wese*," meaning that a child is raised by their community. It is a norm for any elder in the community to correct or sanction the younger ones when they misbehave. As mentioned above, people around one influence one's behavior and course of action.

This cultural dimension of social capital produces shared visions, feelings, interpretations, and meaning, which, in turn, contribute to the enhancement of social capital (Chiu, Hsu and Wang 2006). The existence of these is a prelude to the development of a sense of belonging and commitment by members of a community or group. In such an environment, individuals trust each other and are willing to cooperate. The current global religious-based conflicts are a result of differences in norms and identities, amongst many other factors. In some cases, they have escalated into armed conflict due to a failure to reconcile and compromise regarding these differences – for example, the case of Islamic fundamentalist groups in Mozambique and Nigeria. This highlights bonding social capital based on religious backgrounds. The cultural dimension of social capital dismisses the role of individual agency (Williams and Durrance 2008). It suggests that individuals are solely governed by identity, norms, and rules in their communities. Social capital is the adherence of an individual to a set of norms (Fukuyama 2001: 11). How people relate to others and the outside environment is a product of the socialization process.

People's memories, desires, and thoughts are also associated with cultural social capital. These influence how people interact with those around them. For instance, famous individuals and collectives influence an ordinary individual's attitude and actions. They tend to evoke certain memories, thoughts, and desires in individuals, which influence actions and attitudes. Popular South African figures, such as Albertina Sisulu, Albie Sachs, Desmond Tutu, Helen Suzman, Hugh Masekela, Nelson Mandela, Miriam Makeba, Steve Biko, and Winnie Madikizela-Mandela, are well known for anti-apartheid activism. They represent a memory of an odious epoch in South Africa's trajectory as a nation. These men and women continue to inspire the desire and thought of a South Africa that is peaceful and inclusive in all aspects. They encourage interactions across social identities (bridging social capital) and power gradients (linking social capital). These cognitive ties create a sense of community in individuals, which can transcend into their immediate network and inner circle of friends.

Due to changing times and technological advancements, famous figures are being assisted by social platforms in exerting their influence. Social media in these modern times has facilitated the increased mediatization of culture as they have gained a

social institution status (Hjarvard 2008: 113). Friedrich (2007: 39) defined mediatization as a continuous process where human interactions and behaviors are influenced by the media, often leading to a change in culture and society (Hepp and Krotz 2014: 7). It allows individuals to satisfy their interests and needs, which are usually context specific (Hjarvard 2014: 223). Terrorism continues to thrive on the use of social media to recruit members and spread their Islamic fundamentalist propaganda. Terrorists have made use of platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube (Klausen *et al.* 2012; Awan 2014; Klausen 2015: 1; Awan 2017: 139). As a result, the Islamic community has bonded amongst themselves to defend and promote the Jihadist movement “and that we [are] in a media battle in a race for the hearts and minds of our Umma (Muslim people)” (Awan 2010: 10). This corroborates the assertion that faith groups possess notable amounts of social capital. Social media allows them to play upon the dissatisfaction and grievances of unsuspecting individuals and give them a sense of significance and belonging (Awan and Blakemore 2012) as well as creating a support base.

However, from an economics perspective, people are autonomous and self-interested, with their actions solely meant to maximize their utility (Coleman 2000). Often, people tend to engage individuals or a collective from whom they seek to gain a benefit or an advantage. Social capital is resident in relationships because of its durability and usefulness (Castle 2002b). Career advancement, employment opportunities, and access to service are examples of benefits or an advantage that one may be pursuing. Therefore, social capital is categorized as a resource that relates to benefits or an advantage for an individual or a collective. It is both a private and public good as it caters for both the expectations of an individual or a collective in exchange for desirable behavior. This study is an attempt to empower young citizens to partake in this resource and improve their livelihoods as individuals and collectively in a socially cohesive environment.

The nature of interactions determines the type of action that an individual performs. This is substantiated by Lin (2001: 76) who suggested that “actors are motivated to either maintain or gain their resources in social actions – purposive actions. Action to maintain resources can be called expressive action, and action to gain resources can

be called instrumental action.” In a homophilous<sup>2</sup> interaction, the action is often expressive, and it is instrumental in a heterophilous<sup>3</sup> interaction. An expressive action seeks to maintain the status quo; this is mostly found where there is bonding social capital. In families, parents act in an expressive manner that safeguards their authority over their children and protects as well as instils values and norms in them (Herrero 2018). On the other hand, bridging social capital is associated with instrumental action where individuals are in pursuit of change. The researcher is aware of the challenges that will arise as the participants may clash due to their different actions on issues. Some may bond to defend and maintain what they believe should be unchanged, whilst others may act instrumentally in a bid for change and do away with the status quo.

Social capital theorists have argued that social capital does not only influence behavior but is also used to obtain resources. Education, increased trust, health, and employment are some of the resources that an individual may access through social capital (Woolcock 2010; Rodgers *et al.* 2019). Individuals become members of formal and informal associations or organizations, which, they believe, will benefit them or give them an advantage. Others form organizations or associations to realize benefits or advantages. In various communities, there are numerous opportunities for these collectives. Matuku and Kaseke (2014) examined the role of *stokvels*<sup>4</sup> on the well-being of their members in Orange Farm, Johannesburg, South Africa, and established that women joined the *stokvels* because they were unemployed, in need of mutual support, and had been advised by their friends or had seen their friends participate. During the interviews, the women stated that participation in the *stokvel* had been beneficial and that it had given them an advantage. They listed the following benefits and advantages:

- Ability to meet basic needs
- Easy access to credit and mini loans

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<sup>2</sup> *Homophilous* refers to relations of socially similar individuals.

<sup>3</sup> *Heterophilous* refers to relations of socially diverse individuals.

<sup>4</sup> *Stokvel* is a term unique to the South African context. It is the South African version of Rotating Credit and Savings Associations (ROSCAs) or Accumulating Savings and Credit Associations (ACSAs). It is an informal group savings scheme in which members voluntarily agree to contribute a fixed amount to a common pool on a regular basis (Lukhele 1990 cited in Matuku and Kaseke 2014).

- Ability to save and invest
- Women empowerment
- Networking and friendships (Matuku and Kaseke 2014)

Such collectives are an example of self-help initiatives started in the community by the community members. Matuku and Kaseke (2014) highlighted that trust, honesty, and evolving friendships were some of the reasons that made some of the *stokvels* successful. In scenarios where these were not present, the women withdrew their participation and compromised the success of these *stokvels*. Therefore, to partake in the success of the *stokvels*, the women had to behave in a manner that allowed their counterparts to trust, support, and befriend them. The above puts forward the agency that lies in individuals in placing themselves in networks or relationships that will satisfy them. This study seeks to award young people an opportunity to find their agency in pursuit of addressing problems that they face in their community and improve their sense of community.

Trust, trustworthiness, support, and friendships existent in these *stokvels* can be attributed to the nature and pattern of connections. This is the structural dimension that allows for the development and usage of social capital (Widén-Wulff and Ginman 2004: 450). Density, connectivity, hierarchy and multiple uses of networks (Nahapiet and Ghoshal 1998: 244), and structural holes are indicators used to measure structural social capital. Through and from these relationships, social capital breeds various assets. These depend on the nature of the relationship that is existent between the parties involved. Relationships are the basis upon which people's individual needs are addressed and their behavior is derived (e.g., showing respect). Acceptance, prestige, and sociability are some of the needs that people want to address as they interact in the community. Trust, sympathy, synergy, sanctions, collaboration, trustworthiness, cooperation, and obligations (Nahapiet and Ghoshal 1998: 244; Chiu, Hsu and Wang 2006; Chow and Chan 2008: 459; Almohamed and Vyas 2019) are created when individuals interact and become the products of social capital. The presence of trustworthiness and trust in a relationship promotes collaboration and cooperation. The latter is an attribute found in an individual, and the former characterizes the relationship (Nahapiet and Ghoshal 1998: 244). Trust is yielded when individuals have

empathy for each other and exhibit integrity, making ethics an integral part of building human relations.

### **3.4 Operationalizing Social Capital**

The literature suggests that there are three types of social capital, which are bonding, bridging, and linking social capital. These three stem from the same concept of social capital but present different characteristics, functions, and outcomes (Lollo 2012). The abovementioned types of social capital facilitate access to resources. The following subsections are an attempt to dissect these characteristics, functions, and outcomes with the dimensions that have been discussed above.

#### **3.4.1 Bonding Social Capital**

This type of social capital manifests itself as relations existent to people who are of a homogenous social identity, for example, ethnicity (Chen and Meng 2015: 2; Almohamed and Vyas 2019). The presence of strong bonds helps in the building of security and a sense of identity. This study acknowledges the importance of the family unit as the primary institution responsible for socialization in terms of observing hierarchy. Each family has its peculiar way of deciding who has power and authority, roles of family members, and spelling out the obligations and expectations. All of these are usually defined and guided by a family's hierarchical structure. Parents are usually the ones at the apex of the hierarchy, and the children follow in their leadership. In patriarchal societies, men sit at the apex of the hierarchy. Men should preside over and provide for their family, and women oversee the home and children.

Families enjoy strong bonds due to shared norms, goals, and a high frequency of interaction. Such a scenario puts young people under pressure to conform to what their families prescribe and expect. The young people who are the subject of this research are under pressure to live up to family obligations and expectations. The study assumes that these pressures may be one of the reasons behind their disruptive behavior in the community. Bonding social capital may be found in different settings, such as schools or the workplace (Herrero 2018). In some cases, bonding social capital may lead to conflict. For instance, bullying in schools or universities is a result



of students who have bonded and now collectively engage in this anti-social behavior against the rest of the student body.

This study takes into cognizance the likelihood of youths bonding amongst them. These are youths who have commonalities that go beyond their age, such as unemployment and exclusion. Due to the frequent interactions, they may choose to identify with certain individuals due to commonalities. This may naturally lead to the formation of smaller groups within the larger collective and may be harmful or helpful. These small groups may be harmful in the sense that they perpetuate further divisions in the main group undermining attempts of social cohesiveness (Villalonga-Olives and Kawachi 2017). In another light, they may be useful in terms of facilitating social support. The participants may offer this to each other due to likeness, which has also cultivated trust and hence the support. This study also incorporates the older generation to encourage instrumental action to build much-needed peace in the community.

Shared norms, obligations, expectations, and identity facilitate the development of bonding social capital. These are a result of frequent interaction amongst individuals in a community. Therefore, it fits well into the study, which is participatory in nature. This form of capital is the main source for social support (Chen and Meng 2015: 2), but the researcher acknowledges bridging and linking social capital as contributors as well. This study seeks to establish a culture of social support amongst the young people themselves and other community members. Social support is facilitated by the presence of large quantities of trust, reciprocity, and shared commonalities. This study hopes to encourage emotional, informational, and instrumental support as well as companionship amongst the young people and, by extension, the Durban community. Everyone must be a beneficiary of the social support available in its various forms. The researcher believes that this will contribute to building much-needed peace due to social cohesion.

### **3.4.2 Bridging Social Capital**

Another form of social capital is bridging social capital. It speaks to relations of mutuality and respect (Catts and Ozga 2005; Chen and Meng 2015: 2) among a group

of heterogeneous (Villalonga-Olives and Kawachi 2015: 47; Almohamed and Vyas 2019) individuals outside the family unit. Social capital becomes a perfect fit; it suggests that there are a wide variety of resources that can be shared to better a community. This study is premised on diversity being used to bring together people in communities for collective betterment and peace. The sharing of resources is a result of the existence of trust and the establishment of communication channels, among others. In these networks, individuals can access valuable resources, such as social support and power.

Bridging social capital, unlike bonding social capital, is inspired by instrumental action (Williams and Durrance 2008). The assumption is that an individual will engage with other individuals to resolve a problem that may benefit the individual or the whole collective of individuals. In the context of this study, young people from different socioeconomic and political backgrounds were brought together in the pursuit of social change and peace.

This study engaged youths from various socioeconomic and political backgrounds, making the group a diverse one. Through bridging social capital, this study hopes to facilitate the setting of expectations, norms, and obligations that are mindful of their diversity. Expectations, norms, and obligations will be set due to the frequent interactions among those in the network (Lollo 2012). This process will also help them realize the strands of homogeneity that exist in their network. Often, friendships are built in this way, as espoused by the expectation that since the participants are from one area, they will find commonalities through which better and beneficial relationships can be built. The type of relationship that the researcher has with her friends falls fittingly into this category. They are all from different backgrounds, but over the years, they have managed to identify commonalities between themselves and the researcher. Respect, trust, and reciprocity are at the core of their relations in the researcher's network of friends due to frequent interactions.

### **3.4.3 Linking Social Capital**

A study by the World Bank (Gillis, Shoup and Sicut 2001) is one of the studies that have led to the addition of linking social capital. It can be regarded as an extension of

bridging social capital. This was due to their realization that the well-being of poor communities is dependent on the nature of relations with those in positions of authority. This type of social capital facilitates the interaction of individuals across formal authority or power gradients (Szreter and Woolcock 2004: 655) and differences in resources and/or status (Carrillo and Riera 2017). In simple terms, it refers to the vertical relations among individuals occupying different positions in the societal power hierarchy. Unlike bridging social capital, it is premised on the existing differences in power, status, and wealth in relationships. Individuals interact with those in positions of authority to access services, employment, and resources in a vertical manner.

Through bonding and bridging social capital, communities may not always have access to the services and change that they require. In the context of this research, these horizontal ties are not enough to enhance social cohesion. Bonding and bridging social capital allow people to cope and peacefully coexist with one another. Linking social capital helps people to advance through the improvement of relations in the community and trust (Muir 2011; Almohamed and Vyas 2019). Linking social capital, through formal institutions, will help realize the desired social cohesion, which is pivotal in achieving sustainable peace (Szreter and Woolcock 2004; Muir 2011). The study will engage those in positions of authority to be part of the participants. All this reinforces the official role that social capital has in the well-being of communities (Szreter and Woolcock 2004: 656). Hope Cheong (2006: 369) agreed and suggested that “in contrast to the stress on voluntarism, this form of social capital implies the need for government intervention to activate policies to help people access formal resources for civic engagement.” Donor agencies, law enforcement agencies, and healthcare providers are examples of these institutions meant to serve and capacitate individuals in their areas of need. For instance, linking social capital helps community members tackle issues of corrupt government officials.

Unlike bonding social capital, where homogeneity is key and groups are value-oriented, linking social capital involves task-oriented groups meant to better the lives of individuals. Frequency and hierarchy, which characterize linking social capital, contribute to good coordination and interdependence when carrying out specific tasks. Coordination and interdependence are due to well-defined roles that exist. This coordination and interdependence are responsible for high levels of trust. It is

imperative to note that linking social capital does not always result in desired outcomes. The bonding of homogenous groups may result in buttressing the exclusion of others on the basis of religion, ethnicity, gender, etc. This cultivates the seeds of corruption, nepotism, and ethnocentric tendencies meant to pursue self-interests at the expense of the community at large.

#### **3.4.4 Social Capital in Broken Communities: Hunhu/Ubuntu and Bridging Social Capital**

This study aims to strengthen a sense of community within the young Zimbabwean migrants in Durban. It is, therefore, imperative to unpack what community entails, particularly in the context of this research. Community is one term used loosely to refer to any collection of individuals (e.g., an association, organization, or church). This is done without paying close attention to the nature of communication within these collectives, which may be poor or nonexistent. The term refers to a collective of individuals that enjoy honest communication and spending time together, amongst other factors. Making use of definitions that have been discussed earlier, social capital involves a connection amongst individuals. This connectivity may transmogrify into relationships, participation, and social skills because of the existing culture of reciprocity (Verweel and Anthonissen 2006).

Mabovula (2011: 38) defined *community* as “any philosophical standpoint that defines a person in the context of social bonds and cultural traditions rather than through individual traits.” A community is the sum of its parts (individuals), and the nature of a community is a mechanism that facilitates economic, political, and social interactions. These interactions are the basis for measuring the humanness of an individual by those around them. The Shona concept of *hunhu* (human) is used in two different ways. Firstly, it may be used to refer to an individual in their physical form as a person. This study is mainly concerned with the meaning that is centered on *ubuntu/hunhu*. The word *munhu* is derived from the concept of *hunhu* (Mugumbate and Nyanguru 2013). *Munhu* is, therefore, someone possessing humane characteristics, as *ubuntu* is about being humane. “*Mwana uyu munhu chaiye, ane hunhu*”: this statement acknowledges an individual who behaves in a manner that accords them a place in their community. One assumes the status of *munhu* if one exercises cooperation,

mutual respect, solidarity, support, hard work, integrity, tolerance, justice, reciprocity, and understanding (Nziramasanga 1999; Khoza 2005; Meiring 2007; Mafumbate 2019).

Contemporary society is riddled with many challenges, which render it broken. One of the main challenges is the lack of appreciation of an existing, truly honest appreciation of differences. It continues to decrease the likelihood of cooperation, support, solidarity, tolerance, and justice, amongst many other aspects. Zimbabwean society possesses fault lines that are political, economic, and social. Samuel Huntington's "Clash of Civilization" is an example of trying to take account. Huntington suggested that differences are a precursor to clashes amongst societies. South Sudan, the youngest state in the international system, came into existence due to ethnic and religious differences in Sudan between the Northern and the Southern regions (Marima 2016). Being a Nuer, Murle, or Dinka has become the basis of further divisions in South Sudan. There are constant clashes between those who belong to the Shona and Ndebele tribes, with the latter feeling marginalized, depicting a broken community.

Access to resources is another fundamental area that informs the livelihood of community members. In an ideal world, members of a community must all have equal access to and equally benefit from available resources. The Youth Fund in Zimbabwe is one example of the unequal distribution of resources in communities. It was allegedly mismanaged and failed to achieve any meaningful youth empowerment (RAU 2017). It is behind the rising tensions amongst most youths who remain unemployed in a crippled economy. When one's livelihood is threatened, desperation and anger tend to emerge. In Sudan, there was a mushrooming of militia groups all vying for a stake in the oil and mineral deposits (Marima 2016). This was because they felt that they were not being awarded equal access and benefits. South Sudan is, therefore, a broken community due to the existence of violence and unfair access to and benefits from resources.

Security is one of the benefits that individuals hope to access by being part of a community. The UNDP (2014) and the World Bank World Development Report (2000) stamped the importance of ensuring human security. The UNDP (1994) purported that

safety from disease, hunger, and repression constitutes human security. It also involves income and protection of one from violence and crime (Willett 2001). The failure to address these accordingly has led to many broken communities with a weakened sense of community. Often, due to induced vulnerability and deprivation, youth engage in violence and crime (McIlwaine and Moser 2001). They also found that in Colombia, due to high unemployment levels, some were resorting to stealing to feed their families. Violence and crime serve as the outlet for these frustrated people to vent out their anger. These are signs of a broken community that has weakened social capital. Strengthening social capital would then help discourage people from engaging in violent and criminal activities while improving their sense of community. The African community gives an individual the responsibility to contribute meaningfully to their community. Individuals are required to position themselves in a manner that allows them to empower their community.

#### **3.4.5 The Nexus Between Social Contract and Social Capital**

Relations between governments and those governed continue to freeze and thaw over time. This is due to expectations that both entities have for the other as they interact. Locke's concept of the social contract provides interesting insights into the role of the government and that of the governed. According to him, the governed are endowed with certain natural rights of which they cannot be deprived. At the same time, in exchange for the protection of their rights, the governed need to respect authority.

A definition that the researcher found more befitting to this context was one from the Oxford English Dictionary (2011). It defines a social contract as an agreement among members of society to cooperate for mutual benefit (Oxford English Dictionary 2011). This arrangement promotes a sense of community amongst members of the community. Social order is a set that is introduced and subscribed to by all members (Popova 2012). This agreement is valid in the area that it is established. Most importantly, it is the foundation of the modern relationships and identities that transcend beyond family and lineage. The social contract prescribes the internal configuring of societies, unpacking citizenship and participation, rules of political participation, power relations, distribution of resources, and the social roles of individuals. When one is part of a community, they surrender their autonomy in

exchange for the protection of their rights. For this to materialize, social capital is the necessary currency. Those governed must be able to trust, cooperate, and collaborate amongst themselves and the government. This study is an attempt to (re)build relations amongst community members across the power hierarchy through linking social capital.

Studies have shown that in areas where there is low government efficiency, low satisfaction with the government, and slow rates of economic development, there is low social capital (Hall 2017; Putnam 1993). Individuals in such areas do not trust fellow community members. These were the findings of Putnam (1993) in a study that he conducted in southern Italy. He also established that individuals with low social capital did not trust others to obey rules and were less likely to obey themselves. This leads to a state of anarchy as there is no observance of rules or any authority. The researcher feels that there is a need to invest more in increasing and promoting a sense of reciprocity and mutual trust in communities. This study is, therefore, the researcher's contribution to helping (re)establish sound relations by encouraging trust and reciprocity in communities in pursuit of peace.

In most instances, public policy formulation and implementation have ignored the important contribution of social capital. The focus has been mostly to harness and enhance other resources (human, financial, and natural resources). This has seen the decay in morality in most communities. For instance, in Africa, South Africa and Nigeria are regarded as Africa's economic powerhouses (Hall 2017). Nigeria has a very corrupt system, which has resulted in mistrust toward the government by citizens and external players (Tinh 2013), resulting in a few benefiting from resources. More importantly, it has destroyed relations amongst ordinary citizens. South African communities have high rates of crime and violence. This is due to corruption, the unfair distribution of resources, and unresolved racial tensions emanating from the apartheid era. This has seen young South Africans engage in crime and violence, undermining social capital. Tinh (2013) went further to single out the Marikana massacre as one event signaling the existence of sociopolitical problems in South Africa.

### **3.5 Unpacking Peace, Peacebuilding, and Conflict Transformation**

As stated earlier, conflict is a phenomenon present in human relations (Galtung 1996; Lederach 2003). Therefore, it is important to find effective ways to manage it and avoid its escalation. Conflict transformation is one way of dealing with conflict and violence. It goes beyond the provisions of conflict resolution, which is defined as “a range of processes aimed at alleviating or eliminating sources of conflict” (Al-Awadhi: 35). Conflict transformation goes beyond set techniques; “It is about a way of looking and seeing, and it provides a set of lenses through which we make sense of social conflict” (Lederach 2003: 9). Conflict is dynamic and, therefore, requires people to develop more dynamic ways to deal with it. Conflict transformation acknowledges that people’s interests and issues, together with themselves, change over time, unlike conflict resolution. Therefore, it is a process that encompasses respect and the inherent dignity of parties involved as well as the (re)building of healthy relations in communities that foster social cohesion (Lederach 2005).

Usually, when faced with conflict, people tend to have an immediate concern, which is a resolution. A resolution does not always suggest that parties involved are in mutual agreement. In some instances, a resolution is reached due to another party being drawn into the resolution. In the researcher’s view, a resolution only deals with what appears on the surface and does not deal with underlying issues. For instance, it does not address any strain that may currently be present in the relationship of parties. On the other hand, conflict transformation allows people to deal with conflict beyond resolution (Lederach 2003) and establish a way of life that promotes sustainable peace. He suggested the following:

[Conflict transformation serves] to envision and respond to the ebb and flow of social conflict as life-giving opportunities for creating constructive change processes that reduce violence, increase justice in direct interaction and social structures, and respond to real-life problems in a human relationship (2003: 14).

This study embraces a transformational approach acknowledging the need to have a positive inclination toward conflict and the disposition to grow or change. Conflict is constructive and inevitable and provides an invaluable platform for growth and change. This argues that conflict may be both useful and inevitable, allowing for personal



growth and transformation. Through interaction, the study hopes that the participants will see this as an opportunity, at the personal and collective levels, to bring about change in their community. They will be able to understand themselves as well as their fellow community members. Relationships are, thus, an important factor in the face of addressing conflict in people's communities (Lederach 2003). They form the breeding ground of conflict and vehicle upon which it may be addressed. One of the researcher's objectives in this study was to encourage positive relationships amongst the participants. These positive relationships do not imply that they should and will always agree. The researcher believes that positive relationships are not perfect but allow for imperfections, such as conflict.

### Toward a Culture of Peace

The concept of peace is defined in terms of inner and outer peace (Harris and Morrison 2012). The Dalai Lama in the 1990s (cited in Webel and Galtung (2007: 3) suggested that:

Although attempting to bring about world peace through the internal transformation of individuals is difficult, it is the only way... Peace must be first developed within an individual. And I believe that love, compassion, and altruism are the fundamental basis for peace. Once these qualities are developed within an individual, he or she is then able to create an atmosphere of peace and harmony. This atmosphere can be expanded and extended from the individual to his family, from the family to the community and eventually to the whole world.

Inner peace is, thus, achieved when an individual is free from oppression, harassment, and all forms of hostilities (Webster 2015). Serenity, tranquility, as well as harmony with the self and others are important in attaining inner peace (Harris\* 2004; Gaur 2017). This suggests the existence of spiritual and cognitive elements concerning peace. Spirituality influences people's thought processes and actions in their daily interactions. It is how they seek and attain a connection with themselves, others, and the world (Mitroff and Denton 1999; Dreyer and Hermans 2014). Engaging the participants in this study anticipates that empathy, openheartedness, self-awareness, and compassion will be invoked and ultimately result in cohesion within the group (Wiggins 2011). It may also help mitigate the effect of divisions informed by diverse backgrounds. The researcher is of the view that this is not merely another academic research adding to existing knowledge. Rather, it is a story of young people finding

themselves and being able to connect with others and the world at large in the context of pursuing peace.

Outer peace refers to the absence of wars and the protection of one's well-being through laws or customs. It refers to the material aspect in an individual's life – for example, safety, food, shelter, education, participation, and health, amongst others (Tanabe 2016). Inner and outer peace have been interdependent and key to promoting images of peace. They also reflect two issues, which are being peaceful and contributing to peace. Peace education theory allowed the research group and the researcher to explore how to be peaceful individuals and contribute to peace. It is a platform where the research team engaged themselves in listening to others and understanding them better. However, Lederach (2005: 165) suggested that there is another matter to consider: "I am increasing of the view that people who listen the best and the deepest to others are those who have found a way to be in touch with their voices." The participants will be able to humanize each other and their diverse backgrounds. Peacebuilding is defined as follows:

[Peacebuilding is] a set of long-term endeavours undertaken continuously through multiple stages of conflict (before, during and after) and involving collaboration at several levels of society ... peacebuilding emphasizes transformative social change that is accomplished both at the process-oriented level, and through tools such as negotiation, mediation, and reconciliation, and on the structural level, through the development of resilient institutions and social processes that allow conflict to be resolved through political, rather than violent means (Greenberg, Mallozi and Cechvala 2012: 12).

A distinction is made by the above-given definition between negative and positive peace. These two concepts are associated with the work of Galtung (1976). According to him, negative peace refers to the "absence of organized violence involving a collective and individuals" (Galtung and Fischer 2013: 173), while the "absence of structural violence and conditions for war is referred to as positive peace" (ibid). The above distinctions allude to the various forms of peacebuilding, that is:

- Political peacebuilding (peacekeeping and peacemaking between, for example, political entities, such as government and militia groups)

- Structural peacebuilding (rehabilitation of systems meant to help yield a functional and peaceful society through assets such as security sector reform, rule of law, and good governance)
- Social peacebuilding – activities that (re)build broken relationships and transform attitudes and perceptions; it may be through truth and reconciliation commissions, or radio or television programs (Ricigliano 2003: 447)

Therefore, peacebuilding is a holistic process meant to rebuild broken relationships and provide space for realizing respect, legitimacy, and truth, amongst many other factors. It is a process that requires time to generate platforms allowing individuals to address their relationships (Lederach 2003). This research is premised on allowing and giving time toward building peace in the Zimbabwean migrant community in Durban.

Peacebuilding can be seen as a commitment (Lederach 2003: xvi) to ensure politically, socially, economically, militarily, and structurally sound conditions that promote a culture of peace. Various components are vital to have a holistic peacebuilding process for sustainable peace. Communication, peace-cultivating political and socioeconomic structures, consultation and negotiation, software of peacebuilding, and a supportive regional and international environment are some of the necessary elements to ensure successful peacebuilding (Reychler 2004). On the other hand, Doyle and Sambanis (2006) listed the rule of law, the right to property, genuine moral and psychological reconciliation, and wider participation (democracy) as some of the necessary ingredients in conducting successful peacebuilding endeavors. Youth empowerment programs (Fudu 2017), setting up peace clubs (Irene 2015), and community radios (Gustafsson 2016) are some of the activities that have been part of peacebuilding initiatives. The above suggests the interaction of various actors, resources, and structures in a bid to attain sustainable peace. It stamps the point stated earlier in the discussion on social capital on the importance of interaction (vertical and horizontal). For peacebuilding to be a success, it has to be an inclusive process in terms of actors bringing about sustainable peace.

The aforementioned elements mostly speak to dealing with the physical and seen effects of violence. The researcher feels that they do not speak to the psychological wounds as a result of the violence inherent in individuals due to their unique experiences (Lavi and Bar-Tal 2015; Löfving–Gupta *et al.* 2015). Violence or conflict results in pain, loss, suffering, and hurt. The researcher believes that these provide a platform for the further manifestation of more violence in some instances. Youths who reside in disadvantaged urban areas are exposed to and experience violence daily in their community and their home (Butcher *et al.* 2015). This often leads to negative perceptions of the self and the others around one. Due to violence, others have developed suicidal tendencies, trauma, depression, substance abuse, anger, or even engage in criminal and violent activities (Fletcher 2010; Butcher *et al.* 2015; Eisman *et al.* 2015). Taking time to acknowledge these effects contributes to an individual having peace from within and healing (Lambourne 2009). Relationships are the foundation of social support, which is vital in developing resilience. Therefore, the transformation of an individual alongside the relational component is imperative to attain social cohesion. Sustainable peace is realized when social cohesion has been achieved through individual and relational transformation (Lederach 1997: 20).

The famous poet, William Wordsworth, in one of his poems entitled *My Heart Leaps Up When I Behold*, recollected his childhood experience, particularly his love for nature. Wordsworth hoped that he would continue to find joy in nature as he used to in the past when he was younger. In the poem, he wrote that “*The child is the father of man.*” He suggested that people’s childhood experiences inform the type of people they become in adulthood. What people learn and experience as children reflects in their words, feelings, behaviors, and attitudes in adulthood. This research acknowledges the importance of both negative and positive childhood experiences and their contribution to the transition of the participants into adulthood. These experiences also form part of the problems and solutions in any given community and its journey to sustainable peace. If an individual forms good habits as they grow up, they become an asset to their community. Conversely, if they form bad habits, they assume the status of being a threat to the well-being of their community.

This study is, therefore, premised on the centrality of building relationships and relational (Gill and Niens 2014: 11) and individual transformation. It aims to contribute

to lasting peace through reframed relationships at all levels and the re-imagination of the past, present, and future Gill and Niens (2014: 12). Building social capital will help in (re)establishing positive relationships that will result in the promotion of a culture of peace due to social cohesion. Social capital is concerned with (re)establishing sound relationships, which are a prerequisite for sustainable peace. The building of peace is not merely a political process; rather, it is a social and associative process. Peacebuilding is qualified as a social process as it is concerned with human interaction. It is a process that is both a social and associative process that re-establishes broken interpersonal ties. (Mani 2002). This interaction may take place in the following forms:

- Person to person
- Intrapersonal
- Person to group or group to person
- Group to group

Social processes do not have an identified pattern; rather, they constitute a series of frames and repeated patterns of interaction. These patterns of interaction, repeated over time, result in accommodation, cooperation, assimilation, acculturation, and amalgamation. The aforementioned are qualified as associative. Social interaction involves the modification of behavior, attitude, and actions. Max Weber observed that “a social relationship will be called associative if and in so far as the orientation of social action within it rests on a rationally motivated adjustment of interests” (Halewood 2014). The participants will go through this, as they will be engaged in interaction over a period of months. The idea is to help them see the negativity that comes with competition and conflict and adopt associative tendencies, which result in a common good and social cohesion.

### **3.6 Conclusion**

The chapter outlined the different theories that shape the research. Social capital can be achieved when people learn, unlearn, and relearn which is facilitated by transformative learning. The following chapter focuses on Zimbabwe in relation to youth and the presence of violence.

# CHAPTER FOUR

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

*We want a social science committed upfront to issues of social justice, equity, nonviolence, peace, and universal human rights ... different things in each of these moments* (Denzin and Lincoln (2011: 11)

### 4.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter (Chapter three) discussed the relevant literature for the study, providing a basis for developing the research methods. The chapter is divided into two sections. The first section provides a discussion of PAR and highlight its usefulness in the study. Thereafter, there is a discussion of the data collection procedures and data analysis methods. A qualitative research design was used to obtain an in-depth understanding of youth experiences to strengthen social capital in the pursuit of social cohesion and transformation. Making use of a qualitative approach, one can give a holistic account of social phenomena (Creswell and Poth 2016; Hammarberg, Kirkman and de Lacey 2016). This is because it allows for multiple perspectives to be brought forward in identifying the root of problems and the way forward. It goes beyond a cause-and-effect relationship analysis.

The original research objectives in Section 1.2 in Chapter one were based on conducting a PAR project. However, the project took an exploratory route to meet the newly set objectives. The following section includes a discussion on PAR, which influenced and guided the research process.

### 4.2 Research Design

A research design is a study plan, structure, process, and strategy that spans the decision from broad generalizations to particular data collection methods, analysis of data, and its interpretation that the researcher utilizes in order to find answers to research questions (Kettles, Creswell, and Zhang 2011). This study employed a qualitative research design based on a triangulation of several research methods. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2011), the study of individuals in their natural

environments includes the researcher conducting a systematic investigation into meanings, seeking to understand and make sense of occurrences and the meanings that people attach to them. As Berg (1995: 7) suggested, “qualitative techniques allow the researcher to share in the understandings and perceptions of others and to explore how people structure and give meaning to their daily lives.” (Snape and Spencer 2003) added that qualitative research helps address questions that need the understanding and explanation of social phenomena. All the above characteristics informed the researcher’s decision to make use of a qualitative research approach to understand youth experiences, knowledge about the conflict, their feelings, and the effect of conflict on the life of people and evaluate the outcome and impact of narratives in (re)establishing social capital.

The qualitative approach allowed the gathering of data from the participants in their natural settings. For instance, focus groups and interviews took place in migrants’ places of residence, church functions, and other places that they had suggested. This was important as the researcher had access to the context where the participants experience the issue or problem at hand. Direct access to the participants allowed observations of their behavior and actions in their context. The qualitative approach facilitated the learning of their meaning among the participants, which informed the varied perspectives and views that they hold as individuals. The participants assisted in identifying themes and shared their stories, creating, recreating, and altering experiences collectively. This prevented the researcher from putting forward her meaning or that of other empirical studies beforehand. The study utilized the flexible nature of a qualitative approach, which allowed adjustments to be made as the research process unfolded. For instance, there was a question on the documentation of the participants, which many did not feel comfortable answering. This resulted in the question being rephrased to ensure that the participants were comfortable sharing the information. In addition, through the exchange of experiences and perceptions, there was a need to follow up with individuals after the focus group discussions to probe further on some of the issues raised in the focus group discussions.

The study takes a PAR approach that is action centered. PAR is, therefore, a social investigation in the pursuit of addressing an identified problem. It can also be defined as a sociopolitical action making use of collaborative efforts. It aims to engage the

participants in collaboration and reflection in pursuit of desired change (Brydon-Miller 2008; Chevalier and Buckles 2013; Herr and Anderson 2014). The aim is for the participants to be empowered through continuous engagement, connection, and learning (Gerstenblatt 2013). It is an educative process that is dynamic and allows for the identification of a problem and sociopolitical action.

#### **4.2.1 Participatory Action Research (PAR)**

This section provides an in-depth exploration of PAR, paying attention to its definition, development, principles, and the prospects and challenges. It also justifies its use for this research endeavor. Furthermore, the section tries to point out the role or importance of PAR in peacebuilding initiatives. It is a paradigm that “offers a critique of, and challenge to, dominant positivist social science research as the only legitimate and valid source of knowledge” (Maguire 1987: 10). It involves the generation of knowledge to bring about social change in communities to address issues of concern. This type of research allows a researcher to work with a group of individuals affected by a particular social problem or issue (Loewenson *et al.* 2014). PAR is, thus, a qualitative research methodology that is liberating, democratic, and life-enhancing (Maguire 1987: 10). PAR is a process that overturns social givens, the notion of common sense is critiqued, and people question and antagonize their spontaneous consent through which they participate daily in structural oppression. The use of PAR goes further than understanding the abovementioned. It allows for collective effort toward the much-needed social change, including sowing positive relations.

The choice to employ PAR was influenced by the need to have a methodological and pedagogical process that goes beyond gathering data in the form of opinions from Zimbabwean youth in Durban. In addition, the participants explored how they could be at the forefront of bringing about change as a collective of youth. The use of PAR in this context strengthened the youth voices by allowing them to realize their agency and to make use of it. Previous studies have already established that young people need to be heard, but this is not adequate on its own. According to (Norton 2016, 2018), the voices of young immigrants are marginalized and overlooked. The PAR approach aims to empower the participants to transform their lives. Participants are



“active agents in the process of creating knowledge, reaching a collective objective and solving problems” (De Vos *et al.* 2011: 493).

This methodology was appropriate for this peacebuilding initiative as it allowed for question posing and research to find answers that were important to the affected community. PAR contributes to peacebuilding initiatives because it involves exploration and answering pertinent questions in people’s communities. It allows people to closely establish social factors, roles, and relationships at play and how they may affect the peacebuilding initiative. Most research that confronts privilege and explores issues of power threatens the current structural setting and is often silenced by those in power. However, this research allowed the participants to engage with their current experiences and the change that they would like to see and experience. However, through this initiative, participation allowed for the participants to critically engage with *what is* and move toward *what could be*. During this engagement, there was an opportunity to reframe the research process and develop it as necessary.

#### **4.2.2 Guiding Principles of PAR Working with a Youth Group**

The following principles guided the process as the research team facilitated the building of positive relations in the pursuit of sustainable peace and transformation.

##### **a. *Inquiry-Based and Situated***

Often, young people are sidelined together with their experiences and treated as though they are second-class citizens. In this research process, young people and their experiences, needs, and aspirations were viewed as significant, and their role as co-creators of knowledge and meaning was emphasized. They meaningfully participated in the construction of knowledge and refining the quality of their lives. It was important to ensure that they understood that they were not merely passive recipients through all the various interactions. The process was purposeful, practical, supportive, and analytical. The use of PAR had the young Zimbabweans engage in interpersonal reflexivity where they were allowed to interrogate the nature of relationships within and beyond (Chiu 2006). Interpersonal reflexivity deliberately makes use of contextual analysis and power relations. (Camarota ; Cammarota and Fine 2010: 6) are of the view that when people generate knowledge, it “should be

critical in nature, meaning that findings and insights derived from analyses should point to historic and contemporary moves of power and toward progressive changes improving social conditions within the situation studied". As a group, the research team was able to pause and assess itself in relation to how the data was collected and analysed and the report backs. One of the most difficult parts in interacting with the group was getting them to find the link between their lived experiences and the broader realities. It required developing ways in which they could examine their understandings of concepts such as violence, non-violence, and agency. This was done through a question-posing exercise to help them understand the problems and identify possible interventions.

**b. *Participatory and Empowering***

To ensure interactive participation, the youth group was involved in designing various elements of the process. It was all achieved through self-mobilization, which translates into them having full control, power and responsibility for planning, implementation, and evaluation of the entire research process. Youths are agents of change and experts of their personal narratives, especially when unresolved issues relevant to them are concerned. The youth's lived experiences are affected by external dynamics at play, and it is important to acknowledge the influence that they have over their daily lives. How the participants have navigated these structures on a day-to-day basis have become an important area of discussion throughout the research. The general assumption links power to oppression and imbalance. In this context, power was crucial in building relationships while people collaborate and learn. Therefore, power in this context, is regarded as educative and indispensable. This stance was aimed at resisting the idea that older adults are central to achieving the much-needed change.

**c. *Activist and Transformative***

As put forward by Freire (1970), education is meant to liberate the oppressed who, in this context, are young Zimbabweans. It was important to understand the reasons for broken relations by getting individuals to reflect on their personal experiences and link these with events in the broader society. This was also an opportunity to create a space where their voices were valued, since they are usually silenced. Young Zimbabweans, in this instance, are theorized as truth-tellers, agents, and experts of

social change, problem-solving, and transformation. They were allowed to share experiences and pose questions around existing beliefs, practices, and attitudes. The participants started to realize their agency and moved toward disrupting and configuring the way they related with the world.

It was important to build a sense of togetherness, build trust, and co-create a safe space. The research team started with the pre-reflection stage involving the use of role-play exercises and games. They served as icebreakers and helped everyone to get to know each other more. All of this helped to develop interpersonal communication skills, mainly that of listening as well as collaboration. The participants were being positioned to be able to explore the existence of differences in experiences due to their complex personal and social identities (Schensul and Berg 2004: 81). It also became a platform to discuss the structure of society, specifically how it creates dominant, subordinate, privileged, and powerful groups.

### **4.3 Population and Sampling**

Purposive sampling, a nonprobability sampling technique, was employed to select the research participants. According to Creswell *et al.* (2011), purposive sampling entails locating and choosing people or groups of persons who are aware or have firsthand experience of the phenomena of interest. Paton (2002: 230) is of the view that:

The logic and power of purposeful sampling lie in selecting information-rich cases for study in depth. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the inquiry, thus the term purposeful sampling. Studying information-rich cases yields insights and in-depth understanding rather than empirical generalizations.

The population of this study consisted of 30 Zimbabwean youths (18–35 years of age) living in Durban, South Africa. They were residing in the Durban CBD, Morningside, Seaview, and Umbilo. It is from their participation that the research team managed to address the research aim and objectives. They shared their narratives in a bid to (re)establish positive relations. All these participants were of different genders, religions, languages, and levels of education. Apart from their nationality, the

participants are all based in Durban, South Africa, and are bound by exclusion as well as limited access to resources.

Tashakkori and Teddlie (2009) concluded that purposive sampling seeks to produce a richness of detail from a few examples and discovers the four key features listed as follows. They address particular goals linked to the research questions; as a result, the researcher chooses examples that are information-rich in relation to those topics. They also focus on the depth of information that may be collected; and employ a sample size of 30 or fewer, which is chosen based on the researcher's and participants' judgment. Silverman (2010) posited that purposive sampling enables researchers to recruit informants based on their knowledge about and/or experience with the topic of empirical investigation. Simply stated, the researcher defines what needs to be understood and then seeks out persons who can and are prepared to offer the information through expertise or experience (Bernard 2002).

The researcher initially approached potential participants who were known to her through different social networks, such as schools and churches. This was done by selecting participants who met the criteria for inclusion in the study (Marshall 1996). The selection criteria were as follows: the participants must be Zimbabwean, have been in South Africa for the past 2 years, and must be between the ages of 18 and 35 years (youth). Twenty-five participants were known by the researcher, and 18 met the inclusion criteria. During various stages of the study, the recruiting process continued. This was due to the participants bringing friends or family members to the sessions. Therefore, snowball sampling also worked in the recruitment of the participants. This was a sign of trust and a good relationship established between the participants and the researcher. Table 4.1 shows the demographic characteristics of the 30 participants.

**Table 4.1:** Demographic data of participants

<b>Participant name</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Level of education</b>	<b>Religion</b>
Alistair	28	Male	O level	Christianity and ATR
Biggaz	33	Male	O level	Christianity and ATR
Chenai	29	Female	Master's degree	Christianity
Dexter	25	Male	O' level	ATR <sup>5</sup>
Farai	30	Male	Master's degree	ATR and Christianity
Fiona	30	Female	O level	ATR
Hazvineyi	32	Female	A level	ATR
Kudzai	30	Male	Master's degree	Christianity
Madzibaba	32	Male	O level	Christianity
Mai Bee	34	Female	Diploma	Christianity
Marve	32	Female	Diploma	ATR and Christianity
Melody	33	Female	Bachelor's degree	Christianity
Munashe	26	Male	Bachelor's degree	ATR and Christianity
Ndaba	34	Male	Diploma	ATR
Newman	30	Male	Bachelor's degree	ATR
Nyasha	25	Female	Diploma	Christianity
Pamela	24	Female	Advanced diploma	Christianity
Passmore	31	Male	Mechanic	ATR
Polite	27	Female	None	Christianity
Progress	31	Male	None	ATR and Christianity
Rumbidzai	19	Female	None	Christianity
Gladys	29	Female	Master's degree	Christianity
Silas	22	Male	O level	ATR
Sokostina	34	Female	O level	ATR and Christianity
Grace	30	Female	Master's degree	Christianity
Themba	26	Male	Diploma	ATR
Tonde	22	Male	A level	ATR
Garikayi	31	Male	Master's degree	ATR
Vimbayi	33	Female	O level	Christianity
Yeukai	23	Female	O level	Christianity

<sup>5</sup> ATR is the acronym for African Traditional Religion, which is a religion based on African beliefs and cultural practices.

From Table 4.1, it is useful to note that the youngest participant was a 19-year-old female. Seventeen of the participants were between the ages of 30 and 35, while eight were between the ages of 25 and 29, and five were between the ages of 18 and 24. Out of the 30 participants, only 10 identified as married. As for the rest of the group, their status varied from “single” to “other” (difficult to label). In terms of education, most of the participants (seven) had completed the Ordinary level, with a few going on to complete their high school education and earning an Advanced-level qualification. Most of them continued their studies and earned diplomas, the highest level of which was a master’s degree. The older participants had earned these credentials at home. The sample was composed of 15 women and 15 men.

#### **4.4 Data Collection Methods**

This study used focus groups, individual interviews, and observation as data collection methods to generate data (Gillis and Jackson 2002; Whitehead and McNiff 2006). These methods complement each other in the face of their limitations, allowing for triangulation in gathering data and pursuing problem-solving. When the data had reached a point of saturation (when new themes stopped emerging), the researcher concluded that there was no need for more interviews (Oberle 2002).

Data was collected from a sample of 30 Zimbabwean youths residing in different areas in the city of Durban. ChiShona and English were the two languages used in all the sessions with the participants. The collection of data was through interviews, focus group discussions, and observations to explore the experiences of the participants regarding living in Durban. The participants were divided into groups according to their gender. This separation was to encourage the participants to express themselves freely in the sessions.

The participants for the interviews were approached after a session if the researcher had realized their willingness to speak more than other participants. After having gone through the transcriptions, some participants were approached for an interview to gain more understanding. There were a few shy participants and others who had shown discomfort during the group sessions who were also approached for interviews.

Given the background of the researcher, it was easy to identify the responses provided by the participants. The social location of the participants and the researcher in terms of their religion, race, gender, and social status played a pivotal role in shaping the research process (Oberle 2002). The participants and the researcher shared a similar social background; it was not difficult to create a connection and a safe atmosphere in which the participants could construct the meaning of their experiences without feeling judged.

#### **4.4.1 Focus Group Discussions**

Focus groups are a form of group interview (Kitzinger 1999) with emphasis on the interaction of the research participants. When the participants are similar, it increases their chances of cooperating, interacting, and generating the required information. They usually consist of seven to twelve participants per group. In the study, the groups were composed of usually 10 individuals per session. However, sometimes the number would increase to as many as 15 in the later stages of the research. This was because the participants had their friends or family members join in some of the sessions. It proved to be a challenge as the researcher had to cater for them in terms of introducing herself and the research that she was conducting. The positive side was that it allowed the researcher to directly experience the participant networks and their interactions with other Zimbabwean migrants.

The focus group discussions allowed for the creation of a supportive environment that encouraged communication. The participants were able to share their different experiences as well as their views without any fear. The responsibility lay with the researcher to hold a safe space and ensure that no one was harmed in the process. PAR recognizes and values the participant responses and the importance of communication (McTaggart 1991). Discussions were free-flowing, transparent, and encouraged a “heads together” (Sendall *et al.* 2018) way of interaction. The participants were starting to acknowledge and make use of their knowledge, skills, and resources. During these focus groups, the participants suggested areas of interest for discussion, and the researcher had to provide some type of structure for this (Gillis and Jackson 2002).

The focus group sessions were also used to reflect on the accuracy of the researcher's preliminary analyses. This was in the form of themes that the researcher had found from going through the collected data. It helped to identify areas where there was missing information with the help of the participants.

#### **4.4.2 Observations**

In addition to the focus group discussions, the researcher spent a considerable time with the participants as they carried out their "ordinary" activities: the researcher attended church services, celebrations, and social activities such as braais and soccer. This is consistent with Atkinson and Hammersley's (1994: 249) argument that social research involves "some form of participant observation because we cannot study the social world without being part of it". The researcher, therefore, engaged in participant observation, which involves learning about the activities of the participants under study in the natural setting through observing and participating in those activities (Burawoy *et al.* 1991). Through observations, the researcher became part of the group (participant-observer) as she was able to experience, see, and listen together with the participants. This process enabled the researcher to focus on the broader view of what was taking place and put into words what was communicated nonverbally. The observations complemented the focus group discussions and interviews to establish the extent of variation from behavioral ideals. This assisted very well in dealing with impression management and potential deception and accurately interpreting the data (Creswell and Poth 2016). In all the sessions that the researcher facilitated, the researcher kept a notebook in which she recorded her observations in real time.

Access to participant observation was easy because of the relationship that the researcher had built with some of the participants. As explained earlier, the researcher dedicated some days where she would spend time with the participants as they undertook their daily activities. Through this, it was easy to negotiate access to certain spaces, and their reassurance of her integrity facilitated the building of trust that would have otherwise taken longer to be built. The process was difficult as the researcher had to share more than what she had wanted to in the initial stages.



### **4.4.3 Interviews**

The third key data collection tool used was in-depth, semi-structured, individual interviews to gather in-depth understanding and information of the research problem from each participant. Interviews are used in PAR initiatives, allowing the participants to “describe their situation” (Stringer 1999: 68). The interviews were semi-structured and made use of open-ended questions. This element of inquiry in interviews makes them suitable in this research, which is centered on individual experiences (Kaufman 1992). According to Reinhartz (1992:9 cited in (MacDonald 2012), “interviewing offers researchers access to people’s ideas, thoughts, and memories in their own words, rather than the words of the researcher”. Structured interview questions allowed the researcher to compare responses from the participants using the same interview schedule.

Creswell and Poth (2016) suggested that the best candidates for an interview are the participants who are willing to speak about and share their experiences. This study agrees with that notion but also finds the participants who do not speak much in focus groups as great candidates for one-on-one interviews. It is important to also understand what the barriers to their participation are as well as their feelings over the issues being discussed. Once the participants agreed to be interviewed, an appointment was made with each participant at a time convenient for both themselves and the interviewer. The interviews took place at the participants’ places of work or their homes depending on what was suitable for them. During the interviews, it was important to allow free expression of the participants and allow them to present their understanding of the self, others, and the world (Stringer 1999). The use of semi-structured questions allowed the participants to divulge other parts of their lived experiences that they felt were useful in this context. Most of the interviews were carried out in a face-to-face manner, and some were conducted over the telephone due to disruptions from the COVID-19 lockdown restrictions. The interview sessions also allowed the participants a platform not only to answer the researcher’s questions but also to pose their questions. The interviews were used to reflect on their lived experiences as well as the experiences in the group. These unanswered questions in the interviews also became starting points for the group session to collectively engage

in finding possible answers. This process provided a platform for the participants to unlearn, relearn, and learn.

There were different interview schedules used in the research. The first schedule contained questions that helped in profiling the recruited participants. The first interview schedule sought to acquire the participant demographics. The participants shared their names (some did not give actual names), age, gender, level of education, gender, and marital status. This first interview with the participants was also used to further address concerns, provide information to the participants, and acquire their informed consent. The second interview schedule was composed of questions to explore their migration journey to South Africa. The participants were asked to share why and how they had come to Durban, South Africa. Where required, additional relevant questions were asked to probe the participants more to get thicker descriptions. The third schedule of questions asked the participants to reflect on their experience with the group. Sometimes, after going through focus group discussions, certain individuals were pursued in interviews. This was to either probe them for more information or to clarify and confirm what they had shared in the discussion. The researcher then had to develop questions either from field notes or during the transcription process. All these questions in the schedules were meant to facilitate storytelling, make necessary connections from the lived experiences, and meaning making.

The interviews were conducted in English; in some sessions, the participants also made use of their home language, ChiShona, to express some idioms. Conducting the interviews in English permitted the researcher to transcribe the interview responses without translating the interviews. In cases where the local language was used, the researcher translated the interview responses into English to make the data accessible to people who do not speak or understand Shona. Table 4.2 presents the research process.

**Table 4.2:** Research process

DATE	ACTIVITY	PURPOSE	NO. OF PARTICIPANTS
3/3/2018–17/3/2018	RECRUITING	The researcher introduced and explained the possible study to potential participants.	30
31/3/2018–14/4/2018	PROFILING	This was done to gain personal background information of participants including names, gender, age, level of education, and marital status.	30
28/4/2018–20/10/2018	INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUPS	To explore the migration journey of participants from Zimbabwe to Durban, South Africa	30
3/11/2018–4/3/2020	Dialogue sessions – DARE CHINA GANGO	The participants and the researcher discussed their lived experience in Durban, South Africa.	30–35

The initially planned interventions were not carried out due to the coronavirus and restrictive measures that followed, as previously explained (see Section 1.2 in Chapter one).

## 4.5 Research Tools

### 4.5.1 Tree of Life

The importance of context has been mentioned in earlier discussions. It was, therefore, prudent to make use of an approach that is creative and culturally appropriate. Findings from other studies have shown how ignoring the context may be problematic. Hijazi *et al.* (2014); (Van Wyk and Schweitzer 2014); Droždek (2015) pointed to how some Western interventions cannot be applied in non-Western settings due to cultural and language barriers. The presence of these barriers may lead to the stigma attached to such approaches as they may be alien or inappropriate (Hughes

2014). This study made use of the Tree of Life (TOL) as a methodological guide. It is an approach popularly associated with the works of Ncazelo Ncube (2006) and Denborough (2008), although there are earlier submissions mentioned in the latter's work by Sally Timmel and Anne Hope in the 1980s.

The TOL makes use of the tree and its different parts as a metaphor for the different aspects of their lives and identities. The different parts of the tree represent the following aspects: roots (the young people's background, culture, ancestry, and family history), ground (place of residence, hobbies), trunk (their skills, ability, memories), branches (their hopes, dreams, wishes), lives (important people in their lives), and fruits (the gifts they have been given by others; (Ncube 2006). During this process, storytelling, externalization, and deconstruction assisted the participants in reframing their past (Denborough 2014).

Through storytelling, the participants were able to find meaning in their past and present experiences. As they shared their stories, they were able to establish the stories that they tell themselves, identify the problem, and work on changing or improving them. This is the first step of realizing agency when one decides to work on improving these stories. These stories are usually the result of how people see themselves and how the community sees them. The participants also heard the stories of others and connected over shared experiences. For instance, the women connected over how their male partners mistreated them and how it made them feel negative. The next step was technique, which helped the participants see themselves as the problem but acknowledge the presence of a problem.

Externalization refers to separating an affected individual from the identified problem (White, Wijaya and Epston 1990). Often, when people internalize certain beliefs about themselves, they blind themselves from certain important experiences. These beliefs are influenced by people's family, friends, and societal messages or expectations. The participants were able to realize that they were not the problem but "the problem is the problem" (White, Wijaya and Epston 1990: 39). When the participants assume this position, it becomes possible to work toward reducing violence and work toward healing and positive relations. This is achievable when the problem is broken down into smaller parts known as deconstruction. The engagement as a group allowed all

to interrogate and explore these beliefs and practices. This is after exploring the present and past relationships together with experiences. Issues of power, gender, age, and religion, among many other social identities were identified as sustaining problems identified in the narratives. This narrative technique of deconstruction assisted the participants in breaking down the problem into smaller parts.

This allows individuals to share stories about their lives in ways that make them resilient; hopeful; and, more importantly, able to reframe their narratives. The process simultaneously allows them to explore negative experiences and explore shared values, hopes, and new skills and to connect and generate new knowledge in the pursuit of social change (Denborough 2014). The participants gradually moved from their first story to the second story of themselves until the final stage. The use of storytelling and drawing creates a safe (van Westrhenen *et al.* 2017) space in which the participants can process their feelings. Creativity facilitates the processing of traumatic episodes of life without people being retraumatized or lessening the likelihood of it occurring (Van der Kolk 2015; Jacobs 2018). The approach has been used in many other studies working with marginalized individuals made vulnerable by, for example, HIV/AIDS (Ncube 2006; Vitale and Ryde 2018), migration (Schweitzer *et al.* 2014), mental health (Ibrahim and Tchanturia 2018), learning disabilities (Randle-Phillips, Farquhar and Thomas 2016), and political violence (Mpande *et al.* 2013). The versatility of the tool means that it can lend itself as an assessment tool. TOL can also be an intervention strategy to hear the voice of the marginalized youth. It can be adapted to work with various populations to break barriers that prevent help-seeking and to support community connectedness in various settings (Ncube 2006).

Ncube (2006), working with HIV/AIDS orphans in Zimbabwe, made use of this approach to provide a safe space for the orphans to talk about their grim experiences in ways that would recognize the potential found in their abilities and dreams. It also helped them feel stronger and prevented them from being retraumatized. Hughes (2014) observed that Ncube (2006) established the importance of mourning and how children could find room to acknowledge and celebrate their hopes and dreams for the future, rebuilding a sense of safety. Ncube (2006) further suggested that it is important to encourage the participants to focus on their hopes, aspirations, and skills. This helped the participants to develop resilience as well as strengthen them.

TOL was deemed useful and appropriate for this research because it makes use of storytelling, which is an essential element in the Zimbabwean cultural context. It also presents an empowering and powerful opportunity for young Zimbabwean migrants to acknowledge and utilize support within social networks. The young Zimbabweans who are far from their homeland have lost very much on their journey for “greener pastures”. The TOL provides a platform to connect with both negative and positive past experiences, which provide hope and serve as a valuable resource for the future. It facilitates witnessing (White *et al.* 1990) where people may share their second story consolidating and supporting change. As stories are being shared, the platform is allowing for multiple voices to be heard and strength in diversity where the participants can reflect and bond over them.

#### **4.5.2 Detailing the Research Process**

The first 6 months focused more on understanding the reasons for migrating, expectations versus reality, and the challenges encountered during their stay in Durban. After several focus group discussions, interviews, and observations, themes emerged, namely, mistrust and broken networks. After identifying the themes, the research implemented an intervention focused on building social capital within the participants. The researcher implemented the intervention over a period of 6 months. Again, several visits were made in 2020 to implement and evaluate the intervention. The researcher visited the participants at least once a month doing follow-up interviews and observations. As a result, this study took a longitudinal approach, revisiting interviewees to examine changes over time and the processes that led to these changes. Spending more time in the field has the added benefit of allowing the researcher to develop a close familiarity and social proximity to people in the research site, who then become valuable sources of information and insight. Auyero and Swistun (2009) noted that this familiarity and social closeness is highly beneficial in decreasing, as much as possible, the symbolic harm perpetrated through the interview interaction.

In the focus group discussions, the researcher began by explaining the nature of her research and its part in it. The participants were next required to introduce themselves

by providing their names or how they wished to be recognized. The researcher had told them that they may use their real names or create new ones for the purposes of this study. After that, there was an icebreaker exercise (see Appendix 4) to help calm the tensions and begin tearing down barriers of difference. According to Kavanagh, Clark-Murphy and Wood (2011), icebreakers can help people share their values, interests, and experiences as well as collaboration (Stenros, Paavilainen and Mäyrä 2009), connection-making (Chlup and Collins 2010; Paasovaara, Jarusriboonchai and Olsson 2017), and communication. It was critical to begin thinking about how the participants could use their diversity as a resource as a group. If they could identify with any of the statements read forth, each participant was expected to stand. We had to keep track of who stood and who did not during the exercise.

The icebreaker was founded on personal experience and served as a springboard for building a critical perspective on life. The participants were able to observe how their life experiences were distinct or similar. They were asked to speak about what they had noticed, liked, and disliked at the end of the activity. They were able to recognize similarities and differences in their life experiences. The icebreaker, in its simple style, had set the tone and established the participants' expectations for the investigation. More importantly, people communicated their emotions and views while taking part in the icebreaker activity.

The cabbage game was used as an icebreaker in research by Kilanowski (2012). They were able to monitor group dynamics and build acquaintances through this icebreaker. In the context of this study, the icebreaker fulfilled a similar objective. After the ice breaker, the team moved on to the next step of cementing their existence as a collective. The researcher led the group into establishing a "Common Set of Values" that would govern their conduct during the time that was spent together. All needed to agree on what they meant and their application. Everyone took part, and all worked diligently to create connections to the first icebreaker that was had before this part of the program. As illustrated in Figure 2 (Appendix 5), all agreed and drafted the "Common Set of Values".

Establishing a common set of values was the first step in sowing seeds of social capital. It was within the confines of this exercise that trust, participation, mutual

respect, and a sense of belonging were introduced as key elements of the group function. The researcher reviewed the research's goal and what she expected from the participants. This was done to ensure that all were on the same page. The participants were required to provide comments on everything that had been done after the first session. The participants were also allowed to ask questions and obtain clarification on anything that they did not understand.

#### **4.5.3 The Exploratory Research Process**

The TOL influenced the intervention of the study because it centers on exchanges amongst the participants. In Zimbabwe, there are different public spaces for engagement and dialogue. These platforms include the *dare*, *china chemadzimai*, and *dairi*. The *dare* is often defined as a family or community court where conflicts are resolved and all other matters affecting the collective are administered (Gwaravanda 2011: 148). In a family *dare*, aunties (*madzitetete*) and uncles (*madzisekuru*) are the ones tasked with presiding over matters (Ncube and Tomaselli 2019). In a community *dare*, community leaders or elders are the presiding officers (Hungwe 2021). The *dare* is also known as a “customary sitting and dining area for men in precolonial Shona societies” (Gombe 1998: 41). The study is working with *dare* as a platform for men only, while previous studies have made note of the limitations of the *dare* platform in terms of structure and participation. The platform, while reserved for men, was exclusionary as younger men were not active participants. It was also a platform for men to assume, display, and encourage hegemonic masculinities. This study found it rather to be a strength as it was used to help build bridges amongst men only. Therefore, there was a men's only platform for dialogue with 10 participants initially.

Women, on the other hand, are not given much of a platform to express themselves. When sitting in family or community gathering, women are usually passive as the communication is linear and they merely receive it (Ncube and Tomaselli 2019: 19). Often, the women are limited to their own space around the home to discuss their own issues. However, the church has also provided a platform for women to spend time with one another. These platforms come in the form of conferences, seminars, or *Ruwadzano/Manyano* (women's fellowship group), also known as KuChina Chemadzimai (Berejena Mhongera and Lombard 2017: 29; Muguti and Sande 2019:



285). Both traditional and Christian platforms are used to teach women to support patriarchal standards with much emphasis on being a “good wife”. It also became important to create a platform for women to dialogue on their own terms. This study then had a platform for women only known as *china*. The platform was also composed of 10 female participants from the study and helped build bridges amongst them.

The study had participants who were male and female, and it was also important to engage them across genders. A platform was created where five females and five males were to engage with one another in dialogue. Patriarchy gives more leeway to men to express themselves than women. In most public dialogue spaces, women are “othered” and “infantilized” (Ncube and Tomaselli 2019: 19), excluding them from decision-making and active participation. This mixed-gender platform was inspired by the traditional roasting pan known as the *gango*. Nowadays, it is also used to refer to a local dish made of different meats roasted together.

All three platforms, the *dare*, *china*, and *gango*, formed the intervention of the study. They required the participants to sit in a circle leaving a space in between. The empty space sometimes represented people’s daily reality as they engaged with one another. Growing up, there were games that people used to play that usually required them to sit in a circle. In the center of the circle, there was an individual or sometimes one who led the game by making a call. The rest of the people would then respond to the call being made from the center of the circle. The platforms also had the call-and-response setup when it was time for games and role-play activities. The response was from the call made through selected participants performing role-plays of different scenarios. They would then discuss the activity and make relations to their experiences and the world around them. The call-and-response function encouraged high levels of participation, communication, interaction, and the realization of agency (Chivandikwa and Muwonwa 2013; Chivandikwa, Makumbirofa and Muwati 2019). These games and role-play activities were helpful in educating as well as entertaining (Charles 2018: 24; Ncube and Tomaselli 2019: 13).

Hudson (2013) analyzed the significance of education making use of theatre arts. She worked with less privileged youths in Jamaica employing pedagogy in rehearsals, workshops, and performances as a form of critical praxis. Workshops became the

platform for sharing and analyzing stories informing the content of their plays. Her study highlights the importance of transformational pedagogy in developing various “literacies” in participants. Most importantly, it is an experience that equips the participants with knowledge that they cannot access from formal education. The participants gain a deeper understanding of their social context, acquire strategies to reduce antagonism and violence, and contribute meaningfully to the socioeconomic development of society. Another study on the Sadaka Reut by Ross (2013) evidences the effectiveness of transformative learning working with the youth. Ross made use of personal experiences as the basis for initiating a discussion on cultural and structural features of society in which their personal experiences lie. Ritchie *et al.* (2013) highlighted that participants exhibited more willingness to address racial and social class inequities than the usual focus on skills and strategies. Their participants had undergone a course that emphasized the importance of social justice. Written reflections and focus group discussions in this study showed that the participants realized the importance of education in perpetuating or reducing social injustice. All studies do not point out participant levels of commitment of pursuing social change and stress and that there is no guarantee that they will pursue social change.

**a. *First Dialogue Session***

The first session had all the 30 participants. It was used to go over the aims of the study with the participants again as well as address any questions. The team and participants also revisited the “Common Set of Values” (see Appendix 5) established earlier and issues of consent. In this session, the participants were given a short talk around the concepts of violence, agency, and social change. It was meant to provide more depth to what the study was all about. The session was quite interesting as the participants shared their different understandings or assumptions about the three concepts. Others found it quite easy to relate these to their lived experiences as they gave responses.

**b. *Second Dialogue Session***

For the second session, the focus or theme was trust. It was important to work on it for the sake of the group’s functioning besides the research element. The session started with the “Blindfold Trust Walk” game. Due to its nature, the “Blindfold Trust

Walk” was the most interesting activity of all the ones used in the group. One person was blindfolded and had to rely on the navigation instructions of another. The game’s success hinged on the couples’ ability to communicate and collaborate effectively. Each person had 2 minutes to play each role before returning to the plenary. When asked which of the two roles they preferred, many of the men expressed their discomfort with having to rely on others and the feeling of being vulnerable. The role of leading someone who was completely reliant on them was triggering for the others.

The debriefing led to a conversation about what trust implies, its relevance, and how it works after all had reflected on the game. The researcher emphasized the importance of trust in keeping the group together, and that all have a responsibility to be trustworthy. All had to create a safe environment for themselves that was free of judgment and ridicule and with the presence of confidentiality. Putting trust in people in vulnerable situations, such as when they first came to South Africa, has frequently led to disappointment. Some people had been deceived, while others had been abandoned by friends and relatives. The participants also discussed times when they fell short in maintaining and breaking trust with those around them.

### **c. *Third Dialogue Session***

The participants shared their life stories in the third session as their thoughts on each other’s experiences. The previous session on trust seemed to have assisted with putting the participants at ease. It is from these exchanges that the participants realized how they were different or similar depending on the context. The issues of gender expectations and relations emerged many times in all the experiences shared. The participants also shared how they did not hate other fellow youth migrants from Zimbabwe. They found one another to be untrustworthy and competitive, which stood in the way of them getting to know each other. The session also incorporated the “fear in a bowl” activity to shed more light on their experiences and thoughts.

The “fear in a bowl” (see Appendix 6) game was the most difficult to implement out of all the activities. The participants have had a variety of experiences in both Zimbabwe and South Africa. It could have led to post-traumatic stress disorder and a range of

other issues. Throughout the activity, it was vital to preserve the space and (re)build trust to ensure that all acquired empathy and bonded as a group.

The participants became closer because of their shared anxieties, and they felt more confident about themselves. This boosted the group's levels of trust, unity, and participation. The game's one "phone a buddy" feature allowed players to practice reaching out for assistance. It brought up the importance of having a support system in the conversation. The "phone a buddy" feature helped to encourage forming friendships that offer social support just as a *sahwira* does in the Zimbabwean culture. *Sahwira* refers to a close friend who is a reliable source of social support (Chitando and Mateveke 2017). All descended into the depths of failed friendships and shattered family bonds. In terms of variety, the experiences were diverse. Money and relationships were the most popular topics of discussion. Others had misappropriated funds from friends and relatives, resulting in damaged relationships. Some had been through significant heartbreaks where they had lost their partners.

#### **d. Fourth Dialogue Session**

Role-playing exercises on violence, agency, and social change constituted the fourth session. When an individual's interest is stimulated, role-playing is perceived as more efficient and successful (Bagès, Hoareau, and Guerrien 2020). After being exposed to TikTok, an online social media network, the desire to employ role-plays in the research grew even stronger. People shared videos of themselves acting out various scenarios on the platform. The role-playing took the story-sharing further as all engaged whilst co-creating. The most vocal participants, Mai Bee, Sokostina, and Newman, were always the first to volunteer to do the activity.

All were able to construct a platform through role-playing that allowed for some of the fears stated in the last session to be addressed. It was fascinating to see how the participants collaborated to create a creative experience. All were able to demonstrate their awareness of the actual world and produce creative work that could be applied in the actual world (Bowman 2007)(Misra 2020). Most notably, it improved group cohesion, trust, empathy, and respect (Bagès, Hoareau, and Guerrien 2020).

The participants were able to put both agency and authority into practice. They needed to consider how some scenarios lacked any or both elements. Both the agency and the authority must collaborate. When someone simply has agency, they are unable to determine the outcomes of their actions, which is what authority does (Lankshear and Knobel 2007; Knobel and Lankshear 2014). During the debriefing, the participants discussed how they felt about the characters that they had seen or portrayed. They also discussed how it relates to real-world issues such as violence, agency, and social transformation. For some, such as Sokostina, it was an opportunity to receive feedback on their acting abilities.

**e. *Fifth Dialogue Session***

For the fifth session, we spoke more on gender and related issues. Earlier, in the third session, the researcher had asked the participants to draft questions related to gender. These could have either been questions that they wanted to ask their gender group or another gender group. These questions were used to stir the dialogue. For some of the questions, the participants managed to attempt addressing them, and, for others, they could not as they proved to be complex. The session helped bridge the gap between the different genders in the group. All made a Peace Pledge in the final session, based on all they had learned, unlearned, and relearned. Some committed to using kinder words, being more accepting of diversity, practicing nonviolence, and assisting those who are in need.

**f. *Sixth Dialogue Session***

In the sixth session, there was the TOL exercise (see Appendix 7), which was held two months after the previous one. The TOL exercise was done to help the participants tell the story of their lives around roots (the young people's origins, culture, ancestry, and family history), ground (place of residence, interests), trunk (their talents, abilities, memories), branches (their goals, dreams, and desires), leaves (essential persons in their life), and fruits (gifts provided to them by others).; (Ncube 2006). The participants found this to be quite an interesting activity as they viewed their stories in a creative and positive light. The session also served to allow the research team to evaluate the research process together with the participants.

## 4.6 Data Analysis

It is important to take note of underlying theoretical issues around analysis and interpretation (Polkinghorne 1995). The process of data analysis encompasses the process of interpretation as much as the former speaks to objectivity and the latter to subjectivity. Both influence how people decide to represent stories and, therefore, work in tandem. Tere (2006) noted that data analysis tends to be an ongoing process for those methods that fall on the critical qualitative end of the continuum (such as ethnography and in-depth interviews), taking place throughout the data collection process as the researcher thinks about and reflects on the emerging themes, adapting and changing the methods as needed. The data was analyzed using the thematic analytical method in the research.

Thematic analysis is a “way of seeing and making sense out of seemingly unrelated material. It involves identifying emerging patterns and analysing them” (Braun and Clarke 2006: 79). This study made use of thematic analysis to qualify and analyze data obtained from the participants. It is a process that not only focuses on “what was said” (Riessman 2008) but an effort to interpret what is being said whilst also presenting evidence for these interpretations. The researcher’s goal was to make note of emerging patterns, code them, and develop themes. The following steps were taken in the analysis of the data guided by the work of (Braun and Clarke 2006: 87).

The first step taken was that of the researcher familiarizing herself with the data. This was done by transcribing data from the interviews and focus groups to look out for interesting items. In addition to the transcription of the sessions, observations were also used in this familiarization step. This process was done more than once to ensure that the researcher did not miss out on any important elements and avoid misinterpretation. Held *et al.* (2019: 4) repeatedly did this first step and additionally dealt with disciplinary “blindness” because they were an interdisciplinary research team.

In the second step, codes were generated by identifying interesting characteristics of the data. This was done by paying close attention to the overall research aim of the study. The field notes proved to be very helpful in this stage. The researcher had already made note of interesting events and terms during her interaction with the

participants. The researcher was able to identify similarities, differences, as well as the frequency of occurrences and assign names.

The third stage was that of examining the code to be able to identify patterns of meaning by looking for underlying assumptions or ideas to develop themes. The identified potential themes were reviewed, which was a very long process for the researcher. The researcher had to determine whether these themes were a true representation of the experiences of young Zimbabwean migrants. This entailed engaging with relevant literature to the study as well. The researcher started off with more than 15 potential themes and had to work on just remaining with a few. This was a very difficult process for the researcher, but eventually she was able to remain with a few potential themes to work on.

In the next step, the researcher identified and named the themes that she had identified as important to the research. The researcher began working on them to develop a final report. The researcher also checked with some of the participants to ensure that this was an accurate report of their interactions.

#### **4.7 Validity and Reliability**

In all types of research, reliability and validity are important to ensure the adequate measuring of concepts of interest. Reliability refers to the presence of consistency in a measure, not its accuracy (Creswell 2014: 201; Souza, Alexandre and Guirardello 2017). Consistency refers to the repeatability of measurements and whether one can depend on it (Boyatzis 1998: 4). In other words, reliability deals with the quality of the measurement. Validity is about measuring the intended underlying construct. In most of the stages of this research, measuring empathy is required. It is, however, important to ensure that empathy is being measured instead of compassion, which is almost similar to the former. Therefore, validity is about the accuracy of the measurement. Reliability and validity are interconnected as both indicate the quality of the research undertaken. A reliable measurement may not always be valid due to incorrect results, whilst a valid measure becomes reliable if results can be reproduced.

PAR involves participants that possess different deposits of knowledge and experiences. The aim is to engage in a dialectical process that results in collective action and the generation of new knowledge. The display of power dynamics in any community can be damaging especially if not handled with adequate attentiveness. To deal with such, it is important to make use of tools that get the participants to share their experiences through meaningful participation where they get to know each other as well as identify the problem. It is important to ensure that validation occurs using a group consensus by getting the group to collectively discuss all that they have brought forward as individual conclusions (Johnson and Christensen 2019).

The findings of the research must represent the experiences and views of the participants as a group. Therefore, observations made by the group in deliberations will only be deemed as valid after a collective consensus. This is unlike other forms of research where researchers are preoccupied with bringing out the differences in opinions, experiences, and knowledge. For this study, a high level of participant contribution was facilitated to ensure validity by the following:

1. Allowing the participants to share their own experience in their own words
2. Collecting, correcting, and working toward reaching a collective consensus
3. Discussing and reflecting on patterns and differences to reach a consensus on the collective findings

The above allowed the participants to further extend on what they had already shared as well as check and ensure the accuracy of the report before finalization (Stringer 2007; Mills 2011).

Since this is a qualitative study, validity must be ensured such that future researchers in the same area can make use of the findings. In other words, there must be transferability, which is facilitated by accurate description, clear justification for the methods chosen, and providing full details of the problem and context. The transferability will then be applied by other research initiatives (Babbie and Mouton 2001: 277)



Theoretical and empirical approaches help in establishing and measuring the validity of any given study. It is important to ensure validity and measure if the study was compared to several similar studies. Making use of theoretical perspectives and empirical studies will contribute to the confirmability, trustworthiness, and credibility of the study. Most sections make use of these and are able to measure the validity and reliability of the entire research process.

#### **4.8 Ethical Considerations**

Even though the study did not include any technically vulnerable groups, ethical issues always arise when relating to other human beings. Therefore, the necessary precautionary measures were taken. The researcher committed to maintaining the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants, given the sometimes-sensitive nature of the information that they provided, which could expose them to risk. Some of the participants in the study were regarded as illegal migrants by the Department of Home Affairs (DHA) as they did not have the required documentation to be in South Africa. Hence, the participants' identities were concealed using pseudonyms, except in cases where an individual indicated otherwise.

At first contact with the participants, an information sheet providing the purpose and nature of the study was made available to the participants. They were also informed that they had to first consent to participate before the research started. The participants were also made aware that they could withdraw their consent at any given stage of the research process without penalty (Creswell 2013). Informed consent to conduct the focus group and interview sessions and record them was obtained on a one-on-one basis. In instances where the interviewees did not want to be recorded, only consent to conduct the interview was sought. The identity of the participants was protected through the use of pseudonyms instead of their actual names.

#### **4.9 Conclusion**

The chapter gave an outline of the research methodology that was used in the research. A qualitative approach was the most suitable one as it allowed gaining a better exploration and understanding of the Zimbabwean youth migrants' experience. In-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and participant observation were all part

of the exploratory study design. The following chapter presents the first part of the research findings around their expectations in relation to their lived experiences in Durban.

# **CHAPTER FIVE**

## **RESEARCH FINDINGS, PART I: EXPECTATIONS AND REALITIES**

### **5.1 Introduction**

Migration is not an entirely new phenomenon as it happens in the world daily. A report by the International Organization for Migration (IOM 2015) indicated the presence of an increase in international migrants from 155 million, in the year 2000, to 244 million, in the year 2015. The various reasons for the increase are explored in the case of young Zimbabwean migrants. There was a surge in migration as Zimbabwe's socioeconomic and political collapse occurred. Zimbabweans have traveled as far as Europe and the United States. African nations have also received a slew of Zimbabwean migrants, with South Africa being the most popular destination for Zimbabwean migrants. According to reports, South Africa is home to an estimated 3 to 5 million Zimbabwean migrants (IOM 2019). Drawing from data obtained from observations, interviews, focus groups, and narratives, this chapter provides an analysis of the concept of migration in the context of Zimbabwean youth migrants living in Durban, South Africa. The chapter also examines the challenges encountered by the migrants. All of these were necessary for comprehending the perspectives and experiences of the participants.

### **5.2 Reasons for Leaving Home**

There are considerable differences in people's reasons for migrating, either internally or internationally, depending on where they come from and their circumstances. The reasons for migrating are diverse, ranging from personal to economic reasons. However, one can identify the difference by looking at the pull and push factors. This section discusses the various reasons for migration among Zimbabwean migrants living in Durban, South Africa. Whilst examples are drawn from the whole sample, more attention is given to several participants who displayed a wider range of reasons for migrating.

### 5.2.1 Pursuit of Educational Journeys

Education is a significant driver of societal transformation (Chakraborty *et al.* 2018). It encourages vertical and spatial movement while also altering the viewpoint of people who possess it. Education promotes vertical mobility by changing an individual's upward occupational position and associated tasks. It encourages spatial mobility among those who desire to attain it since education provides them with greater socioeconomic possibilities. Through the recognition of the importance of education to better livelihoods, the former president of Zimbabwe, Robert Mugabe, introduced the Presidential Scholarship Programme in 1995 to assist talented children from underprivileged families acquire university education (Mpinganjira 2009). Initially, all students on this scholarship were sent to South Africa's University of Fort Hare, where the president himself had studied and earned a BA degree. The program's aims grew over time to include the need to absorb local students who were unable to be accommodated at local institutions that required high pass rates for entrance, as well as the need to promote the internationalization of higher education and increase graduates' employability. The program's popularity has risen dramatically, extending from Fort Hare University to 15 additional South African receiving universities (Zvavahera 2014). However, this has influenced the migration decisions among the students as they are expected to migrate to South Africa and acquire a university education. Grace's case is illustrative.

Grace is the firstborn of a family of five and is responsible for taking care of her siblings and helping her mother. She completed her "Advanced" level in 2009 and was among the top students in her class. Even though she mentioned that they were struggling, her mother managed to pay for her school fees. Unfortunately, her mother could not afford to pay the university fees as they were too expensive. This forced Grace to look for part-time jobs to earn some extra income, which were not successful because of the economic and political crisis in the country. Through one of her cousins, she was told about the presidential scholarship, which was being offered by the government to poor-income households. Out of depression and the drive to provide for the family, she applied and was awarded the scholarship. Even though she was excited to obtain the scholarship, she was not happy with the conditions, which were to migrate to South Africa. This is evidenced when Grace stated:

I did not want to leave my family alone. ...who will help my mother meet the household food security needs? I wish the scholarship allowed me to attend a local university. I did not want to migrate to another country... I have heard a lot of stories of what happens to migrants in South Africa.

In this scenario, the presidential scholarship acted as a push factor to migration. Grace did not want or did not intend to migrate but was forced to because of the conditions of the scholarship. The findings agree with those of Murphy-Lejeune (2002) who found university scholarships to influence student migration decisions. Students with international mobility have emerged as one of the most prominent categories of new migrants. Between 1990 and 2012, the number of students seeking higher education outside their home country tripled, reaching 4.5 million worldwide (2014).

The above discussion, however, is a different story for another group of participants who migrated largely to improve their socioeconomic status and livelihoods. Kayani *et al.* (2017) are of the view that education is a tool for poverty alleviation and socioeconomic growth. Education enables one to overcome the barriers of entry into the labor market, hence improving income and purchasing power (Mpinganjira (2011). These were also the findings from this study as the participants shared in the interviews and focus group discussions. Newman revealed that he was motivated to migrate and further his studies after witnessing how education improved his brother's socioeconomic status and well-being.

Newman is the last-born in a family of four. His brother migrated to South Africa in 2007 to pursue his master's degree. After finishing his qualifications, he went further to do his PhD, where he received a scholarship and a part-time job. Throughout the period of his studies, Newman's brother has been able to send remittances in the form of groceries and cash. He has also managed to acquire a house and a car in Zimbabwe. All this contributed to Newman's decision to migrate and further his studies. This implies that the benefits associated with improved education encourage migration, as evidenced by Newman when he stated:

Through my brother, I saw the important role of education to social-economic development. My brother was able to take care of me and my siblings which he could not do before. He has managed to acquire assets

and start a small business. Seeing this motivated me to migrate and further my studies.

Through the pursuit of an educational journey, one can improve their socioeconomic well-being as well as that of their family. The above discussion on the pursuit of the educational journey is evidence that education is both a push and pull factor of migration.

Another subset of educated migrants migrated for work and economic empowerment. However, when they migrated, they found out that their qualifications were not enough to get a job. This is because of the competition in the labor market. South Africa has been a destination for migrants from all over Africa resulting in stiff competition in the labor market for the migrants. Sometimes the qualifications from the home country may not be recognized in South Africa. These migrants may then enroll in destination-country education to convert their abilities into recognized qualifications (Bloch 2005). Thus, education may not have been the driver for their migration but becomes important once they have moved.

Munashe's case is illustrative. After finishing his honours degree in Zimbabwe, he decided to migrate to South Africa and look for a job. The process entailed that he submits to the South Africa Qualifications Authority (SAQA) his academic certificates for evaluation such that he could apply for a work permit. Sadly, his qualifications were equated to a bachelor's degree. This meant that he holds a bachelor's degree in South Africa, which made his job hunt difficult and unsuccessful. After 12 months of unsuccessful job applications, Joe decided to further his studies, which is something he never thought that he would do.

### **5.2.2 Food Insecurity**

Examining food insecurity as a determinant of international migration has become increasingly relevant as the number of migrants is increasing, especially those migrating for economic reasons, the case of most Zimbabwean youth (Scheen 2011). Food security is defined by the United Nations' Committee on World Food Security as "a means that all people, at all times, have physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their food preferences and dietary needs

for an active and healthy life” (Pérez-Escamilla 2017: 1). A lack of access can have a significant effect on migration behavior. In this study, almost all (25) of the participants revealed that food insecurity was among the main factors that contributed to migration. The droughts, coupled with the economic meltdown, structural violence, climate change, and political instability, made many Zimbabweans food insecure (Gwatirisa and Manderson 2012). These were also the findings from this study as the participants shared in the interviews and focus group discussions.

Biggaz’s case is illustrative. He is 33 years old and works at a plumbing company in Durban. Before he migrated, he worked as a vendor to meet his household food security needs. He explained that during the period from 2008 to 2013 when the Government of National Unity (GNU) was in operation, his business was booming and he was able to take his children to school and lived a comfortable life. However, matters changed after the dissolution of the GNU in 2013. Inflation was rising every day, and there was a shortage of food, fuel, and electricity. He mentioned that one of his children had to stop attending school as he could not afford to pay the fees. In addition, from time to time, the family had to skip meals as the food was not available in the household. Sadly, he had to send his family to the rural areas and stay with his parents as he could not afford to pay for the accommodation. This is when he decided to migrate to South Africa and look for employment.

However, through further engagement and observations, some of the participants showed signs of food insecurity. A consensus from the group was that most of them could not attain economic empowerment because of the barriers of entry into the labor market that they faced, and this influenced their food security. This is evident when Marve stated that:

I have been called for job interviews, and most of the time I am not selected either because my qualifications are not enough, or the employer requires me to produce a work permit of which I don’t have. This has affected my income and forced me to seek employment in the informal sector where the salaries are just enough to make me have a decent living.

The researcher, however, posed a question to understand why the participants were not returning home since they were food insecure. The group agreed that the intensity

of food insecurity here is better when compared with the one back home, which is why they were not returning home. One of the participants, Garikayi, stated:

Here in South Africa life is better. Even if I am not formally employed, I can still provide for my family decent meals and lifestyle compared to when I was in Zimbabwe. Yes, I admit there is no diversity of diet, but never has my family skipped or went to bed hungry, which was the case when I was in Zimbabwe.

In South Africa, food is available in the markets and evenly distributed (De Cock *et al.* 2013). The country is producing enough staple food to meet its demand and can import food to cover shortages when necessary (Aliber and Hart 2009). However, in Zimbabwe, it is a different story; food is not available, and many do not have economic and physical access to food because of political instability, climate change, and the economic crisis in the country (Dube 2016). The Zimbabwean migrants find themselves choosing between the lesser of two evils: staying at or going back home. The first option involves staying in South Africa and living a decent lifestyle and having a reduced vulnerability to hunger (eating an unbalanced diet), while the second involves going back home and entering the vicious cycle of poverty and extreme food insecurity (skipping meals and reducing the number of meals per day).

### **5.2.3 Marital Obligations**

Several studies (e.g., Adesera 2014, Bijwaard 2012, and Fulford 2015) have shown that marital status plays a significant role in the decision to migrate, especially among women. One would expect the reasons for migrating to be economic. However, the situation is different among women. A study in India found that the most common reason for migration is marriage (Krishnan 2019). The study showed that 46% of the total migrants in 2011 moved because of marriage, and, of these, 97% were women. The reasons cited included the higher probability of divorce (Sadiqi and Ennaji 2004), family disintegration and the lowered ability to monitor children (De Snyder 1993), loneliness (Zachariah, Mathew and Rajan 2001), and decreased social support and networks (Roy and Nangia 2005; Kothari 2003).

The picture given of India is similar to the situation in Zimbabwe. Nevertheless, Zimbabwe is peculiar because women are not limited to local migration but have



extended to international migration to reunify with their husbands because of the socioeconomic challenges, as illustrated by the following response from Mai Bee:

Living in Zimbabwe is hard; food is not available, and the standards of living are poor. On top of this, there is pressure from my husband's family to join because am supposed to be taking care of him and do my responsibilities as a wife.

Some of the participants had no intention of ever leaving the country in their life. Mai Bee's case is illustrative. She has always wanted to work as a nurse in a private hospital; however, due to life's intentions, this did not come to fruition. Her spouse traveled to South Africa after they married, and she was pregnant with her first child. After giving birth, Mai Bee had to follow her husband to Durban. She mentioned that pressure from family members forced her to migrate as it was not seen proper to not live without her husband. Mai Bee was being cautioned against letting her husband stay alone in another country, as illustrated in the following statement by Mai Bee: "Your husband cannot live alone without you the wife... things may get complicated in the future." Because of the pressure, Mai Bee had to leave her nursing dreams and join her husband.

Hazvineyi told a different story about how she came to be in Durban. Hazvineyi eloped to join her Durban-based partner a few years after completing her Advanced level diploma. Since then, she has not returned home, and her partner has not paid her lobola. Her decision to elope affected her relationship with her family, culminating in family ties being severed. They had to work together to construct their family unit because they were each on their own. The females' decision to leave their homes and support their boyfriends in a faraway place was particularly noteworthy.

In line with migration literature (e.g., Brettel 2017; Davin 1999; Fulford 2015), none of the men who participated in the study migrated to unify with his partner or wife. A body of established literature has shown that women, especially those who are married, migrate mainly to join their families or their husbands. Traditionally, men are the head of the family and are expected to provide for the family, and the woman must do whatever the man says.

#### 5.2.4 Political Instability

Young Zimbabweans were pushed to leave their homeland for South Africa due to political challenges. It is critical to emphasize how a state's politics influence its economic muscle and social cohesion. Before, during, and after the election cycles, there was much violence in Zimbabwe. The country has reverted to its former status as a one-party state. As a result of the high level of political intolerance, those who oppose the current leadership have been silenced and punished. For speaking up, many young activists have been tortured and imprisoned (Chiweshe 2016). Youths do not have enough space in political spaces to properly participate. Passmore illustrated how the political environment in Zimbabwe forced him to migrate to South Africa. He is a motor mechanic who has never been formally employed. He is among the thousands of youths in Zimbabwe who advocate for zero corruption, equality, and a better Zimbabwe for all. However, this is associated with being a member of the opposition party. In his own words, Passmore stated:

The political environment is bad; one cannot express their constitutional rights... If you do so, you are associated with the opposition party, and this puts you and your family lives in danger.

Passmore was unfortunate and accused of being a member of the opposition political party. He was brought to the "base," a place or venue where the ruling party carries out its political meetings. Because of fear and intimidation, he and other youths in the area were forced to join the party. He eventually became a regular at the base, receiving free beers and food as part of the privileges. After some time, matters started to change for him. He mentioned that the tasks that they were given harmed other members of the community. They were asked to beat and abuse members of different political parties, for example. As a form of protection levies, he was also asked to collect commodities and cash from vendors and community members. However, retreating from the base would put his life in danger as this was communicated in the meeting. In Passmore's words:

Once you join the base there is no going back, you have to do whatever you are told to do by the comrades ... if you don't, then you have to hide or run away. In every meeting, the comrades used to tell us what happens to people who do not cooperate. They instilled fear in us which worked, and we did what we were told.

After some time, Passmore left the base, which was a risky choice. He felt unsafe and was forced to migrate to South Africa. He has been in South Africa for 8 years and has never returned home. Sadly, his mother passed on in 2016 but could not go home because of fear of his life. The only time he sees his family members is when they come to South Africa to visit him. He concluded by stating that this is the situation for thousands of Zimbabwean youths, and many have fled the country because of the political crisis. The finding is similar to that of Young (2020) who found that the violent persecution of oppositional activists forced them to migrate and seek refugee status in neighboring countries to prevent the dangers of imprisonment, torture, or targeted killings.

### **5.2.5 Economic Collapse**

Zimbabwe's continuous economic catastrophe is causing individuals to flee to South Africa in pursuit of economic empowerment and better living circumstances. The economic downturn has virtually halted industrial and agricultural output; there are acute shortages of critical products, and basic infrastructure and public services have all but collapsed (Asante 2016). The unemployment rate is above 90%, and there is hyperinflation of over 700% (Moyo 2019; Trade economics 2020). Millions of Zimbabweans come from places or families whose per capita consumption is less than \$1.90 per day, the poverty line (Elver 2019). Many people have lost their jobs, while others are struggling to find work as a result of industry closures (Raftopolous 2011). One of the participants claimed:

Finding a decent job in Zimbabwe nowadays is a challenge. We have the required qualifications, but we have no jobs. Even if you get the job you can work for months without getting your salary. It's better we go to South Africa and look for a job and take care of our family.

The economic woes have pushed the ordinary Zimbabweans to find ways to make a living in a disintegrating and unpredictable economic climate, migration being one of the strategies. Zimbabweans have embarked on migration in search of economic empowerment and better living conditions (Moyo (2019). Zimbabweans are present in over 122 countries worldwide, with the most popular destinations being South Africa, Canada, the United Kingdom, and Australia (Chikanda and Crush 2018). The

estimated number of Zimbabwean migrants in South Africa fluctuates between 3 and 5 million (IOM 2019). There is a widespread notion that in South Africa, life is pleasant.

Dexter is self-employed and responsible for three of his siblings after their parents died. Another sibling works in South Africa but is married and helps when she can because she has her own family to look after. Dexter used to work as an electrician in Zimbabwe before he was retrenched in 2015. He tried to look for another job but was not successful. He mentioned that all his life, savings were eroded by inflation. It was difficult for him to meet the household food security needs as the food prices were extremely high. This resulted in his household skipping some meals. Sometimes, when he received some money from his sister in South Africa, food was not available on the shelves to buy. Sadly, he mentioned that sometimes he had the money and food, but there would be no electricity to cook the food, and people went to bed hungry. These economic challenges forced Dexter to migrate to South Africa. However, the journey was not easy for him. He did not have enough documentation and had to use illegal ways to enter the country. Even though it was not easy, Dexter downplayed the difficulties that he encountered on the road to South Africa and his arrival. This is evidenced when Dexter stated:

It was not easy to come here, but it was worth it. Food is widely available and accessible. Money has value and I can plan and do tangible things. I can work and send money to my siblings in Zimbabwe; this is what we call a good economy.

The picture given of Zimbabwean youth is similar to the situation in Tunisia. Each year, an estimated 30,000 Tunisians, mostly young people, move out of a population of 10 million. Tunisians aged 15 to 29 account for 61.6% of all migrants, with 86.1% men and 13.9% women (Prince, Halasa-Rappel and Khan 2018). Their primary reasons for leaving include a low standard of life, unemployment, and a lack of work prospects. As in Zimbabwe, the labor force is continuously rising due to increased female labor-force participation and despite decreasing population growth. Furthermore, the increase in population education does not correspond to the increase in low-skilled employment produced in the Tunisian economy. The overall educated labor force, which includes individuals with secondary and vocational education as well as those with university degrees, has increased to more than 53%. Tunisia's employment

creation attempts have been stymied by the regional environment, global economic and financial events, and internal political and economic conditions. The regional political backdrop is unfavorable for the Tunisian economy, since wars in Syria and Libya, as well as increased violence in Iraq, deter international and local investment (Schafer 2018). In addition to the uncertain regional environment, the global economic and financial crisis as well as rising food prices have caused economic disruptions in the export-oriented economy and resulted in employment losses rather than job creation. As a result, many young Tunisians have been compelled to travel and seek economic empowerment in other nations.

### **5.2.6 Motivation of Existing Social Connections**

Through the discussions with the participants, social networks were found to play a significant role in triggering migration decisions. This finding is consistent with (Hungwe 2013) who also found social networks to play a significant role in migration among Zimbabweans. According to the social capital concept, migration will not occur in a social vacuum; hence, the destination nations will be determined by networks and ties (Muyambo and Ranga 2020). Social networking systems, including family ties and friendships, facilitate the process of migration (Tawodzera *et al.* 2015). People in Zimbabwe who are socioeconomically depressed are under pressure from family and friends with whom they interact, which drives them to migrate. One of the participants explained why some individuals become migrants:

Most of my family migrated to South Africa during the economic and political crisis in 2008. Most of them have been fortunate enough to get employment. However, the persistent pressure from them for me to join them made me migrate. They offered to assist me with resources such as food, shelter and clothing till I am financially stable.

Social networks provide the types of connections needed to make migration possible. They link migrants with friends or family members in the destination areas. The conclusion is consistent with the migration network theory, which holds that networks increase migratory flow independence for two reasons. First, once network connections reach a certain threshold, they become an independent social structure that encourage immigration. This support stems from the networks' ability to decrease the social, economic, and emotional costs of immigration. That is, network-supported

migrants receive valuable assistance in arranging transit, locating housing and employment at their destination, and making a good psychological and emotional adjustment to what is typically a challenging condition of cultural marginality. These benefits make migration easier, thus encouraging people, who would otherwise have stayed at home, to migrate.

However, White (2002) is of the view that simply being a part of a social network is not usually enough to make migration a reality. One must also have social capital. Social capital refers to the actual or potential resources linked to a migrant's social ties – the quality of the tie itself (Grootaert and Van Bastelaer 2002). This is the case with Tonde. He is a qualified electrician who has never been employed in Zimbabwe and has been a vendor for a year. He has been friends with Ndaba since college who migrated to South Africa and is working at a local company. They have been in constant communication, updating each other about life. When Ndaba heard about his friend being a vendor, he tried his luck and asked his boss if there was any vacancy, and luckily there was. Tonde applied for the job and was offered the position. He migrated to South Africa, and his friend offered him accommodation and food until he was financially stable. The participants were able to migrate to Durban, thanks to their social capital. They gained access to information, lodging, food, and employment prospects via bonding and bridging social capital. They moved because they had a friend or relative who had previously done as such. Their decision to start a new life in a different nation was inspired by the high levels of trust in these relationships and networks.

### **5.3 Challenges Facing the Migrants in South Africa**

In recent years, people have witnessed an increase in human migration because of conflict and political and economic instability. Whilst migration has positive impacts, particularly on development, several challenges exist, which include xenophobia, exploitation at the workplace, black tax, and broken family ties.

#### **5.3.1 Xenophobia**

The study findings revealed that xenophobia is one of the issues that most young Zimbabwean migrants encounter and that has a significant impact on their livelihoods.

The participants' stories revealed how xenophobia functions on a broad scale, sometimes institutionally. There was agreement that South Africans have a high level of hatred toward them. "*Vanhu vemuno havatide*," "*hatidiwe muno*," "*vanhu vemuno vari rafu*," and "*muno munotoda akashinga*". Xenophobia is a common feature in the life of young Zimbabwean migrants. Physical violence is prevalent in several well-known cases. This has been well documented in several media reports and research studies. Zimbabweans and Somali nationals were attacked by Free State community members who were displeased with the local administration, according to Le Roux (2006 cited in Aden 2017). According to the Human Rights Watch (2020), foreign nationals were also targeted to draw the attention of the authorities.

Access to healthcare was mentioned as a major issue among the participants. They described how they were treated unfairly at free public medical facilities: "They kept asking me why I had come to South Africa and wanted to see my documents first." This finding is in line with that of (Munyewende *et al.* 2011), who investigated HIV risk perceptions and health access among Zimbabwean migrant women in Johannesburg, South Africa. When the participants visited the hospital, they described negative and unpleasant attitudes from the staff. In public hospitals, migrants can be denied access if they fail to produce documents that validate their stay in South Africa (Crush and Tawodzera 2014; Crush *et al.* 2017). In some instances, failure to produce documents may lead to arrests and having to deal with the Department of Home Affairs (DHA). Migrants are being denied treatment because of their identity documents, which is a basic human right. It exposes migrants to harmful circumstances, such as decreasing health, particularly for those with chronic illnesses. Some of the interviewees acknowledged obtaining healthcare by exploiting the documentation of others. Others have sent their Zimbabwean neighbors or relatives to be treated in their place:

When I first got sick, I went to a public hospital and was treated badly. The nurses spoke to me in isiZulu and were annoyed that I did not understand the language. One of them said I should learn because I am in their country... After that, I made sure I would try harder to learn the language.

Language was also found as a technique used by medical workers to discriminate against migrants (Hunter-Adams and Rother 2017; Makandwa and Vearey 2017). Language is not a barrier in and of itself, but it involves a purposeful act on the side of

the medical personnel. When interacting with racial groups who speak English, they do not use isiZulu. This suggests that race and ethnicity have a significant role in the emergence of xenophobia in South Africa.

Women passionately expressed the difficulties that they face in obtaining healthcare. The women's focus group ultimately discussed maternal health and how they relied on contraceptive tablets from Zimbabwe. Most of them admitted that they were unaware of all the contraceptive alternatives and services available in South Africa. Contraception is a delicate and difficult topic for a variety of reasons. Various types of contraception have various effects on different women. They would rather buy contraceptive pills from home, which are sold by street vendors, due to the language barrier in South Africa. They have created an illicit trade market for smuggled contraception from their home country.

Hospitals are commonly avoided by migrants due to breakdowns in communication. In certain situations, people are treated with medical techniques for which they have not given their consent. The women who took part in the study told horror stories about childbirth and family planning. The inability to communicate in isiZulu inhibits one's ability to make decisions and makes one vulnerable. Hunter-Adams and Rother (2017: 5) discovered that migrants were frequently pressured or, in some circumstances, unaware of medical intervention. One of their participants' comments attests to this:

They came to her when she was sick, and she had no husband there, and told her to sign ... and she had no idea what she was signing. And they did the process [tubal ligation] ... and she cannot deliver anymore, even permanently. So, when they go there, to the hospital, to complain, they said "you signed", but she did not understand, and she was sick. That is why I am concerned. That's why I'm very concerned (2017: 5).

I gave birth to some of my children at [hospital name], some at [hospital name], but the last time they told me, no this time, they gonna sew ... something like tubes... I do not know... I am thinking of maybe going to [alternative hospital] because ... [but] they might do that. Stop me for 5 years ... and that is something I am against. So, I am thinking of private hospitals, but I am also thinking, it's too expensive! (2017: 5).

Makandwa and Vearey (2017) also found that Zimbabwean women faced challenges when maternal-related issues were concerned. The situation reflects the danger and



exclusion that Zimbabwean migrants confront. Low levels of trust result in their exclusion from healthcare access.

Garikayi described how his laptop was stolen and how the SAPS treated him badly. It had been stolen by other foreigners, according to the police officer. The idea that foreigners are criminals was pushed and exploited to address a problem. The officer believed the stereotype that foreigners are criminals, which is a dangerous stereotype. In this case, it resulted in Garikayi not receiving the help that he needed after being a victim of a crime. This is an illustration of the importance of socialization in one's perception of oneself and others. The researcher asked Garikayi if he had followed up on the case following this event, and he said "no". The cops had let him down, causing him to lose trust and feel unsafe.

"The SAPS and DHA have publicly expressed xenophobic feelings toward foreigners" (Maina *et al.* 2011: 2). They have had a significant role in the perception of migrants as difficult and dangerous. All of this is despite the fact that there are no statistics to support this claim. As a result, many migrants, notably young Zimbabweans, have been persecuted. According to Landau's research, cited in (Masuku 2006), migrants provide a platform for SAPS officers to gain career points:

There is pressure on us (police officials) to effect arrests. In the police, you are promoted, respected, and given accolades if you have many arrests under your name. Often, it is less important that an arrest results in a successful prosecution because that is the job of the prosecutor and investigating officer. As a result, we target illegal immigrants for arrest because you cannot afford to have under your name a zero arrest in a month (2006: 22).

The men in the group could attest to having been arrested or hearing about someone else's arrest. Newman described how he was pulled over while traveling to Pietermaritzburg, South Africa, at random. The authorities demanded that he provide his identification documents; Newman stated:

I think my failure to speak isiZulu sold me out when they first approached me... It took thirty minutes of negotiating as I had no identity documents on me besides my license. In the end, I gave one of the officers 500 Rand and they let me go.

The authorities are taking advantage of migrant vulnerabilities rather than safeguarding them. Surprisingly, none of the women had any prior encounters with SAPS officers. In the case of xenophobia, the receiving or host communities have also played a role. This is accomplished by policing and monitoring members of the migrant population. When they talked about their interactions with community members, they had many conflicting feelings. At first, many described how the SAPS police or DHA officials would show up on their doorsteps at random. They would have to show documents showing their legal standing in the country. Sokostina believed that her quick acquisition of isiZulu had protected her from such a mishap. Others in the group, on the other hand, thought it was about more than merely being able to speak in their own language.

Vimbayi expressed her dissatisfaction with her neighbors, who frequently reported her to the building supervisor for having visitors. She has resorted to bringing in her visitors late at night when everyone was sleeping. To the delight of the gathering, Hazvineyi revealed that her landlord was keeping track of her grocery purchases. In December, Hazvineyi sends many goods back home. In her response, she alluded, "My landlord asked me where I got money for a huge number of groceries during the middle of the year. She said that it is something I usually do year-end." Migrants must now account for community members since they are stereotyped and treated with distrust. When young Zimbabwean migrants are concerned, the local population has a low level of trust.

To begin with, leaders have frequently advised their people about the unacceptability of migrants, particularly those from Africa. Migrants are assumed to be dangerous and to be taking what belongs to locals. As a result, antagonism becomes the guiding concept. Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi, a traditional and political leader, is a classic example. During his time as the Home Affairs Minister, he referred to migrants as "illegal aliens" who posed a threat to South Africans' safety, economic well-being, and security (Steenkamp 2009). Other significant persons and organizations, both governmental and private, have made correlations between the rate of crime and the presence of illegal migrants over the years (Crush 2008).

### 5.3.2 Exploitation in the Workplace

This section looks at the most prevalent types of exploitation that migrants face. This mostly pertains to wage fraud, living circumstances, and physical violence. A wide range of forms of exploitation were discovered through interviews and focus group discussions, including wage theft or cashback arrangements, being required to work more hours than permitted, unsafe working conditions, unfair dismissal, unfair deductions from wages, being threatened with being reported to immigration authorities, and having passports withheld. These types of exploitation do not occur at the same frequency or intensity. Working more hours than permitted was the most reported issue by the participants, while having passports withheld appeared less often. Marve looks after two children, and her husband is a truck driver and spends less time with his family. Marve is employed at a local restaurant where she earns some income to supplement her husband's. However, she is not happy with the working conditions at the restaurant and is thinking of leaving the job. Marve stated that:

You are expected to work from 7 am to 8 am every day. There are no weekends for us... Sometimes at the restaurant, I end up doing work that I am not supposed to do.

The situation above is similar to that of thousands of migrants in Australia. According to some accounts, migrants have been compelled to labor up to 18 hours per day, seven days a week (The Sydney Morning Herald 2015b). Further, some workers have reported being denied sufficient breaks, including toilet breaks (The Sydney Morning Herald 2015b). Although migrant workers in South Africa face many of the same types of exploitation as those in other destination countries across the world, there are a few causes of exploitation that are slightly more unique to an individual's socioeconomic circumstances. Most of the participants face exploitation because of a lack of proper documentation or visas. The employers take advantage of the desperation of the migrants and exploit them, knowing that they will not report the matter to anyone.

This is the situation of many of the respondents. Biggaz's case is illustrative. He came to Durban in 2018 with his brother and was employed at a construction company, which is usually the first employment opportunity for many migrants. With the networks of his brother, Biggaz was able to work at a transporting company where he worked

as a general hand. He explained that he would receive random calls at night to report for duty and would work seven days a week. Despite working overtime, sometimes his salary would be slashed for reasons not given, and he would even go months without getting his salary. Because he does not have the legal documents and fears deportation, Biggaz has never reported the issue. In line with Amit (2014) and Moyce (2018), a lack of documentation plays a significant role in the exploitation of migrants in a foreign country.

### **5.3.3 Broken Family Ties**

Migration strains family bonds, according to the findings of this study. To begin with, most of the participants were unable to assist their nuclear family members in relocating to South Africa. This could be due to the difficulties that come with the administrative process (Skota 2020), such as finances and strict permit requirements. The difficult process of obtaining a permit was universally acknowledged. For example, while applying for a study permit for the first time, one must pay a year's worth of medical insurance. Then, there is the application procedure, police clearance, and medical reports to pay for. This cost stands in the way of bringing family legally to South Africa. As a result, people opt for the illegal way to enter South Africa (Madambi 2020).

When asked how frequently they visit Zimbabwe, many participants stated that they only go when it is necessary. They all seemed to agree that it would be a waste of money to go home. It was preferable to send the money such that it may be utilized to support their family. Previous research has shown the importance of diaspora remittances to Zimbabwean households' well-being (Bracking and Sachikonye 2010; Crush and Caesar 2017; Tigere and Ndlovu 2018; Hove 2020). The participants added that they mostly send money and food, which is consistent with the findings of Mukwedeya (2011) and Mazwi (2021).

More women are migrating to South Africa because of the country's present political and socioeconomic situation (Crush, Williams and Peberdy 2005; Mbiyozo 2018). This is part of the global trend of the feminization of migration (Bloch 2006; Thebe and Maviza 2019). However, given that people live in a predominantly patriarchal society,

this poses several issues. The female participants alluded to having suffered difficulties because they decided to come to South Africa and live alone. Fiona came to South Africa at the age of 19 with the help of a high school acquaintance. Her parents were opposed to her desire to live in a foreign nation on her own; according to her, “I was told that getting married would be impossible for me because all women who travel alone to South Africa engage in unsafe sexual behavior and become infected with HIV ... *Unooronwa sei?*” According to Thebe and Maviza (2019), there is much dangerous sexual behavior among migrants, which confirms Fiona’s family’s concerns. Her decision to move has strained relations between her and her father.

As previously stated, some of the group members were unable to speak openly about their marital status. Migration has been shown to impose strain on couples, leading to divorce and separation in some cases (Thebe and Maviza 2019; Madambi 2020; Mawire *et al.* 2020). Since most of the participants were not legally married, the researcher will refer to relationships in the context of this study. Fiona, Munashe, and Silas all admitted that their long-distance romances had ended or were strained. Munashe spoke about the value of sex and how its absence had wrecked his relationship, much to the delight of the other participants. This issue was raised as a motive for married women, such as Mai Bee, to join their spouses. Other elements that were identified as significant factors include a lack of trust and broken communication. Some people ended their relationships or decided to cheat on their partners in the end. All of this has placed their plans to start a family with their partners on hold or dead in the water.

Economic, educational, religious, and cultural institutions affect family life. Experiences with the external systems and new information can make a person change and grow and, thereby, change family relationships; thus, the family is not closed to the ecosystem around it to ensure stability. People’s interaction with the world around them provides a platform to learn, relearn, and unlearn matters. It is a platform for individuals to establish their values and belief systems as well as experience growth. Most of the participants in this study opened themselves up to some form of change. During the debate, topics such as sobriety, religious or spiritual connections, and attire were brought up. The following is one of the most intriguing responses from the participants:

A person should be up to date with the current environment. Here in South Africa, you have to adjust quickly to be part of the community. By all means, try and ensure you do whatever it takes to be part of the local.

They emphasized individuals' agency while simultaneously attempting to establish a sense of belonging. Some people have lost touch with their relatives because of these changes. Hazvineyi's ties with her family have been severed since she chose to stay with her lover, who has not paid the lobola. The willingness of the participants to change was viewed as positive in the context of this study. However, the researcher was wary of expecting that they would definitely undergo any type of transformation due to their participation in this study.

Despite the difficulties, the family unit must be maintained. The participants attempted to maintain contact with their families. One way is to send bus tickets or airline tickets such that they can visit them in Durban. The participants who were attending university had invited their families to come and see them graduate. The others used social media to interact for as long as they could buy data bundles for their family members because they are expensive (Mazwi *et al.* 2020). However, there is a challenge in the quality of service by telecommunication operators in the country (Robb and Paelo 2020). The visits served as a haven for emotional support and a time to reconnect. Others sent parcels whenever they could to maintain the ties.

#### **5.3.4 Ploughing Back (Black Tax)**

The participants who were separated from their nuclear family were required to send money home. The participants stated that they frequently sent money to their families for school fees, food, and other home necessities. This is not concerned much with them being financially secure. This is all part of the process of becoming an independent adult capable of taking care of oneself. It is expected that because of this change, they will be able to take on additional duties, including financial ones. On the part of the youth, this transition is also a period when they aspire to provide a helping hand to their family.

For some, their readiness is characterized by ubuntu (Magubane 2017), or selflessness in action, as well as the recognition of the role played by parents or

guardians. It made them and their families happy and connected, according to the participants. It made it easier for families to bond and maintain and strengthen their ties. It offered a sense of accomplishment, which made their parents happy, according to the participants. Progress, one of the participants, stated that “When I send money home, my mother compliments me by my totem and makes me feel respectable.”

Some of the participants, on the other hand, voiced concerns. They felt that this put them under much financial pressure. For various reasons, none of the participants in this study were formally employed. For some, this meant going without work for long periods, while others experienced slow days in their small enterprises. Mai Bee described how she felt compelled to contribute money even though she did not have any. Madzibaba stated that:

People back home do not understand some of the things we go through here and assume life is okay here in South Africa ... my relationship with my in-laws would be ruined if I stop sending money. *Tinenge tichingonzi tinazvo isu tisiina kana chatiinacho.*

Madzibaba explained that being the firstborn and a man placed much strain on his finances. At home, he had a wife and two children to look after, as well as his parents. In the context of South Africa, this financial obligation is popularly known as black tax (Magubane 2017; Fongwa 2019). Black families in South Africa and Zimbabwe are vulnerable to poverty due to prevailing socioeconomic factors and the politics of the day (Crush and Tevera 2010; Dzingirai, Mutopo and Landau 2014; Crush and Caesar 2017; Fongwa 2019; Mhlongo 2019). There is a commonly held assumption that migrations automatically change one’s misfortunes. It is such assumptions that lead to too many expectations from the family members left behind. Not everyone finds a job upon arrival when they decide to migrate. Secondly, not all these jobs pay well, especially when one is a migrant and undocumented as well.

## **5.4 Conclusion**

The chapter explored the reasons for migration by young Zimbabwean migrants. The pursuit of educational journeys, food insecurity, marital obligations, political instability, economic collapse, and existing social connections were identified as the major reasons for migration. The study also found xenophobia, exploitation, broken family

ties, and the need to plough back as challenges faced by migrants. The following chapter focuses on the barriers to social capital and the coping mechanisms employed by Zimbabwean youth migrants.



## CHAPTER SIX

### RESEARCH FINDINGS, PART II: BARRIERS TO SOCIAL CAPITAL AND COPING MECHANISMS

#### 6.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter discussed the contributing factors for Zimbabwean youth migration. It also provided a chance to examine how their expectations in Durban, South Africa, are in contrast to their reality. This chapter builds on the data provided before to examine the quality of Zimbabweans' social relationships in relation to their experiences. The aim of the research was to increase social capital among Zimbabwean youth to promote social cohesion and transformation. Discrimination, unemployment, challenges to accessing documentation, and maintenance of relationships were the challenges faced. The challenges have sowed seeds of mistrust and competitiveness among migrants, affecting the quality of the relations enjoyed. This chapter also looks at the coping mechanisms used by the Zimbabwean youth migrants living in Durban. These coping mechanisms were equally essential in determining the social capital that they already possessed.

#### 6.2 Discrimination – *aMakwerekwere*/Foreigners

One of the major challenges that the participants face is discrimination from host communities. Migrants are treated in an unjust and prejudicial manner because of their origin, language, citizenship, and physical attributes. When one decides to migrate, they expect to have greater opportunities in their new destination. The migratory journey, on the other hand, might be a conflicting experience. The participants expressed how migrating to South Africa had caused them to lose their social position while also permitting them to achieve economic success. In their interactions with the host community, they are often exposed to different forms of stigma and discrimination. Zimbabwean youth migrants, as with other African migrants, are labeled as *amakwerekwere*. It is a label that marks them out and denies them any sense of belonging in the community or the opportunity to participate in and benefit from local communities. Their inability to communicate in the local language (Hunter-

Adams and Rother 2017) as well as their different physical characteristics are utilized to deny them access to the community and its resources.

This dehumanization of African migrants has roots in the apartheid era. It was a period when South Africa was cut off from the rest of Africa, ushering in a sense of distinctiveness. Migrants from other countries are increasingly seen as untrustworthy, having a low status, and being undeserving. It is because of this belief that they have been subjected to cultural, structural, and direct violence. Humiliation, killing, rape, detention, and denial of access to basic services are some of the examples. The participants shared how they are violated in public institutions and public and private spaces. These evidence earlier notions put forward by Fanon (1967) about how labels lead to violence. Chenai stated:

I share a house with many other tenants who are mostly South African. They openly have shown their dislike towards me. I have heard them speak ill of migrants and blame us for their misfortunes. Whenever we need to come together on matters regarding the house I am always treated differently.

The migrants described how they felt powerless at times, along with having a sense of regret. Locals are abusing their power by treating migrants unfairly because they cannot challenge them. Chenai was questioned about her strategy for dealing with the problem that she was experiencing. Her reaction was that she would avoid confrontations since she felt her landlord would not act. Her nationality has been used to marginalize her and treat her unfairly. Unfortunately, this sense of powerlessness can lead to catastrophic outcomes, such as suicide, because of an inability to cope with the predicament.

### **6.3 Lack of Employment Opportunities**

One of the major push factors for leaving home for many of the participants was a search for economic empowerment. Some were lucky to quickly find employment and others had to create their own. Failure to secure employment is often a stigmatized status. Kudzai stated:

Most of my family migrated to South Africa during the economic and political crisis in 2008. Most of them have been fortunate enough to get

employment. However, the persistent pressure from them for me to join them made me migrate. They offered to assist me with resources such as food, shelter, and clothing till I am financially stable. As time went on, I realized that there was a general notion that I was being lazy and not showing enough initiative. This was because I had been in South Africa for 6 months and was unemployed. It hurt me a lot because whenever my parents were called it always came up. My parents had the impression that I was enjoying staying at home, eating, and sleeping... Whenever people came to visit, my employment status was always brought up; I was referred to as the *bamunini vasingashande* (unemployed brother-in-law). I took this as a sign that my time was up and worked on a plan to move out.

The participants' employment status is used to address and identify them. It humiliates and isolates them, limiting their chances of belonging to a collective. The label comes with the assumption that they are lazy and lack creativity and initiative. This further perpetuates a racial stereotype that Black people are lazy and unwilling to work for themselves (Du Toit *et al.* 2018b). Being labeled as lazy means that people will exclude one from their social circle because they see one as a liability. When someone is unemployed, they may limit their participation because they do not trust that people will treat them fairly or with empathy. Withdrawal from the Zimbabwean circles limits their chances of getting employed as they lack access to information and potential links to employment opportunities. Employment allows one to belong and earns one respect and trust in social circles.

Themba traveled to South Africa in search of work to support his family. He thought that Zimbabweans (including his family) who had been in Durban for a longer period would be a resource for him when he arrived. Themba expected that they would assist him in finding accommodation, but more crucially, a job. He was unable to get work for a long time because he had no assistance from anyone and had to do so on his own. Themba stated:

I noticed that people here are not as helpful as people back home. No one gives you leads to jobs even if they know you are jobless. I was jobless for several months upon my arrival here. The Zimbabweans around me would remind me about how tough the environment was especially with regards to getting a job. During the time, I was not employed; no one invited me to their social gatherings. If they did, I knew I would be the one doing most of the gathering-related tasks like starting the fire, braaiing the meat whilst the employed ones get to talk about their successes and link each with available opportunities. To be fair, there were moments I also declined invitations to even go out for drinks with the guys. I was not able to even

buy a beer for myself. I was not willing to embarrass myself and be a liability in that regard. There were times I felt like less of a man because of my employment predicament. For instance, to attend these events, someone had to collect me from my place and take me back. At the end of the braais, I went to leftover meat was packed and handed over to me to take home. I accepted the meat but found it humiliating as a man to be receiving free food from other men.

Unemployed people in communities must confront the social reality that employed people do not socialize with unemployed people. When the former socialize with the latter, it is conditional and usually benefits the former. In the above, the participant, being male, felt that the support that he was being given was a threat to his identity and narrative of self. The feeling of insecurity may have led the participant to feel threatened and to avoid gatherings by rejecting invitations. Also present is shame and low self-esteem, which results in them withdrawing their participation. The gatherings provided a platform to network, and invitations were a show of being part of the collective and support. To gain a better appreciation of this, there were questions that the researcher should have asked: "Do you think your friends were not showing you support in the best way they could? Why do you say so? Would you not have done the same if you were them?" It is important to establish why he chose not to trust and see this as genuine support.

When the stigma is internalized, unemployed individuals fail to picture a positive possible self in the future. One tends to feel shame and worthlessness, and, sometimes, one isolates themselves. If they also fail to get any validation or support from family and friends, it affects their ability to envision a possible self. The youth stage is one where individuals view it as a transitory stage and a point where one realizes their full potential. The inconsistency between the possible self and how others perceive them leaves the individual vulnerable and possessing low social capital. A lack of trust, sense of belonging, and withdrawn participation divides communities.

Unemployed youths may choose to make their frustrations known by resorting to crime, violence, and other deviant behaviors (Du Toit *et al.* 2018a). The unemployed youth bond over their misfortunes and turn this social capital into a culture of crime. It highlights that people coming together may not always result in a good outcome. In

the world over, young people have gone out into the streets to protest over the lack of employment opportunities. Some of these protests have turned violent, and many have lost their lives. The August 2016 and 1 August 2018 shootings in Zimbabwe are good examples of protests turning violent, and, in the case of the latter, six people unfortunately lost their lives (Mude 2018; Magaisa 2019). It was protest action where social capital was being turned into political capital by the unemployed and frustrated youth.

#### **6.4 Restrictive Migrant Documentation Framework**

Many of the participants struggle with issues around documentation. It takes a very long time to resolve these issues, or they are not eligible since they entered the country illegally. Sometimes, in discussions in public spaces, they are often labeled as illegal “aliens” or illegal foreigners (Hiropoulos 2020). This former is a term that has roots in apartheid migration policies. It works to discriminate against and criminalize migrants who do not have the necessary documentation to regularize their stay. This is not completely unique to South Africa’s context but a phenomenon in global migration. South African media houses have furthered a narrative that undocumented migrants have a hand in dwindling employment opportunities (Jani 2019), destroying their infrastructure, and crime. This has led to the stigma against and discrimination of undocumented migrants in communities, churches, and areas of work.

The lack of trust and criminality narrative associated with undocumented migrants makes them a target of SAPS, DHA, and the ordinary community members. This is through random raids by authorities and policing by communities. The presence of some Zimbabweans in criminal activities has also given community members justification to attack Zimbabweans. Documentation is, thus, a sensitive and personal topic when the Zimbabwean community is concerned. Most times, they are not willing to let one another know. The undocumented usually lie and claim to have the necessary documentation. The lack of documentation in the Zimbabwean migrant community is associated with being untrustworthy, while the possession of documentation is seen as respectable and comes with an element of superiority. Silas stated:

When people hear or know that you do not have documentation to stay in South Africa, they treat and speak to you differently. If anything is to go missing, suppose at a function, the first suspect is the undocumented individual.

The possession of documentation is used to award or withdraw respect and trust. Themba stated, “Life here in South Africa is not so easy as I imagined it to be. One needs to come up with ways to deal with challenges to survive.”

One of the participants acknowledged the presence of challenges and hardships in the remark above. It is also proof that they are conscious of the lowered identity that they carry around with them daily. In sharing their experiences, they identified resilience sources, which were internal and external. These include intellect, motivation, family, and friends, among many others.

## **6.5 Mounting Pressure on Women to Marry**

### **6.5.1 Cross-Border Relationships (*malInternational Friendly Match*)**

Cross-border relationships or marriages have been a common phenomenon between South Africans and Zimbabweans (Tafira 2018). Zimbabwean men, when they cross the border, tend to want to explore relationships with South African women. This is done to satisfy sexual curiosity and exude dominant masculinity. While this is a major achievement for these men, it affects their social interactions with other Zimbabweans and South Africans.

When the Zimbabwean community is concerned, a serious relationship or marriage with a local woman is associated with being unfocused. It is also regarded as something not to be taken seriously. One of the terms mentioned to describe these relationships is “*malInternational friendly match*,” which suggests that it is seen as entertainment since they are young, as it is equated to a sports match where they see themselves as the obvious winners. Ndaba stated:

A lot of guys get distracted and get to the point of staying or marrying local women. This usually ends in them not fulfilling responsibilities at and focus on their ‘new families’. I do not think I would be able to stay with someone who does not understand my traditions; culture; and, more importantly, speak my language. How will she speak to my parents? Is she willing to go

home with me if I decide to return to Zimbabwe for good? I am against being involved with local women. I do not think I would advise any of my friends or family to do so.

Dexter stated:

I have South African girlfriend and we have been together for three years. We moved in together a year into our relationship. My parents are aware of this relationship but do not support it. They feel she will influence me to stop carrying out my duties and responsibilities within family. However, I do always give them update about our relationship here and there. I am planning on getting married to her soon but would really want the blessing of my parents... My girlfriend's family is also not in support of our relationship. They are of the view that I am using her to get South African citizenship. We have both lost a few of friends who did not support our relationship too. Lack of support from both our family and friends has resulted in conflict on numerous occasions between us.

The lack of support from both family and friends influences the quality of the relationships. For such relationships to be a success, there is a need for support from family and friends. A lack of support is usually in the form of a lack of acceptance and mistrust, and it affects the level of commitment, stability, and security in the relationship (Isike 2015; Igbokwe 2019). From a Zimbabwean traditional point of view, this lack of support may be due to the presence of barriers, discourses, and structures that regulate sexual relations and practices (Chivandikwa and Muwonwa 2013; Dube 2017). The popular Shona proverb "*rooranai/rooreranai vematongo*" (marry people from the same area whose backgrounds you know) speaks well to this regulation of sexual relationships. Young people are often encouraged by elders to date and marry people who are not strangers in terms of location, tradition, and culture. Marriage is, therefore, used as social capital and strengthens bonds between two families. Cross-cultural unions are not encouraged but continue to grow due to the migration of young Zimbabweans to different parts of the world. Due to a lack of acceptance, they cannot tap into the information or enjoy any other resources within the family and friends' networks, which isolates them. When there is no support, it lowers the chances of bridging social capital between families of different traditional and cultural backgrounds. It continues to feed into the larger existing divisions across communities and borders.

The regulation of relationships by elders is not entirely to punish the youth but rather to safeguard them (Makaudze 2020). It seeks to protect them from falling prey to incompatible pairings, violence, and abuse. According to the Shona tradition, there are structures in place to support young people during courtship and dating. The young women turn to their aunts whilst the young men turn to the uncles for guidance and confide in them. As the relationship progresses, they walk the young people through sexual education, marital roles, and advice. More importantly, they lead them through all the marital rituals to formalize their union. The rituals are a form of making social capital that require participation and symbolize acceptance and membership in a family network. During marriages, these are the same structures used to resolve conflict when the two fail to resolve it amongst themselves (Dube 2017). Due to migration, most young Zimbabweans have resorted to relying on any available relatives and friends close by as support structures. However, they still long for acceptance from their families to strengthen their own relationships.

### **6.5.2 The Stain of Being Unmarried for Young Women**

In Zimbabwe, religion and custom place a high value on the institution of marriage. Women appear to bear most of the blame for their inability to find long-term relationships. They are either not domesticated enough, have a poor spirit, or lack faith. Unlike their male counterparts, they are blamed for the failure of these relationships. Due to such a culture, the state of being unmarried exposes young women to different forms stigma and discrimination by society. The unmarried women also degrade other unmarried women, as evidenced by Yeukai's response:

When I was a single, I was often a target of hurtful comments and actions by other Zimbos. It all changed when I met my current partner who I live with. I am now treated with respect *saMadam*<sup>6</sup> (spouse/partner) of one of the guys, and that title commands respect and trust. This makes me different from *mvana* and who are not treated with respect. I have also managed to interact with some of the partners of his friends. We often meet when we have braais and talk about female issues.

According to Vimbayi:

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<sup>6</sup> *Madam* is often used to refer to a woman as the official partner, and it is associated with the power that women assume when they get married.



All my friends back home are now married and have a child at least. My family thinks I am not interested and not putting any effort in finding a suitable partner. They do not realize how difficult dating is when you are in a foreign land. You can just easily be attached to someone and start trusting them. These guys also bring partners from Zimbabwe, or they date local women. When you think you have found someone, either he has wife back home or is just looking to satisfy his personal needs.

The researcher was fortunate enough to attend a bridal shower when she first started recruiting participants for the study. The wedding shower incident demonstrates the importance of marital status in terms of social capital. A bridal shower is a common occasion intended to honor and usher a woman into marriage. It gives women the opportunity to create, question, and replicate masculinities. As the women engage, friendships are established, and they express solidarity as well as participate in a network of friends and family. Gender allowed the women present to bond, and the absence of others weakened some bonds within the networks.

The participants and I were greeted warmly and shown to their seats while waiting for the presentation to begin. The ceremony began with a prayer from their church's pastor. After that, younger, single (unmarried) women were assigned to the task of meal preparation. There was silence and tension in the kitchen when the team arrived, and it appeared that the team was all absorbing what had transpired. The researcher started to speak to break the silence and referenced the fact that several of the team were around the same age as some of the married women outside. The researcher believed that because of the team members' ages, they were entitled to sit and participate in the proceedings. Gladys reacted to the researcher with a giggle, implying that age was unimportant in this case but that marital status was important: "*hauna murume mwanangu* (you do not have a husband, my child)". Her remark also emphasized how marriage provides women with a respectable standing. As she was expressing her anguish and disgust, this was a dark side of humor. Since the researcher and Gladys were not married, the elder women had used it to pull them down. Gladys and the researcher had used jokes to express their dissatisfaction with how they were being treated.

Marriage is a form of social capital, and those who do not have it may face discrimination. Ultimately, married women at the bridal shower had formed a bond

around their marital status and used it to block the team's participation. This episode is evidence that the church may not always be a safe environment for its members. Nyasha stated:

We helped to organize this bridal shower and even made financial contributions. I assumed that it meant we would also be allowed to participate fully. These older women should have just told us this before we came. It was a humiliating experience; I would have just sent my financial contribution if I had known this was going to happen. Married women do not like us and they think we are after their men and find it hard to trust us. I am disappointed because I was looking forward to a good time socializing with other women from home. It was also an opportunity to discuss other things like business besides men and marriage.

Their status of being young and unmarried had denied them an opportunity to fully participate in the proceedings. The women were going to share their experiences of masculinity and use it to advise the bride-to-be. Before starting her presentation, the pastor showed disapproval of our presence and asked that we go to the kitchen. She felt that we were inexperienced in dealing with men and that that made us unsuitable to be part of the proceedings. Our inexperience was decided by our marital status as well as age and not our lived experiences. We were not going to get a chance to construct, challenge, and reconstruct masculinities with the older and married women. It was something we could not resist as the instruction was from the pastor and senior church members. Since most of us had or were in some form of relationship, our experiences and knowledge in all that was being discussed were valuable. Femininity, or being a *woman*, is, thus, a construction of a patriarchal society, which is dominated by men. Women are, therefore, a vehicle through which patriarchy is furthered in their own spaces.

## **6.6 Major Barriers to (Re)establishing and Maintaining Social Capital**

The previous section highlighted the challenges encountered by the participants. Each of these has had an impact on the level and quality of the social capital that they possess or that is available to them. The following section identifies implications, including high levels of mistrust and competitiveness resulting in failing and superficial networks.

### **6.6.1 Mistrust of Individuals and Existing Social Networks**

The most widely mentioned aspect and critical component of relational social capital is trust. The definition of trust has a broad accord among academics. It is characterized as “a tendency to presume the best when interpreting another’s motives and behaviour” (Uzzi 1997: 43), or “the willingness to be vulnerable to others’ unmonitored or uncontrolled acts” (Mayer *et al.* 1995:712). During the exchanges and via their lived experiences, the participants demonstrated their desire or lack of willingness to be vulnerable in their interactions with others and the outcome. This was greatly due to a lack of trust due to unfamiliarity with one another. The researcher reminded the participants in every session on how their participation would help them and others. They were sharing their stories to give a voice to their community in the pursuit of social change. This increased their willingness to interact and the levels of confidence and trust within the group.

Munashe attended his final church service when he was in his early twenties. He no longer attends because he has lost faith in the pastors and church leaders. He believed that pastors exploited their congregations for their own gain:

I went to church a lot when I was young because my parents forced us to join them. A lot of time was spent on money-related issues more than anything else. The sermons were all based on giving money to the church. Whenever they wanted to have church conferences and other events, they would ask for donations. The most shocking thing is that they asked for money whenever church members required assistance... They had money for church programs but were not willing to use the money to help their members. I then knew that this money was not for us but for them, so I stopped going.

Due to the behavior of the pastors and other church officials, Munashe did not expect a positive outcome. Most of the male participants believed that the church, particularly the new Pentecostal movements, was there to “take their women” and, in some cases, abuse them. Ndaba stated, “These church people prey on our women; I know of a lot of relationships that have been affected and destroyed.”

However, the women felt that the churches do not have anything to do with the collapse of romantic relationships. Grace responded in the following manner:

These men do not treat us well and expect us to stay with them. Men should treat us well and then we will not leave them. At church, they only remind us of our worth and how to handle our relationships. These men do not like empowered women; they feel threatened.

Ndaba then went on to speak about the demise of his relationship, which he blamed on a local church pastor. He had talked about his future with his girlfriend of 3 years, which included bringing her to Durban. Ndaba intended to marry her after he had saved up enough money and found a decent location in which to live. Ndaba explained to the group that:

I used to date this Lisa from back home and the first two years we were together in Zimbabwe. Before I left, I informed her of my intention to marry her and even introduced her to some of my family members. The first couple of months apart were quite difficult for both of us. I made sure that I called frequently so we could maintain intimate connection. Lisa was a member of her church music group, and that was something I supported. Whenever she needed a new uniform, I would always give her money. Lisa became more distant and was spending more time attending church programs. According to one of my friends in Zimbabwe, Lisa was getting married to the new church pastor. She had received a prophecy from the senior pastor about her getting married, but the identity of the man was not revealed. The man she was supposed to marry was the new pastor who revealed he had also dreamt about this. These pastors are just there to prey on women, nothing else, and, therefore, I do not date *ma sister ekuchechi* (church girls).

Ndaba was no longer willing to become involved with a religious woman and risk being heartbroken again. In the case of Ndaba, the church encouraged its youth to marry within the church. To develop and enjoy peaceful marriages, people were encouraged to date and marry within the faith. Within the church network, this is one of the ways that bonding social capital is manifested. When everyone in the congregation, especially when they come as families, understands the theology and how to apply it, it becomes much easier to administer a church.

Ndaba's narrative also suggests that the church is a place where many women have been sexually abused. The fact that most worshippers are women has been established, and this research reflects that. Many of the male participants were not Christians, but they acknowledged the presence of a supernatural being, as well as good and evil spirits. Many incidents of sexual assault, not only of women but also of

minors, have been linked to the clergy. This indicates that there is a sexual abuse crisis within the walls of the church. The Roman Catholic church's problem of sexual abuse is the most widely investigated and publicized (Plante 2020). It is critical that people investigate other religious institutions where sexual assault has occurred and take the necessary steps forward.

Christian teachings often transmit and further patriarchal practices that result in all forms of abuse against Zimbabwean women. It is through these teachings that the role of women in both public and private spheres is governed. Vuola (2016: 326) is of the view that "Most of the patriarchal claims about women's nature, roles, rights and position, not only inside a given religious community but in society at large, are based on authoritative religious texts and their interpretation," while Chisale (2020: 2) further added that in ecclesial situations, Christian men hide "behind the Bible and culture" to maintain female inferiority, and this is a form of violation by the church. Sibanda and Humbe (2020) gave an account of Robert Gumbura's sexual abuse case and indicated that he took advantage of women accustomed to male authority. This furthered the oppression of women and continued the exposure to abuse and different forms of violence.

Being unmarried is constructed as a spoiled identity by both tradition and religion in Zimbabwe. Women are generally socialized into thinking that they should get married and that being single is a transitory phase. This is a standard set by patriarchy and upheld by women to further patriarchy since they will submit during the marriage and domesticity. The church and society seem to construct single unmarried women as potential "husband snatchers" (Biri 2021: 184). This means that married women do not trust their unmarried counterparts, which decreases their chances of being in a meaningful collective together. In this case, the latter were being treated as untrustworthy, questionable, and "competitors" when men were concerned. In Zimbabwe, there is a phenomenon known as "small house" that may justify this lack of trust between women. It refers to single women who become involved with married men without the knowledge of their families. Usually, men officially get married to one woman but also start another family with another woman (Muchabaiwa 2017). It takes the form of a polygamous relationship but is not officialized. Therefore, married women are always on the lookout and tend to hold this stereotype of husband snatching as

true for all single women, and they label them as *mahure* and *mvana*, which are all derogatory Shona terms meaning prostitute, loose, and not virgins. The men are not held accountable when they cheat; rather, it is all put on the other women evidencing the patriarchal tendencies adopted by women themselves against one another. This continues to provide the breeding ground for the continued and worsening abuse and discrimination of women by women taking away their agency.

### **6.6.2 Competitiveness**

#### **a. *Competition for Limited Available Employment Opportunities and Access to Resources***

Several participants migrated due to a lack of resources, as mentioned in the preceding chapter. It is also true that migration has not resulted in a better life experience for many migrants. Despite being in another country, Melody is still mistreated at her workplace, an experience shared by other men and women in the group, stating that:

The situation here is not really what I hoped for when I decided to come to Durban. I was expecting to get more opportunities in terms of employment. Currently, I am working, but the work environment is unbearable, and I am just holding on to secure my income. If I leave the job, someone, another Zimbabwean, will get it and where will I go? A lot of Zimbabweans are looking for jobs. The opportunities just like home are few; it is very difficult to find a job when you are from another country. Going back home is not an option for me right now. I have hope that my circumstances here will change one day.

#### **b. *Display of Competitive Masculinities***

The lack of economic opportunities has resulted in a competitive spirit in young Zimbabweans. As a way of expressing masculinity, the males often displayed a competitive spirit when they meet at the soccer club. Jobs, income, women, and ownership of property or investments proved to be the most spoken-about topics in their encounters as males. The soccer club is never a platform for sharing information, but rather a platform for asserting dominance and feeling good about oneself. Members of the soccer team brought this to the researcher's attention. They spent much time talking about their interactions with women, in addition to the main issue of soccer. Dexter stated that:

When we meet up for soccer, we play and talk about what is going on in different soccer leagues all over the world. It is an also opportunity to talk about women and our interactions with them. We often talk about our planned sexual encounters or the ones we have experienced.

According to Farai:

At our soccer meetings, we get to talk about our women issues as well as play football. It is one space where we can talk about women without them interfering.

The topic of dating and marriage emerged frequently during the discussions. The men seemed to be competing through having multiple casual sexual interactions and dating numerous women to demonstrate their manhood. Dexter stated that:

If we are going to be truthful, all the men here have had a lot of sex, not just from their wives or official partners. When we started, you asked us to speak about ourselves and our lived experiences, so that is what I will do. When I decided to come to Durban and told my friends about my plan, they all spoke about the greatness of the opportunity as well as the new experiences I would encounter. One of the things they said I should do was to find out what was like to date and or sleep with South African women. My friends were counting on me to experience this on their behalf as well as prove my manhood. I have experienced what is like to date South African women and still am. My current girlfriend is South African, and she is great. It is quite different from dating these sisters of ours. When they come here, they somehow are too clingy if you date them and expensive to maintain because you must help them send money home.

This illustrates how men are socialized into regarding women as sexual objects and who can be violated through denying them autonomy (Muguti and Sande 2019). They have also been socialized into believing that having many sexual interactions qualifies them as “real” men. An earlier study by (Buvé, Bishikwabo-Nsarhaza and Mutangadura 2002) showed that peer norms in Africa’s youth included “expressing” their masculinity through early sexual conquests and having several sexual partners. The soccer club provided a public forum for men to bond over this embodiment of masculinity. Places of work have also been identified to be a platform where male employees encourage each other to engage in risky sexual behavior (Tafadzwa and Herbert 2018). Females, on the other hand, are stigmatized for premarital and numerous sexual practices (Tolman 2016; Zaikman and Marks 2016). It is this very

same masculinity that is responsible for their vulnerability to HIV/AIDS and their unwillingness to seek treatment (Ganle 2016). Risky sexual behavior is being regarded as a form of social capital to be accepted and gain membership in the soccer club.

In Zimbabwean society, masculinity is often connected with power and virility. A bull (*inkunzi/bhuru*) is a sign of authority and virility in the Ndebele and Shona cultures, hence anyone referred to as a bull is a figure of authority and virility. The bull can also be a symbol of desirable male sexuality, which accounts for the use of sexual enhancers by men (Tafadzwa and Herbert 2018; Muguti and Sande 2019). The symbol is linked to a popular expression in both cultures: “*bhuru rinorwa rinoonekwa nemavanga/inkunzi ibonakala ngamanxeba*,” which literally translates to “a bull that can fight is seen by its own scars”. The expression implies that a “real man” is judged solely on his sexual prowess. Chitando (2007) goes on to state that sexually transmitted diseases are considered as “signatures of manhood” in this context. Males are encouraged to inflict violence on their bodies and display the scars as a source of pride (Mangena and Ndlovu 2016). This behavior is counterproductive in the face of the HIV/AIDS epidemic and undermines social cohesion.

The image of a bull is also associated with strong masculinity, which commonly embraces the use of violence. Some of the men in the group claimed to having previously been involved in gender-based violence. They had either fought with other men over a particular woman not only to demonstrate their sexual prowess but also to physically mark their territory. No one directly admitted to having fought with their partner over sexual intercourse. According to Garikayi:

There was this girl who cheated on me with another Zimbabwean guy here in Durban. I fought with him to protect my dignity as a man and not be seen as a walk over.

Alistair stated that:

I do not think it is right for a woman to refuse sex when you are in a relationship. My partner knows that sex is a must or else there is no relationship. The first time she denied me sex, we got into a verbal fight, and she ended up agreeing to give me sex. She is my partner; she must give me sex unless she wants me to get it somewhere else.



The males were constructing a certain type of masculinity throughout all the study's engagements. In both the interviews and the wider group conversations, the males distanced themselves from the undesired or unwanted individuals. In this study, all the males had attempted to remove themselves from a violent group of men who would mistreat their partners and neglect their families. Ndaba stated that:

In some cases where there is conflict, it turn violent, and women end up being beaten. These women do not listen or let alone try to understand issues and that why it is sometimes necessary to beat them. I have friend who used to beat his wife, and I advised him to stop otherwise he risked killing her one day.

By mentioning his friend, Ndaba was acknowledging the occurrence of violence. He then went on to reject this aggressive masculinity by explaining his feelings about his friend's conduct and what he had done in response. He had also found a platform in the group to other and conform to or oppose many types of masculinities (Gottzén 2013, 2019). He was exercising his agency in terms of what he wanted the group to identify him by and probably for the females to be open in interacting with him.

In one of Fiona's previous relationships, she had experienced this entitlement to sex by her boyfriend. She had met him through one of her friends in Durban. Their relationship had progressed to the point that they had moved in together. She explained how she could not bargain for safe sex and that contraception was solely her responsibility. Due to the boyfriend's sense of entitlement, her right to consent was revoked in the relationship. A part of her believed that she owed him sexual privilege because of how she was socialized into femininity. It was her responsibility to ensure that he was sexually satisfied by giving in to his demands. Fiona stated that:

I once had a boyfriend and we stayed together for a long time. He always wanted to have sex even when I was not feeling well. I loved him very much and would end up having sex even if I did not want. This is something I did so that we would stay together since I wanted him to marry me. The guy would get angry if I were on my period and would always come home late during that week. Later, I that he was seeing someone else but could not ask. I feared his reaction when I asked because of we always end up fighting whenever we did not agree on anything.

Females in Zimbabwe are socialized into servitude and sexual pleasure by the time they reach puberty. Women are assumed to possess characteristics that make them

reliant on men. Dominant gender constructs encourage female sexual passivity and ignorance as well as an overpowering male sexual drive, which is sometimes blamed on women, make it more difficult for women to negotiate safe sex while also putting them in danger of contracting HIV/AIDS (Helman and Ratele 2016). This construction of masculinity encourages sexual privilege for men and makes women vulnerable to sexual abuse.

It is in these interactions with women where men show a lack of attachment. This results in different types of abuse with women being the victims. Mangena (2015) identified emotional, mental, physical, and economic abuse. The following response from one of the respondents speaks to this very well: “*Munhu wechirume haaita mafeelings ndezvekungoitawo* ‘hit and run’ *wosiirawo vamwe*.” Loosely translated, this means that men should not be invested emotionally in their relationships. This subjects the women to abuse in their relationships with their male counterparts due to their lack of emotional and physical attachment, etc. (Mangena 2015; Ganle 2016). Several women in the group alluded to having encountered male partners who were not emotionally invested in their relationships. In the occurrence of such, men have agency to award or withdraw worth to or from women as they wish. Muguti and Sande (2019) alluded that due to fungibility, women are treated as interchangeable objects. One of the constant dreads is that one’s partner may leave one if one does not follow the rigid cultural teaching for women in relation to men. Being a submissive partner is also a form of social capital that is used to find female friends, especially in religious circles. Both religion and society consider submission to be a positive quality in a woman. It bestows dignity and demonstrates resiliency in the face of adversity. If one is a submissive partner, it is assumed that one has been taught well by one’s family and is well-mannered. Unlike single women, submissive women are thought to be able to keep their relationships together through submission. It makes one a desirable and trustworthy member, and it typically elevates one’s social standing.

### **6.6.3 Failing Superficial Networks**

The role of religion in understanding migration and migrants’ lived experiences has been underlined in previous studies (Dube 2019; Chimbidzikai 2021; White 2021). Integration is aided by the church, which is a key part of migrants’ overall approach

(Hungwe 2013). As a result, the church plays an important role in the lives of young Zimbabwean youth migrants. It has the power to either increase or decrease social capital. The church is also a place where social capital is manifested through the various interactions of its members. The participants were asked if they were a member of any religious or spiritual group. The responses indicated that many of the participants were Christians, but others were unsure to which doctrine they most closely adhered. Some belonged to Zimbabwe's "mainline" or "traditional" churches, which have Western roots.

Churches were employed as a technique to obtain access to Africa's resources during the colonial era. Cecil John Rhodes used a policy known as the "flag to follow the Cross," in which the church and the state collaborated (Sibanda and Humbe 2020). As a result, mission schools and hospitals have been built in Zimbabwe. Morgenster mission (Dutch Reformed Church), St Augustine's mission (Anglican Church), Chishawasha mission (Roman Catholic Church), Kwenda mission (Methodist church in Zimbabwe), Old Mutare mission (United Methodist Church), Mt Selinda (Church of Christ from America), and Hope Fountain (London Missionary Society) are examples of these mission stations.

Yeukai is a devout member of the Zimbabwe Assemblies of God Africa (ZAOGA), originally known as the Assemblies of God Africa (AOGA), which was founded in the 1960s by Apostle Guti and his wife, Dr Guti (Biri 2012; Musoni 2021). Yeukai stated that "I am a born-again Christian who attends ZAOGA Forward in Faith Ministries International founded by Ezekiel and Eunor Guti."

The mainline churches failed to retain African members because, in terms of racial segregation, they constituted an extension of the colonial state. Pentecostalism and indigenously built churches emerged during this time. Other members of the group were from Pentecostal and indigenous congregations. Although it was not completely legitimate at first, ZAOGA was one of the earliest Pentecostal movements that tried to give Christianity a Black face (Maxwell 2000). When it first opened, it drew many young people because of its contemporary feel (Chitando and Biri 2016).

Zimbabwean-based churches are a preference for most Zimbabweans. The reason is that they are allowed to enjoy an environment that is familiar and that gives a sense of belonging. Such a comfortable environment allows its members to express themselves and fully participate in activities, which are crucial in any network. The strong desire to feel at home and enjoy this familiarity is evidenced by the high numbers of activities organized. The activities include conferences, prayer retreats, braais, and other recreational activities. This contributes to bonding social capital because of religious affiliations and establishing positive and genuine relationships. It is also a platform for Zimbabweans from different walks of life to socialize, facilitating bridging social capital. There is much information sharing in this network, but this is limited to what is available to the few members. Rumbidzai stated that:

I enjoy going to church every Sunday because it is the only time I feel a strong connection to home. We sing in Shona and play our traditional music instruments. We are so few that everyone knows everyone including the jobs we do and where we stay. It feels like another version of family because of the way we also assist and look out for one another.

The feeling of safety, reciprocity, solidarity, and trust in the church network closes off its members from other community members. It lowers their ability to establish relations outside this network and limits their access to resources and information. Congregants are advised to marry each other and support each other over everyone else outside their network. Access to others outside of the network facilitates increased opportunities, a wide range of resources, and an improved quality of information.

Mainline churches from Zimbabwe continue to advocate for their own independence from their South African counterparts. The Anglican Church, Roman Catholic Church, Methodist Church in Zimbabwe, Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe, and the United Methodist Church are some examples. Due to a lack of infrastructure, the Zimbabwean congregants are housed by South African counterparts. Their leaders continue to advocate for their identity that clearly distinguishes them as a Zimbabwean parish operating in South Africa. To achieve this, they have their own time slots to hold services for Zimbabweans, usually called the Shona-speaking service. This may be attributed to the fact that the majority of Zimbabweans speak Shona. Postcolonial Zimbabwe is dominated by the Shona culture and language, which results in the stigmatizing of other cultures and languages. This Shona hegemony is witnessed in

the government when officials visit and address non-Shona-speaking communities. It is also transmitted at different levels of formal and informal education. Therefore, it undermines the voice, agency, and participation of migrants in the church network, affecting their levels and quality of social capital.

Pamela, Mai Bee, and Melody also shared how they had become members of the churches where they now worship. Melody stated that:

I used to attend one of these mainline churches before I came to Durban. My friend introduced me to Prophetic Healing and Deliverance ministries led by Prophet W. Magaya. After I attended, I never stopped going because of the type of sermon he gave. When I look back at it now, I can see clearly that it was God's plan.

Melody became a member of a religious group where she thought her personal issues were being handled. She had already highlighted the challenges that she had encountered at home. The church became a source of inspiration and optimism for her future health, prosperity, and success (Magezi and Manzanga 2016). She believed that her positive outcome would arrive through sermons, bringing an end to the era of adversity. These were also the results of Chimbizikai (2021) who discovered that the church was a beacon of hope for migrants in South Africa through an informal encounter. He was speaking with a member of Bushiri's congregation, a well-known Malawian prophet. The church member believed that being delivered at church contributed to his good fortune in obtaining legal documentation to stay in South Africa. This reliance on hope and religion makes them vulnerable as they look inward instead of outward to obtain the essential information that they require.

The participants who attend multicultural congregations have enjoyed better access to information, assistance, and opportunities. Due to their membership in multicultural churches, migrants obtain information faster and that is of a higher quality than that of their counterparts. This is what one of the participants had to state:

Our pastor encourages us to look out for each other despite that we come from different countries and backgrounds. My South African churchmate who has become a friend and sister looks out for me. Whenever he hears about planned attacks from her social media platforms, she warns me of the places to avoid. When I need to get my tax number, she even accompanied me to the South African Revenue Authority (SARS) office and

walked me through the process. I also pass on the information to other Zimbabweans I know. I like going to this church because we all treated as equals before God and each other. We are all just one big family of Christ.

Pentecostalist movements in South Africa have a multicultural approach that is appealing to young migrants. It recognizes all its congregants as equals and as belonging to the great family of God. They speak of a borderless territory that God has created for all His children (Rocha 2017, 2019). Therefore, it creates a sense of belonging, trust, reciprocity, and an improved sense of self-esteem in its members. However, there is a downside when people are aware of the possible benefits of belonging to a network such as this one. A few of the migrants spoke of how they occasionally attended these multicultural churches to score benefits, such as grocery hampers and small piece job opportunities. This may be attributed to the failure to establish and connect themselves within the larger congregation due to language barriers or racial issues, for instance. It may lead to loneliness and alienation due to the superficial nature of the relations and is a major flaw.

Migrant prayer requests concern obtaining stable jobs, increased income, becoming documented, and their families at home. The researcher has been fortunate enough to attend one of these Zimbabwean Pentecostal churches in Durban. The sermon concerned trusting God, that He has a plan for everyone, and that one needs to be patient:

Brothers and sister, we are here because our Father (God) wants us to be here. He has already made a promise over your life and will see it through. You might not have the job that you left Zimbabwe hoping to get, your business is not performing well, you have no permit and no prospective life suitors. *Satani achida asingade uchawana basa, businesss richaunza mari, permit unoyiwana tichapemeberera michato muno* (Whether Satan approves or not regarding you getting a job, your business will rake in huge profits, you will get that permit, and we will have many weddings here in this church)... A permit is just a piece paper and an earthly requirement. God's great plan for your life will manifest in your life at the right time. Trust God, have faith, and allow Him to work in you (Field notes, 10 February 2019).

The sermon inspired hope in the congregants who may have lost hope or started thinking of giving up. It also paints a picture that they are above the law, especially when being documented is concerned. There is a belief that God will give the ultimate decision to grant or deny a permit and not the DHA. The church plays an important

role in cultivating hope but does not leave room for congregants to seek out information that is necessary. For instance, there are few or no teachings around how to be tax compliant or how the permit process proceeds. The church could do better to share relevant information around documentation and encourage its migrants to be documented. Most of these pastors themselves, in some cases, do not have documentation and are not motivated to become documented. In some cases, some of them work elsewhere during the week and have secure jobs and are documented. Their willingness to focus on encouraging others to be documented is less.

In reaction to Zimbabwe's political and socioeconomic situation, a new wave of Pentecostal church groups has recently emerged. In the country, a new, much more charismatic Pentecostal movement has sprouted (Magezi and Manzanga 2016). These new entities appear to be more appealing to the impoverished and marginalized (Mujinga 2018; Rocha 2019; Sibanda and Humbe 2020). Citizens had lost hope and trust in politics, and they were desperate for help. A few noteworthy young men rose to prominence because of the ministries that they founded. Walter Magaya (PHD Ministries), Uebert Angel (Good News Church, formerly Spirit Embassy), and Emmanuel Makandiwa (UFIC ministries) were among them. The positive outlook intended to motivate the attendees that everything is possible can be discerned from the titles given to the churches.

During a period marked by rising unemployment, hyperinflation, inadequate service delivery, and the scarcity of commodities, young people were encouraged to look forward to "good news," prophecies of good fortunes, healing and liberation from sickness and dark powers, and to be a part of a welcoming and ubuntu-based community. Due to their silence on significant concerns of the day, the older Pentecostal movement and certain mainline churches were losing appeal (Chitando and Biri 2016). The good news, prophecies, healing, and deliverance would ensure safety, employment, documentation, good health, and marriage for the participants in this study, among many other goals. As a result, such movements have witnessed a rise in network membership and participation. Pamela stated that:

At my old church, they did not perform healing and were not accepting the use of modern instruments and sing the same old hymns. More importantly, I yearn to speak in tongues.

Pamela further informed the researcher that she thought that starting her own small business in Durban would alter her life. She also prayed fervently for the success of the modest business and for it to grow into something of which she could be proud. In his study of university students, Gukurume (2018) discovered that they were also optimistic that prayers would help them acquire good grades and finally find work after graduation. The most widely held belief is that obtaining a job boosts one's access to financial and material resources. However, the circumstances in Zimbabwe limit young Zimbabweans' possibilities for official employment. Their status as immigrants in Durban does not help them obtain formal employment. Pamela stated that:

I have never been formally employed since my arrival in this country. All my income comes from my small business of buying and selling, which sometimes is very slow. I stopped going to this other church because they kept on asking us for money always, we never really saw the church giving back but they kept on asking for money from us. The pastor somehow suggested that we remained poor or struggled because we never gave to the church. I never went back because I felt personally attacked by these sentiments. I put in a lot of effort and work for business to remain afloat. From the little money that I make, I can barely afford to give myself the life I have always dreamt of.

Vimbayi and Melody also discussed the many steps that they had taken to achieve their goals and ambitions. They had contributed their little financial resources and time to several church programs. Vimbayi stated that "I used to seed the little money I had and participate in church fasting programs, but, until this day, I remain unmarried and struggling financially". According to Melody:

There was never a time that I did not join other church members to go to the prayer mountain. I also attended all the conferences and all-night prayers, but all that I prayed for has not come to fruition, especially that of getting a job.

These young women were using spiritual warfare as a strategy (Gukurume 2018; Rocha 2019). Fasting, praying in tongues, giving money, and attending all church events are all part of this spiritual warfare. Despite this, none of their hopes and dreams had come true, leaving them even more despondent and dissatisfied. They were encouraged to believe that making a deal with God would solve their difficulties. This is a regular occurrence in most African Pentecostal movements. Congregants are



led to think that they must enter a contract with God by seeding and speaking in a language (tongues) that only God hears. They are taught that He favors those who devote their material resources and time. Pentecostal movement sermons emphasize affluence and personal progress, and this has contributed to their popularity (Rocha 2019). Pastors and prophets seem to imply that they have the keys to assisting people in realizing their desires and ambitions. The participants have decreased or stopped their participation in church networks because of the failure of dreams, hopes, and aspirations materializing.

## **6.7 Coping Mechanisms and Deviant Behavior**

Migrants are often labeled as a vulnerable group due to the lack of having their voices heard and access to resources. This study is a platform to give them a voice and show how the label does not entirely remain, as it can be challenged and rejected. It also gives a snapshot of how they manage to overcome challenges. As detailed in the previous sections, the participants discussed their travels to Durban and current experiences. Their vulnerability and coping mechanisms were also brought up during the session. Some people's only way to cope was to be deviant, putting them in much more danger. While some coping techniques appear to push people further into adversity, others appear to increase their odds of resilience and social acceptance in host communities. Resilience is viewed as a developed trait that people develop as they go through life and encounter various risk factors and adversities. Themba stated that "Life here in South Africa is not so easy as I imagined it to be. One needs to come up with ways to deal with challenges to survive".

One of the participants acknowledged the presence of challenges and hardships in the remark above. It is also proof that they are conscious of the lowered identity that they carry around with them daily. In sharing their experiences, they identified resilience sources, which were internal and external. These include intellect, motivation, family, and friends, among many others.

### 6.7.1 Avoidance and Compromise

The participants shared how they avoided any situations that led to confrontation with locals. Most of their encounters in the workspaces and places where they stay are characterized by abuse and discrimination:

At work, they always refer to me as the 'foreigner'; at first, I used to be so offended. I wanted to take it up with the supervisor then realized securing my spot in the organization was more important. In the end, I decided to ignore all kinds of insults and pretend not to be affected by them. This is a sacrifice I am making for those that dependent on me for financial support.

In my experience, my work colleagues always make jokes around my situation (nationality and the crisis back home). It is a sign that they do know about where I come from and try to connect with me through these jokes.

The preceding highlights the xenophobic working atmosphere and conditions that Zimbabwean youth migrants face. The first participant elected to disregard the xenophobic atmosphere and continue. The second participant dismissed the possibility that their co-workers had xenophobic tendencies. Both cases evidence the weak bargaining position occupied by migrants in the workplace, which often leads to abuse and discrimination. Avoidance is being used as a coping mechanism and form of social capital. The whole idea is to be part of the team, which is the larger picture. This is the price that is paid for acceptance and to keep their jobs, and it comes as a compromise as well.

Due to high levels of mistrust, the participants shared that whenever they could, the plan was to avoid other Zimbabweans. Much of this was influenced by past experiences where they had not been given support or where information was not shared with them when they had needed it. They are also aware and wary of being used to achieve personal interests. Some do engage in small talk at events where there are many Zimbabweans. Kudzai stated that "*MaZimba ndiwo anokubira ukanyanya kuvasekerera havazi vekunyanya kusweddedza padhuze*". Loosely, this statement paints a picture of Zimbabweans as untrustworthy and that one should not bond with them. Much of the networking that occurs between Zimbabweans is superficial because of the high levels of mistrust. Therefore, many of them avoid opening up to other Zimbabwean youth migrants, let alone seeking support when

needed. This is usually achieved by staying further away from other Zimbabwean youth migrants.

### 6.7.2 Skin Bleaching

When speaking about relationships, the men spoke about their preference for South Africans in some cases. Progress stated that:

Women from here know how to take care of themselves. They take time when it comes to personal grooming and are more attractive. What attracts me to them is their lighter skin and other physical attributes (chuckles). Our sisters from home could really learn a thing from their counterparts. I have a local woman I see from time to time *tichingobatsirana nekupanana* (engage in casual sex from time to time).

The statement suggests preference based on skin complexion and other physical attributes. The women also complained about this preference for local light-skinned women by the male countrymen. Nyasha stated that:

Men from Zimbabwe have this unexplainable thing for local women who are lighter and have much more thicker body frames than us. We cannot compete with the local women when it comes to that regard, but we try our best to keep up. When I first came here, I was so dark in complexion and did not really invest in my look and dressing. After staying here for a few months, I realized I had to make certain changes if I were to get a boyfriend. I invested in these special oils, soaps, and creams for my skin and my skin has improved. I am lighter and find myself to be more appealing than before.

International beauty standards consider skin tone to be just as important as body shape in assessing female attractiveness (Shivakumar and Jafferany 2020). The quotes above are an expression of dissatisfaction with their skin color by the female participants. Another way that Zimbabwean women try to make themselves attractive and measure up to this standard of beauty is skin bleaching or skin lightening. It is a non-surgical cosmetic procedure that alters the structure and color of one's skin with the intention of improving one's appearance, beauty, or self-esteem (Fayemi 2020). Individuals express their individuality and self through their skin tone, which is the most noticeable expression. Due to being social creatures, individuals place a high value on how others see them, which has an impact on their self-esteem. Women are now being pressured to change their appearance to meet particular beauty standards,

become employed, and attract partners leading to marriage (Jacobs *et al.* 2016). Skin bleaching seems to be a coping mechanism used by migrants in different places. In 2016, some migrant refugees lost their lives after consuming skin bleaching products in Verona, Italy (Pussetti 2021).

The most common motivation for female participants bleaching was to seek life mates. This is further proof of patriarchy and beauty standards that continue to subordinate women to men's power. Skin bleaching is a harmful reaction to men's incessant objectification and stereotyping of women. This was also evident in some of the male participants' answers when they spoke about their interactions with women. Female participants use their skin tone as a type of social capital to enter into marriages, which can lead to other forms of capital, such as economic and cultural capital. Simply put, the lighter a woman's skin, the better her chances of marriage and social standing. It continues to create and promote a very restrictive definition of what it means to be a woman in contemporary society.

The skin bleaching, on the other hand, was not merely for marital purposes for the female participants. It was also supposed to establish a sense of belonging. When skin tone is concerned, South Africans have a lighter, more natural complexion than Zimbabweans. As a result, it was necessary to develop a sense of belonging by utilizing skin tone as a type of social capital. It was a social integration plan on their part. This type of social capital would also enable them to gain access to all other community resources. Men have also taken to skin bleaching to improve how they fare in social circles (Okango 2017; Shivakumar and Jafferany 2020). A handful of males admitted to changing their appearance to blend in with their new surroundings:

*Kana wakatsvukirira vanhu vanokubatawo bho mumaraini ukangosviba une watoshata and wakutarisirwa pasi* (If you have light skin tone, people will treat you well and respect you unlike when you are of a dark skin tone).

As a result, skin tone is a form of social capital that permits migrants to integrate into a community. They gain trust by achieving a homogeneous physical appearance by bleaching. The same principle about how one looks also applies when migrants socialize with each other. Being light-skinned is also associated with a sense of superiority as well as being considerably smarter. When someone has a darker skin

tone, they are treated suspiciously and alienated, and their self-esteem and confidence suffer as a result. It also concerns the symbolism of light and darkness. Lightness is related with well-being and youthfulness. Darkness, on the other hand, relates to danger and hostility. Migrants also want to paint a picture of living comfortably for those at home when they visit them or send photographs. Having lighter skin then becomes a marker of success and being trustworthy. Migrants go further to dress as locals and make an effort to be able to speak the local language. This will increase their success in terms of acceptance in the local communities (Almohamed and Vyas 2019).

It is also vital to note the risks that come with this practice, which is considered a public health issue. Many of the products utilized cause renal failure, damage to the liver, and depression. Stillbirths and neonatal illnesses are common among pregnant women. To obtain treatment for this, much money is required, and most migrants cannot afford it.

### **6.7.3 Dating and Marriage**

In an attempt to compensate for the lack of social support in the absence of family and friends, migrants often explore relationships, sometimes with prospects of marriage as a means of support. These can either be amongst the Zimbabwean community and, sometimes, with local community members. Some of the men in the group were involved with local women. Dexter stated that:

My current girlfriend is South African, and she is great. It is quite different from dating these sisters of ours. When they come here, they somehow are too clingy if you date them and expensive to maintain because you must help them send money home.

For Zimbabwean men, dating local women implies less financial strain that comes with sending money and goods to Zimbabwe. It does not, however, absolve them of the responsibility of supporting their local partner and, in some cases, children's material necessities. Migrant men are well known for *ukusupporta* (they provide material needs), and that makes them more preferable. However, their Zimbabwean female counterparts are not much accustomed to this generous side of Zimbabwean men. Chenai stated that "*Varume vekuZimbabwe* (men from Zimbabwe) can be so stingy.

You can date him, and he will not even buy you a chocolate slab”. Other male migrants from countries such as Nigeria and Pakistan also explore relationships of this nature to gain access to the host community. These migrants are preferred by local women because of their financial generosity.

When Zimbabwean youth migrants interact with South African women, they boost their chances of being accepted, challenge stereotypes, and reduce their vulnerability to xenophobia. This is because they develop trust with their spouses and their family and friends over time. Over time, as trust is created, a network emerges through this union, and they gain access to information about jobs, basic services, and information. In summary, it confers a type of citizenship/membership that facilitates the integration of Zimbabweans and South Africans via bridging social capital. South African women are also the vehicle for linking social capital that links migrant spouses to health services and authorities such as Home Affairs.

Women in South Africa display xenophilia toward migrant men and believe that they are nonviolent. The host country has a high rate of gender-based violence (Enaifoghe *et al.* 2021). As a result, migrant males provide a source of support and safety, which is aided by a high level of trust and a sense of security in the relationship. To affirm their dominance, South African men have been socialized to embody and exercise violent masculinities. The females in the group also shared that they did not involve themselves with South Africans because of the stories that they had heard in their communities and media platforms. However, this does not rule out the possibility of migrant men committing acts of violence against women. Migrant men may not be violent toward their South African partners out of fear of authorities such as the SAPS, Home Affairs, and the judicial system. Migrants know that any brushes with the law may lead to deportation to their home countries. The female participants in the group shared some of their experiences of violence at the hands of Zimbabwean partners earlier.

These cross-border unions also have their downsides for both parties. For Zimbabwean men, it means that they will have to reside in South Africa to be with their families. The Zimbabwean crisis is well known in the region, and most South African women are not willing to visit. They fear that visiting may result in relocating and not

returning to South Africa. It means that the support is conditional and one-sided. It may explain why Zimbabwean male partners on both sides of the border may have to ensure that they always have support.

Migrants have been known to experiment with sexual relationships with one another. It gives women the freedom to negotiate the terms of their relationship on their own terms. In this case, the lack of lobola works to their favor as it decreases the amount of power that men have over them. Lobola is, at times, associated with having power over or ownership of women by their partners. In the absence of this traditional rite of passage, Zimbabwean migrant women are also allowed to benefit from the protection from their Zimbabwean partners. Yeukai stated that:

When I was a single, I was often a target of hurtful comments and actions by other Zimbos. It all changed when I met my current partner who I live with. I am now treated with respect *saMadam* (spouse/partner) of one of the guys, and that title commands respect and trust. This makes me different from *mvana* and who are not treated with respect. I have also managed to interact with some of the partners of his friends. We often meet when we have braais and talk about female issues.

Being involved with Zimbabwean men opens the door to other Zimbabweans living in Durban. It increases their base for support and access to information, especially about documentation and employment opportunities. They are also allowed to bond over shared values, identities, and norms from their home country. They also get to bridge with other Zimbabweans from other backgrounds and form new networks.

The absence of lobola, on the other hand, deprives women of security and safety. When lobola is paid, it unites two families into a new family network in which they can share knowledge, find acceptance, and offer support to one another. Women in such partnerships are frequently at the mercy of their spouses, hoping that the man will honor the woman in the future by paying lobola. As a result, these women are prone to a variety of forms of abuse from their male relationships. Many women stay to gain access to other perks, such as knowledge and the much-desired married status. Women are also made to believe that the use of violence by their partners is morally sanctioned and a symbol of love. The participants also spoke about how marital status is important in society. Therefore, by cohabiting, they are rejecting a spoiled identity

of being unmarried. They use their agency to pose as married by cohabiting (Oluseye, Waterhouse and Hoggart 2021) to acquire social capital and be accepted by other married women.

In all relationships, there are moments of conflict and tensions between involved parties. It is important for the couples to make use of available resources in the absence of family structures for support. They can make use of friends or church pastors to help resolve their conflict. However, the levels of pastoral care shown in Pentecostal movements seems to be dependent on one's church contributions and whether the pastor knows one. It is also affected by the pastors having other jobs during the week, reducing their availability.

#### **6.7.4 Social Media**

The establishment of social media has helped people break the barriers of connecting over distance and time. It has become a valuable resource for many migrants who want to communicate with friends and family and access information on Zimbabwean current affairs. Garikayi stated that:

I spend a lot of my free time on Facebook and WhatsApp talking to some of my friends and family. Through Facebook, I can connect with my friends from high school and my hometown. I sometimes video call them or go through their profiles see what they are up to and interact with them... It has also become a source of entertainment and way to while up time. There is always something going on social media from the likes of ana Tatelicious, Passion Java, Mudiwahood, and Prophet Madungwe. I can spend the whole day following these social media celebrities.

According to Polite:

I look for new comedy skits from BUSTOP TV, Comic Pastor; they are quite entertaining and informative. On other days, when I am not ok and need a good a laugh, I go and watch *Queen weVanhu Tatelicious* (The People's Queen Tatelicious). The Queen always makes me laugh and forget about some of the things that will be stressing me.

Social media also provides entertainment and facilitates a sense of belonging for young Zimbabwean youth migrants. BUSTOP TV, VaKing Kandoro, Comic Pastor, Tatelicious, and Doc Vikela have provided alternative content that aims to raise



awareness, provide social commentary, and entertain. Some of the issues that they cover are around governance, active citizenship, health, and sexuality. Out of all the social media personalities or collectives, Tatelicious is the most interesting one. She is a transgender and HIV/AIDS activist based in Sweden who entertains through dance and music. Through her platform, she addresses her gender and sexuality and how it has affected her experience as a Zimbabwean youth and young migrant. Zimbabwe is one of those countries that has not fully embraced the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersexual and Asexual and many others (LGBTQIA+) community. Her platform has allowed individuals to talk and learn about this and for LGBTQIA+ persons to feel represented and live their truth. Tatelicious also gave a voice to this community when she began her #ThisFlagisOursToo and joined the #This Flag movement (Young-Jahangeer and Sibanda 2018). This is evidence of how social media can be a tool for transformative learning and building social capital that leads to sustainable peace.

Social media has provided an alternative platform for the youth to participate in the political space, especially when out of the country. The existing political milieu does not allow young people to fully recognize their agency and engage in any meaningful participation. In recent years, new political movements have been established and developed on social media; these include #This Flag, #ThisGown, and Tajamuka (Oberdorf 2017; Matsilele and Mutsvairo 2021). Through mobilizing youths online, they were able to establish themselves as powerful forces of active citizenship. This was because of mobilization on various social media platforms, such as Twitter and Facebook. Youths were coming together from different walks of life to bond over their experiences, creating bridges in the Zimbabwe youth demography that would lead to social change. Young Zimbabwean youth migrants have used social media to exercise their agency as well as provide financial and moral support to the youth movement. However, the same resource continues to contribute to a polarized and violent Zimbabwean youth community. This is through the presence of online bullying and trolling whenever individuals disagree. Munashe stated that:

Social media has allowed me to keep up to date with the Zimbabwean current affairs. There are so many platforms that provide this information; more importantly, we can interact with one another when we share our

thoughts. That is my own way of contributing to the Zimbabwe I want as I would love to return one day.

According to Silas:

*Isu tisu vemaghost vanenge vachingotaura zvavanoda tichiitisana nharo dzimwe nguva tosvika pakatukana nevanhu* (I am part of those with social media ghost accounts. I use these accounts to engage in political debates, which sometimes ends in trolling and shaming one another). This lessens chances of people knowing it is me or even finding me. I use my actual social media accounts to communicate with friends and family only.

The use of social media to mobilize people and resources for social change also saw the emergence of young activists. Kuda Musasiwa, Fadzayi Mahere, Pastor Evan Mawarire, Linda Musarira, and Stan Zvorwadza are part of those young activists who arose (Matsilele and Mutsvairo 2021). Each of these young activists brought in a different dynamic and experience to the movement. Along the way, a new crop of the elite activists was being created by these young leaders. In these platforms, they were only engaging between themselves and slowly alienating their followers. This was manifested through the smallest of matters: not responding to questions, not accepting criticism, and not acknowledging ideas from the general youth populace. There were instances of infighting due to differences in approach, the misappropriation of resources for the movement, and the pursuit of individual interests. For some of the young leaders, participation in the movement was a plan to gain connections that would yield employment opportunities, credits from other internal or external political players, or assistance to leave the country by being offered scholarships or political asylum. This is not a new phenomenon in Zimbabwe's crop of leaders as they thrive on putting their stomachs before the collective national well-being. All of this has led to dwindling hope in the youth movement. Many of these young leaders have lost respect and trustworthiness with the general youth populace. They are subjected to bullying and shaming, which affect young female leaders more (Ncube and Yemurai 2020). Linda Masarira and Fadzayi Mahere have been attacked for their physical looks and have been labeled as prostitutes.

There was one participant who had removed themselves from most of the social platforms. She felt that social media has a way of placing pressure on people to conform to certain standards of life. In addition to the pressure, people often trolled

each other due to intolerance and the unwillingness to listen as well as learn from the experiences of others:

People will attack you just to amuse others on social media for maybe a recent picture of yourself. In one Facebook group, there was a lady who posted her picture with a group of friends, and people were so ruthless about their looks and clothes. Sometimes, people screengrab your responses and circulate them to your friends and relatives. The group admins fail to ensure our safety and privacy, but I blame the creators of the platform mostly. It is just a toxic place that is not safe for anyone at all.

### **6.7.5 Religion and Music**

When faced with challenges, some participants turn to religion for help. Many of the female participants belong to a prayer group either from their church or an interdenominational group. There were a few that shared that they belonged to more than one prayer group. Rumbidzai stated that:

Every Sunday, I make sure that I go to church so that I can ready myself for the week ahead. In the service, I use my cell phone to record the sermons and replay them when I get home. During the week, I attend online prayers and services from other denominations whenever the time and data allows me. I always anticipate a challenge due to the uncertainty of being a migrant here. Going to church charges me up and gives me strength to go through the week ahead.

According to Melody:

We have a Durban-based all-ladies prayer group, and we have prayer retreats. Once a month, we meet and go camp somewhere outside the city to pray. We get to present our issues to God without any disturbances. It is also a place where we encourage each other and help each other to pray. One of the things I like the most is that we were paired as a prayer partner and pray for each other daily as well as share the Word with one another.

As stated earlier, Zimbabweans are religious, and levels of being religious increase when one is away from home. The church is being used by migrants to connect with other Zimbabweans and gain protection as well as access to information. The participants above draw their resilience from the teachings received from attending church and the prayer sessions. For others, their levels of being religious have increased due to misfortunes that have happened whilst in South Africa. These include the failure to find jobs, poorly performing businesses, rejected permit applications, and

the failure to find life partners. Migrants turn to the church for solutions through prophecy, which is mostly found in the Pentecostal churches and the apostolic sects. Vimbayi stated that:

There are a lot of dark spirits that follow you when you get an opportunity to succeed. I have never been called to a job interview whenever I apply for one. I went to a shrine with my friend who also wanted to consult about her marital problems. I was told my misfortune was a result of certain members of my family were not happy that I was in South Africa. The prophet advised me to pray hard and told me of the spiritual warfare I had to employ. I just have to be patient to yield results. I believe God's time is the best.

The reliance on prophecy has become more popular in Zimbabwe as the country's crisis persists. Young Zimbabweans have had enough of the calamities brought on by the country's turmoil. Despite their formal education, many have difficulty finding stable employment. They are unable to pursue other key chapters of their lives, such as starting their own families, because they are unable to acquire an income. Some of the participants have moved from one church to another in their search for a better life. Unfortunately, another Zimbabwean sect took advantage of the desperate situation and established their own churches.

Listening to music facilitates the regulation of emotions and improves well-being. The participants shared how they used music as a coping mechanism. Despite some participants being a member of a particular church or attending regular services, each one of them had a particular gospel song or artist that they listened to regularly. Many of these songs would mostly speak of prosperity and hope. Some of the responses from the participants included that from Kudzai, stating that "I listen a lot to Takesure Zamar; his songs make me feel hopeful and sometimes gives me answer when I am uncertain," and Melody, stating that "I am a Minister Mahendere and Janet Manyowa fan; their music encourages me to pray and trust God always no matter what is going on around me". They also spoke of other genres of music that seemed to speak more to them and that had many songs that they loved. Chimurenga, Sungura, and Zimdancehall were the most popular music genres within the group. Each of these genres has a special appeal and speaks to the everyday Zimbabwean youth reality. The Sungura and Chimurenga music genres have their roots in the liberation struggle and were forms of resistance (Hollington 2018; Tivenga 2018). Alick Macheso,

Thomas Mapfumo, Leonard Zhakata, Oliver Mtukudzi, Josiah, and Tongai Moyo were the most talked about in these genres. Much of the music sung by the abovementioned is assumed to be targeting the “mature” and older generation. However, present daily struggles have made the music consumable to the young generation. According to Garikayi:

I listen to a lot of Zhakata; his music is full of truth and wisdom. When I listen to it, I get to think about my situation and the need for me to continue fighting.

Ndaba stated that:

Thomas Mapfumo is a legend; he might be regarded as an artist for our parents who fought the war. I disagree with that because I can relate to the messages in his music. They were struggling back then, and we are still struggling as much as context may be different. I would rather listen to that than Zimdancehall where there is a lot of vulgarity and politics *dze ZANU PF* (talks about ZANU PF) and its political ideology.

The above implies that music is a timeless resource that can transcend across generations. It is important to note that most of the above genres do not make use of vulgarity, unlike the younger artists. This is what makes it more attractive and results in positive behavioral outcomes for its listeners. Ndaba also highlighted how Zimdancehall has been captured by the state to stifle any resistance and the youth’s voice.

Zimdancehall is a popular genre that targets mainly the youth as its audience. Everyone in the group had a favorite song of theirs from the Zimdancehall catalogue. There was a consensus that most of the songs did speak of the Zimbabwean youth’s lived reality. For others, the songs motivated them to be resilient each time that they listened to their songs. Many of the songs encourage the youth to develop resilience by adopting certain personas such as *maNinja* (ninjas), *maBandit* (bandits), and *maSoja* (soldiers). Youths are encouraged to continue pursuing change and realizing their full potential. These personas are a form of social capital as youths bond over them or are excluded because of them. They usually make the following statements: “I am a ninja” or “we are bandits”.

Soul Jah Love, Winky D, Lady Squanda, Jah Signal, Lady Bee, and King Labash are some of the artists who have used vulgar language and violence in their song writing. Much of this music has influenced young people to abuse drugs and engage in physical violence, the objectification of women, and risky sexual behavior. These artists do not only sing about these matters but also engage in some of these risky behaviors. However, a certain portion of them use their music platforms to discourage risky behaviors – an example is Winky D.

## **6.8 Contentment and Endurance as Likely Outcomes**

Despite being in a vulnerable circumstance, many of the participants showed signs of contentment. They were largely content with the fact that they could support their families back in Zimbabwe. This is despite, among other factors, high levels of discrimination in various spaces, a longing for home, and a denial of access to services and support. In the lives of the participants, the capacity to provide for their families is a significant testimonial. It aids in their regeneration and motivation in the face of adversity. Sokostina stated that:

I am just happy that I can send money back home. When my family is happy, I am also happy. So, I choose on focusing on ensuring I can continue working to provide for them and they can be proud of me.

In addition, Progress stated that “When I send money home, my mother compliments me by my totem and makes me feel respectable.”

The display of contentment is rather worrying as it encourages migrants to not address some of the challenges faced. Some of the participants were involved in the informal sector. The operating climate there is not entirely favorable but better than in the formal sector. Garikayi stated that:

In South Africa, life is better. Even if I am not formally employed, I can still provide for my family decent meals and lifestyle compared to when I was in Zimbabwe. Yes, I admit there is no diversity of diet, but never has my family skipped or went to bed hungry, which was the case when I was in Zimbabwe.

Garikayi holds a master's degree, but he has resorted to deskilling by selling a range of goods. He realized that when he worked informally, he did not have to worry about paperwork or being discriminated against by others in the organization. He is pleased with the amount of money that he earns; if he can feed his family, then it is enough.

Endurance is also another valuable resource for the Zimbabwean youth migrants. It is a way for them to reject spoiled identities and develop resilience. Zimbabwean youth migrants use their past experiences in Zimbabwe as fuel to keep them going no matter the challenges they face. According to them, South Africa fares better than Zimbabwe in every possible way. For instance, there is no social grant in Zimbabwe, and the chances of finding employment in Zimbabwe are lower than in South Africa. According to Garikayi, "*Zimba haurigone rinoshanda nyangwe mari ikaite shoma zvakadini* (Zimbabweans are generally hardworking, even if they get paid poorly)." In addition, Madzibaba stated that:

When a Zimbabwean has a business idea, you cannot stop them. They will work hard to ensure the business is up and running. There is no situation that a Zimbabwean cannot get out of. We have been through a lot back home and have learnt to survive! Our experiences have made us tough and *mdara Mugabe vakatibika manje* (*Mugabe prepared us for life's challenges*).

Due to their past experiences, migrants are sometimes viewed as vulnerable and weak individuals. However, with endurance, they reject the identity of being weak and vulnerable. Rather than seeing their past as a source of negativity, they see it as a resource that motivates them to endure adversities and remain hopeful. They even praise the late President Robert Mugabe, even though he is the primary reason that they have left Zimbabwe. In the case of failing to find employment, some of them have started their own business ventures, such as hairdressing and buying and selling wares. It enables them to build resilience and exercise agency in the face of the challenges that they must confront whilst living away from home.

## **6.9 Conclusion**

The discussion above was a breakdown of the key themes that emerged from the research findings. For young Zimbabwean migrants, being away from home is a

challenging experience. They possess low levels of social capital, as evidenced by high levels of mistrust and competitiveness. These have resulted in “othering” through spoiled identities as well as failing and superficial networks. They use a variety of coping mechanisms to deal with day-to-day problems. These mechanisms are necessary for acquiring social capital and for determining how much social capital they possess. Many of these mechanisms have given rise to hope and the development of resilience, while some of the other coping mechanisms appeared to have been putting them at a greater risk by the day and encouraging isolation. The following chapter is the evaluation carried out on the intervention.



# CHAPTER SEVEN

## REFLECTIONS

### 7.1 Introduction

Qualitative research seeks to divulge meaning and constructions, which are usually taken for granted. Self-awareness as a researcher is important in research as one constructs and understands data with the intention of generating knowledge (Holtan, Strandbu and Eriksen 2014). Often, the emotional reactions of the participants are left out in the analysis of data. The arena of academia seems to emphasize the importance of the spoken and written material and dismisses the importance of emotional body language (Hellum and Oláh 2019). This self-awareness is brought about by exercising reflexivity as a researcher. It involves the researcher's reactions to the research, the position and location of the research, and present relationships between the participants and the researcher themselves (Holloway and Biley 2011). Interviews and focus group discussions are social encounters (products) upon which the researcher was able to interpret participant experiences and make meaning (Flemmen and Eriksen 2009). Therefore, language, speech (Denzin 1994), and emotions (Holtan, Strandbu and Eriksen 2014) are considered as key experience creators.

Throughout the research, there were moments of self-disclosure, knowledge production, and (re)establishing relations. The focus group discussions were a platform for the participants to present and make meaning of their experiences. This was highly influenced by how they positioned themselves and the context. The participants presented themselves in different ways stemming from the power given to them by society. Other studies have also established how differences in gender influence and perpetuate power imbalances between men and women.

This chapter is composed of the researcher's reflections after engaging with the participants. The researcher gives a reflection on her experience interacting with the men-only group, women-only group, and the mixed-gender group. The researcher highlights what worked, what did not work, and how her own experience fits into the whole experience. The chapter is also a reflection on the outcomes based on the new

research objectives (see Section 1.2 in Chapter one), which resulted in an exploratory approach.

## **7.2 Reflection on Emerging Themes**

The lived experiences of the participants clearly suggest that they are vulnerable to various types of adversity. During the exchanges and listening to narratives, the participants were able to identify areas of commonality. These included age, nationality, and exclusion, amongst many others. In the context of this study and setting, their nationality seemed to encourage them to bond during the engagements. Their nationality has led to many challenges, more precisely, intolerance and a lack of acceptance by host communities. Existing literature points to how the presence of commonalities, such as identity, facilitate bonding social capital and social support. However, the research findings suggest that it is not always the case and refutes earlier assumptions. Zimbabweans are not willing to commit themselves fully to Zimbabwean social networks. In the case of already existing networks, there are low levels of commitment and limited positive benefits.

Many of the experiences shared pointed to the presence of conflict between the young men and women. It can be traced to the earlier stages of their lives where they have socialized around societal expectations from them. The stories were told, and the values that people are taught as young girls and boys affect their future interactions and self-esteem. The men seemed to be fixated on asserting their dominance at the expense of women, while the women continued to be oppressed by the patriarchal system and stripped of their agency. In the female groups, the participants spoke about how the women related with the men in their lives growing up and in their present adult lives. Most of the women shared how their male siblings were allowed to explore outside life at home and how they were confined to the homestead. The women also wanted to explore the world and make choices for themselves, which is a conflicting position. The researcher learned that to have healthy relations, people also need to work on gender relations. This will help challenge existing constructs of masculinity and femininity and create ones that help establish positive relations.

The soccer club is one example where young men were not able to access meaningful support. It was, rather, a platform for them to construct hegemonic masculinities and to assert their dominance due to high levels of competitiveness. The soccer club from the findings provided a platform for men to bond over sexualizing women and encourage risky sexual behavior. Women have also been complicit in furthering these toxic masculinities. A great example is the bridal shower where the toxic masculinities and servitude, such as femininity, were promoted. Patriarchal standards only give power and agency to men while depriving women of both. The researcher's engagement with them provided a platform to challenge, construct, and reconstruct masculinity and femininity collectively and individually.

Throughout all the engagements, the men constructed a certain type of masculinity. The men, in both the interviews and larger group discussions, would distance themselves from the unwanted or undesirable men. All the men in this study tried to distance themselves from a violent group of men who abuse their partners and who do not take care of their families. It was evident in their narratives as they would acknowledge the occurrences of violence and their own tendencies indirectly. Ndaba stated that:

Sometimes, talking does not yield any result with *ana madam*<sup>7</sup>... it is not a good thing, but, sometimes, these women leave us without a choice. Sometimes, it is very difficult to reach an understanding with them, and they end up getting beaten up. I advised one of my friends to stop beating his wife; otherwise, he was going to kill her. Violence against women is not a good thing and must not be encouraged.

Ndaba acknowledged the presence of violence and resisting this violent masculinity in the above statement. The interviews and group discussions had become a means to other and conform to or resist different types of masculinities (Gottzén 2013, 2019). Narratives that were being shared shed the amount and presence of violence in people's daily lives. The narratives were producing the other violent men in society, but this did not mean that the participants were not violent in themselves. It may mean that the discussions and interviews had become a turning point to reflect on how they carried themselves in relation with others. The researcher was left assuming that they

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<sup>7</sup> *Madam* is often used to refer to a woman as the official partner, and it is associated with the power that women assume when they get married.

had chosen to share certain experiences and had left some out, perhaps due to past wrongdoing.

In terms of their conduct during the research process, they were hospitable and polite. They would often volunteer to go and get refreshments and bring and return chairs. In terms of language, they also tried to be very respectful, though, sometimes, they seemed to fail. The men tried not to use strong or sexual language while interacting with the researcher and the other women. They wanted to be seen as respectful, caring men in the eyes of the female counterparts. It also evidences how the group socialized in terms of their interactions as men and women. There were issues such as sex, gender, and sexuality, which are regarded as sensitive. Due to their sensitivity, men and women tend to shy away from openly discussing them with the opposite sex.

In Zimbabwe, discussing sex or one's relationship is regarded as taboo, even when it is between lovers. When people decide to engage in such conversations, it is treated as somewhat distasteful and unacceptable. During the discussions, the participants avoided making use of direct vernacular terms referring to sex. The men referred to sex as *kubatsirana* (helping one another), *kupanana* (giving each other), *kupihwa* (being given or receiving), and *kuponesana* (saving one another), while the women referred to sex as *kufadza baba* (pleasing/satisfying the father/head of the house). This form of indirectness helped the participants to not appear as crude as they engaged with one another. This may be attributed to Shona politeness systems, which avoid crudeness and negative overtones (Kaguda 2012), as well as their personal pursuit for acceptance within the group. Sex workers were also spoken of mostly by male participants who referred to them as *ana Mai muponesi* (female saviors) instead of the term *hure* (prostitutes), which is direct and has many negative overtones. It was also to try and not offend the females within the group and justify why men involve themselves with sex workers.

Conversations around HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) were also difficult to facilitate as they are usually characterized by emotions and shame and are often stigmatized. They referred to HIV/AIDS as *kucrosser ma robots* (crossing the robots). This is highly influenced by one popular advertisement aired by the national broadcaster focusing on the stigma around HIV from 2008. The advertisement had a

male by the name of Donance who shared his HIV status: “*Handina kucrossa red robot. Ndiri kurarama neHIV. Ndakatanga kuita magirlfriends akawanda pakafa mudzimai wangu. Ndava nemakore fifteen ndichirarama neHIV* (I did not cross a red robot. I am living with HIV. I started having many girlfriends when my wife died. I have been HIV-positive for fifteen years)” (Mavunga and Kaguda 2016: 178). The aim of the advertisement was to communicate that HIV is not a death sentence and that people must not stigmatize or discriminate against those living with HIV. In some instances, they would just call it *chirwere* (disease).

Young men are socialized into being independent individuals who chart their own way without relying on others. This may account for their unwillingness to participate and their frequent avoidance of other fellow male Zimbabwean young migrants. While young women are socialized into being dependent on the men for their security, the researcher found that the reason why many of the unmarried women were in “early” marriages or romantic commitments was as a means of coping and acceptance. This dependence on men makes them vulnerable to different forms of violence at the hands of their partners. For the men, it provides an opportunity to assert their dominant and powerful masculinities. The migration of women is not always warmly received if it is not linked to marital obligations. Male migrants are more likely to gain support as they are expected to be providers. For the single ladies coming to South Africa on their own, this seemed to be a disadvantage in terms of finding life partners. They complained about how their ambition and resolve to look for greener pastures made them undesirable partners in some instances. In the words of Grace, “they see you as forward and loose and *kazhinji unozongoitiswa wosiwa* (most of the time, they will use you and leave you)”.

Another interesting point was how there was much focus on teaching the females as compared to the males. Females are taught at home and in the church on their role in the home. They are socialized into believing that belonging to a man through marriage and maintaining it is an “honorable” achievement. Some women spoke of men behaving as children and found them very indecisive when many matters, including marriage, were concerned. The researcher thinks that this is because male platforms do not focus on the importance of marriage or their role in it. Much of the focus is on sexual prowess and dominance. The discussion also highlighted the types of conflict

resolution skills or mechanisms into which both genders have been socialized. For the men, they turn to the use of violence (economic, physical, and verbal) to resolve conflicts. Women are socialized into not speaking out and accepting whatever resolve their partners resort to.

Another important point from the findings concerns the role of social capital as a coping mechanism. The findings point to social capital as weak in terms of it working as a coping mechanism. This can be attributed to the presence of socioeconomic circumstances that migrants currently face. The findings do acknowledge the role played by social capital in facilitating their migration through family and friends. Many of these social connections are strained when the new migrants fail to secure employment. It puts more pressure on the older migrants to continue sharing their resources and supporting the new migrants. Therefore, having spent more time in South Africa does not translate into material success. When new migrants fail to secure an income, it delays their ability to reciprocate, which is an expectation. Several of the participants are no longer in communication with other migrants who have helped them come to South Africa. Migrants may be willing to help, but the socioeconomic pressures may not allow them to do so.

The analysis also highlighted how migrants went through, or are going through, different forms of violence. These are discrimination and structural, physical, sexual, and cultural violence. These may occur all at once in a particular situation and are, sometimes, not easy to separate and resolve. Migrants are stripped of their dignity and agency to deal with these because they occupy a “rejected” or “spoiled identity”. For instance, they cannot speak out against SAPS, DHA officials, and employers who may treat them in a discriminatory manner. A lack of linking social capital lowers their chances of realizing and enjoying the change for which they hope. Initially, the study sought to include authorities in the form of community leaders, the SAPS, and DHA officials, among others. The researcher ultimately did not do so because she felt that their presence would intimidate some of the participants.

## 7.3 Reflecting on the Use of Narratives as an Intervention

### 7.3.1 DARE: Speaking to the Men only

The researcher realized that she had ignored gender dynamics when she had to recruit and speak to the men. The researcher thought that her love for discussing current affairs, especially in the world of politics and sport, would be an advantage. The researcher's first male participants were recruited at a soccer game that they had organized. The strategy that she had adopted of self-styling did not result in her not being treated as an "outsider" by virtue of being a woman. The researcher, therefore, had to ask for assistance from a male friend to help her recruit them. The researcher would also enlist his services in the male-only focus group discussions. This helped the men open up more as well as be at ease with sharing their experiences or asking questions. The researcher's friend introduced her to them as Runyararo Marima. Interestingly, they chose to address the researcher by her last name. The researcher was not impressed at first because it felt that they were trying to make her adopt a male persona instead of acknowledging that she was a woman in their presence. It was later that the researcher realized that it was a way of allowing her into their space. Usually, men are addressed by their last names and not the women in social circles. The researcher took this as a mark of progress as this marked her entry as a researcher and their acceptance to share their experiences with her. They were also addressing each other, making use of common terms such as *mdara* and *chi Baba*, which all, loosely translated, refer to a dominant man.

Gender dynamics are something that every researcher needs to consider whenever they are conducting research. People's gender takes away from or gives people power to speak to others or vice versa. The researcher observed that her gender did not notably encourage the men to speak. Venganai (2017) had the same experience in her research together with (Bhebe 2015) who described her experience as a "struggle". The researcher's study may not be about labia elongation, but it involves another female researcher working with male participants. The men may also have been reluctant to speak because the topic required them to share their personal journeys. Marital status and issues around the current state of Zimbabwe seemed to be sensitive areas for these men. In some of the male-only sessions, many of the men were gesturing (mostly nodding) that they agreed with whoever was speaking. The

researcher considered speaking since many people shy away from openly sharing their opinions around the politics of the day. This is usually due to mistrust and political polarization, which have led to political intolerance and conflict over different political preferences. On a positive note, it also inspired confidence in those who chose to speak about these issues.

Issues around the political and economic situation in Zimbabwe were often described as *zvadhakwa* (being drunk), *zvadhanya* (being pressed hard by a situation), and *yakapenga* (madness). All of these speak to the hopeless and desperate nature of the situation back in Zimbabwe. One of the most interesting ones is *mahwani thousand* (one thousand), which seems to illustrate the severity of the crisis. Corruption, which is one of the major challenges bedeviling the country, was often spoken of as *vakuru vanodya* or *kutora* (elders eat or take). As much as they were pained by the corruption, they expressed it in a manner that still showed respect for the older generation and their positions of authority.

Other common metaphors were *kukiya kiya* (locking things together), *kumhanyidzika* (running), and *madhiri* (deals, in this case, usually illicit), which referred to how they had to make ends meet in a difficult space, both at home and away. These were also meant to speak of the illicit deals in which they had to indulge to put food on the table without giving much detail. *Madhiri* was meant to sanitize whatever dealings that were illicit in which they were partaking. Young people have had to find ways to earn an income outside the formal economy through unconventional methods. A few of the participants shared about their short stints as money changers in the capital, Harare, at Ximex mall.

At the end of the session, the researcher asked them questions regarding the following:

1. What they felt had made it easy to speak
2. What had made it difficult to speak, and what they thought would make it easier the next time



*“Haa sister zvoorema kutaura nevakadzi ... vakadzi hamheno zvamunongoita so”*: loosely translated, this statement suggests that women do not listen to men when they speak, let alone understand them. This had also emerged in the women-only discussion, that men did not listen to women when they spoke. The researcher made a note of this such that the participants could try and explore this further in the mixed group sessions. However, this differs from the findings of Huysamen (2016) who established that females are more compassionate listeners. The men in her study felt that she was there to understand their experiences as men. The researcher felt that their assumption was that her presence was that of a woman rather than the researcher role that she occupied. The researcher’s role required that she listen and facilitate conversation to generate knowledge, paying particular attention to their lived experiences. Many of them had expressed that speaking only as men would help make participation easier. The researcher’s colleague and the researcher resolved that he would help the researcher in the sessions for men only. His role was to hold the space while the researcher gave support and observed and took notes during the sessions.

There were instances where the researcher found the situation in the men-only focus group discussions unsettling. The men got quite excited when issues around sex and relationships found a place in the conversations. Although no direct references were made about the researcher, there was the use of explicit language. The researcher did not find how they objectified women acceptable and associated this with being masculine – *“Bho here sister? (Are you okay sister?)”* came from one of the guys who was checking in with the researcher on how she felt. The researcher’s facial expression had exposed her lack of amusement by all of this. He had noticed and apologized on behalf of all the men present. In some instances, the researcher became invisible as the men engaged continuously without her input. The researcher realized that these men had been socialized into objectifying women and had never challenged this notion. They all wanted to be identified as experienced in terms of sexual prowess as well as assert their manhood. This was an opportunity to share how the researcher felt as a woman and the issues that men should know about women. However, after much internal debate, the researcher decided to leave that for the mixed-gender group sessions. The researcher did not want to be the expert but rather felt that the women in the group deserved the opportunity to address this. It was

a difficult moment where the researcher struggled in her role as a researcher in relation to her gender.

In the absence of women, the men spoke about them in a manner that objectified them. The researcher realized that most of the married men had brought their wives from home. A few had met their wives in South Africa. According to Newman, women based in South Africa were only good for flings but were not “wife material”. He admitted to having been involved with a few merely to ensure that he was not sex starved, and it helped reduce the amount of stress. Male promiscuity was regarded as acceptable because of the challenging lives that men lead. Promiscuous behavior was a coping mechanism for these men and was likened to *kudya* (eating) or *kuponeswa* (being saved). The group then received further explanation about what the term *wife material* meant. For one to meet the criteria of being wife material, they must always be submissive and morally upright. The men expressed how they felt that it was not appropriate for women to go to parties or night-time activities. There seemed to be a consensus among the women that this was not appropriate. A standard for women had been set, which was different from that for the men. Both genders shared and agreed that growing up, they had been told that a woman’s place was in the home to take care of her husband and children. Interestingly, the women had expressed their unhappiness over this societal standard in the women-only group. In the presence of the men, most of them had changed their view and constructed themselves as desirable conformists. It highlighted to the researcher the deep roots of patriarchy and how acceptance is influenced by conformity.

### **7.3.2 CHINA: Talking to the Women only**

These were sessions that the researcher looked forward to the most and where she was not anticipating any challenges. The researcher’s first encounter recruiting female participants was relaxed as the women were very forthcoming. Age and marital status seemed to be the points of tension amongst the women. Married women seemed to want to be the authority when discussions that revolved around sex and relationships were concerned. Often, married women are seen to be, or construct themselves as, authorities when these issues are concerned. The cracks of divisions were very visible, and how the participants sat in the first sessions evidenced this well. Married women

sat on their own while the single women sat together. Much was needed for them to humanize each other and look beyond their different social identities. The group had to look for areas of commonality, and the sharing of experiences worked well to this effect. In the men's groups, the issues of age and marital status were not truly an issue. In the case of the females, marriage and age were two sensitive areas that were often used to measure one's womanhood.

Women are often socialized into silence and not expressing themselves fully through the earlier stages of socialization. In the first sessions, the women had moments of long pauses or silence as no one wanted to speak. The researcher later asked what the reason for the silence was, and the group spoke about this at length. They highlighted that they had not been socialized to fully express themselves and feared being judged by others in the group. There was also a sense of doubting whether their experiences mattered and whether they were worth sharing. For some, it felt as though they were exposing themselves and would be judged by the rest of the women.

Interviewing the women yielded different experiences and was greatly influenced by their familiarity with one another. The women who were not from the Durban University of Technology were holding back in their first encounter. As the participants met more, they cultivated a relationship that had them speak more about their experiences with the researcher. The researcher's colleagues from the Durban University of Technology were very comfortable around the researcher. The conversations were often informal but remained within the limits of the research. On the contrary, the researcher was worried about this familiarity also threatening her chances of gaining their fully detailed experiences. In many ways, the researcher could observe that they were leaving out certain experiences, assuming that the researcher had also gone through them. This made the sessions difficult as the researcher had to find ways to probe them further. The researcher's experiences were different because the researcher came at a different time, under different circumstances, and was much older than they were. Most of them had arrived in South Africa as early as 19 years of age to pursue their educational journeys. The researcher then shared her experiences and asked questions to ensure that she could obtain more from them. It speaks to how one should not assume that one has the same experiences as others because of commonalities

that exist in a group. The researcher does acknowledge some of the instances of common experiences and moments of learning from how they handled issues.

### **7.3.3 GANGO: Mixed Gender Discussions**

In the first mixed group discussion, there was much holding back from both genders. The men were trying to assert their masculinity without giving too much in the discussion. Most of the men spoke about their role as responsible providers here and at home, while the women were trying to make connections without necessarily losing their femininity as dictated by society. They seemed not to openly challenge some of the behavior and sentiments shared by the men. It is evidence of how deeply entrenched patriarchy is in society and how it influences constructions and exercises of femininity. Mai Bee, Newman, and Sokostina were always the people to whom the researcher turned whenever the discussions went silent. They were also in the habit of making jokes, which helped lighten the mood in the room.

Along the way, the researcher realized that the participants were downplaying their knowledge and were referring to the researcher as the expert. Whenever they were not confident of their contribution to the discussion, they would look toward the researcher for affirmation. The researcher had to help them realize the power that they had, that they were experts of their own reality. The researcher constantly reminded them to treat their interactions as any other conversation with a friend or family member where there is no correct or incorrect response. The participants were also encouraged to challenge existing positions by posing questions. It seemed that they had constructed the researcher's presence and interaction with them as with an expert and figure of authority. The men seemed to be much more confident than their female counterparts in the discussion. It was a platform for them to portray themselves as desirable and, more importantly, knowledgeable in the face of women. Confidence is a trait that is considered as important for men by society. A man who lacks confidence is marked as undesirable and weak. Mai Bee and Sokostina were the only females who openly spoke and challenged the men and their positions. The women did not speak much but found the engagement interesting and informative. Sharon highlighted how she had been able to understand the way men behave in certain situations. The

researcher also then turned to follow-up interviews and the women-only group to get these women to speak as well as understand their lack of participation.

The ability to discuss taboo and sensitive issues was greatly enabled by humor and laughter. Whenever humor was used in sharing experiences by the participants, the rest of the group responded with the same humorous element. It was a way of showing one another some form of support and empathy. Laughing together brought the group together and enabled relationships to be cultivated. It had a therapeutic effect that was beneficial at both the individual and group levels. The relationship that had been developed as a group made it very difficult to ignore joining in moments that were full of humor and laughter.

There were instances when the researcher's role as a researcher was blurred in relation to the rest of the participants. Eye contact and other forms of inclusive gestures made it impossible not to be part of the laughter. In some cases, the researcher responded to the laughter by making use of humor in the way that she posed questions. As the group continued to meet, the researcher realized that her laughing along could have been construed as her acceptance of a particular standpoint from the floor. As highlighted earlier, the researcher's research seeks to highlight the plight of young Zimbabweans as well as help them establish healthy positive relations amongst themselves. The researcher laughing along could have been mistaken for promoting unacceptable behavior among the youth in different spheres of life, bearing in mind the "power and responsibility" (Kelly, Burton and Regan 1994) that the researcher held as a researcher. Distancing herself from making jokes at any point was important but was difficult to adhere to. The researcher realized that joining in the humor and laughter made the participants more comfortable around her and the research process. There was also a need to ensure that harmful jokes were flagged and that the group explored how harmful they were.

#### **7.4 Personal Reflections as a Researcher**

The researcher would like to reflect on her own experiences and relate them to those of the participants. Throughout the research, there were many moments that resonated with the researcher as the participants spoke. The researcher was able to

appreciate her family background more as she listened to their stories. The researcher is the firstborn in a family of three daughters and was raised in Harare, Zimbabwe's capital city. The researcher's father is a primary school teacher, and her mother is a member of the clergy in one of the mainline churches and a person who has also worked for the national police force. The researcher's family moved from place to place because her mother was transferred to different parts of the city. From time to time, the researcher's family shared their home with people who were being assisted by the researcher's parents. In addition to the church services, the researcher's family also attended many weddings and parties (birthdays and graduations) to show support for family and friends. As soon as the researcher turned 16, her mother started taking her to funerals as well. The researcher learned the importance of consistently supporting friends and family. All these experiences instilled the important values of being reliable, trustworthy, and selfless in the researcher.

The researcher was raised as a capable individual without paying particular attention to her gender. The researcher's father invested much of his time in ensuring that the researcher excelled in her studies. Together with the researcher's mother, they both supported the researcher's extracurricular activities. For many girls, this is not usually the case. From a young age, they are socialized into becoming desirable spouses for men. Marriage is something that they left for the researcher to decide about on her own, and they never pressured her into it. When the researcher left to pursue her studies with the Durban University of Technology, the researcher had the support of both her parents, and that made it easy to embark on this journey.

During the research, the researcher felt that her sensitivity contributed positively. The researcher feels that she was able to respond to the needs of the participants and avoided possibly harming them further. In the interactions, the researcher ensured that she showed empathy to build and maintain her relationship with the participants. All activities were fully explained to the participants and required their consent and input before doing them. It was important to constantly check how they were feeling at each stage of the interactions. However, the researcher's sensitivity caused her to feel exhausted and overwhelmed. The researcher was exhausted because, in some instances, she could not resist taking on other people's feelings from time to time. It was also comforting to find out that there were others who had gone through difficult

episodes such as the one that the researcher was then experiencing. All had experienced discrimination at the hands of South African individuals and institutions and other Zimbabweans. All had been subjected to different forms of violence, and some were perpetrators of the violence themselves. Hearing these sad experiences made the researcher worry over the participants such that the researcher sometimes forgot her own experiences. The researcher's inability to assist or provide working solutions in most cases also brought about feelings of failure. For a large part of this period, the researcher was overwhelmed in times of pressure regarding finding time to complete tasks, which depended on participant availability.

Pamela shared how she had joined her current church that she attends. Her statement elicited a wide range of reactions from the rest of the group. Members of mainline churches believed her cause for switching churches was illegitimate and that she was lying. The amount of trust in her was gradually diminishing. Some of the reactionary responses from Pamela included:

At my old church, they did not perform healing and were not accepting the use of modern instruments and sing the same old hymns. More importantly, I yearn to speak in tongues.

I think she has other reasons for leaving the church because we now have modern instruments in our church, and it is a mainline church usually viewed as traditional but slowly opening up to changes to move with the times.

Ah!! Can the desire to speak in tongues be the reason for leaving church – let us be serious?

The participants were reminded of the common set of values to keep the discussion from spiraling out of control without considering others. They were then able to continue the discussion, but, more significantly, they were able to allow Pamela to share with the rest of the group. This was a very difficult situation to handle due to the researcher's background as a daughter of a clergy woman. It was a tempting moment for the researcher to dwell on theology, making use of her background. Other moments presented themselves when the participants spoke about the current deterioration and moral decay in the church. The researcher realized that she could not defend the church based on her background, which entails a different experience altogether. The

researcher is happy that she did not give in to the temptation as it would have made the participants uncomfortable.

## **7.5 Storytelling as a Means to Measure Social Capital**

As part of the evaluation, the researcher first looked at the type of stories shared by the participants. These are very crucial in establishing the available amount of social capital and the potential to develop it as well. There were three types of stories that were identified: I-stories, we-stories, and they-stories (Ottesen, Jeppesen and Krustrup 2010). These stories were shared from the first contact of the participants with one another until the end of the research. All had to introduce themselves to the rest of the group. This process worked well as a step toward establishing trust within the group. A sense of trust encouraged participation and gave the participants a feeling of ease. The following part of the engagement required them to share their migration journey. A search for a better life was a common characteristic in participant migration journeys. It facilitated bonding amongst the group members as they listened to one another. The presence of commonalities helped to create opportunities that allowed for bridging amongst the participants within the group. It helped them see beyond their differences in age, gender, level of education, etc. and create a collective. The establishment of a collective also saw many we-stories develop in the group. Kudzai stated that:

When we first started, I planned on not attending all the sessions but then realized that this was important and fun too. It allowed me to share my story and listen to theirs. I usually spend my weekends alone, listen to my music, and relax while waiting for the incoming week.

Kudzai previously shared how he had avoided interacting with other Zimbabwean migrants. The above shows progression, signaling a willingness and commitment to be part of a group as well as cooperate. Commitment, willingness, and cooperation helped to keep the group together. Role-play exercises and games were responsible for satisfying the fun element together with moments of shared humor with the group. The intervention also provided a platform for individuals to become acquainted with others and possibly forge relations outside of the research activities.



The researcher noticed that before the sessions, during breaks, and after the sessions, the participants would engage with one another. This did not come easy in the first weeks, but, over a period of time, this was the outcome. As previously stated, some of the participants were from familiar circles – for example, some of the males belonged to a soccer club. In the initial weeks, they would sit together and speak amongst themselves. However, as time progressed, bridging social capital allowed them to establish relations with other participants within the group. This is evidence of how different forms of social capital can be developed or present at a given time. It is important to acknowledge the importance of time in establishing relations. The participants may have been able to establish relations with one another, but they still required more time to develop mutual trust and be mutually beneficial. This is supported by the earlier assertions of Putnam, Feldstein and Cohen (2004: 287) who identified time as a major factor when building social capital is concerned.

Their interaction outside the group provided fertile ground to ensure continuity and bonding. The researcher realized that some participants were then organizing transport-related logistics together. They were helping each other to get to the meeting points. More importantly, they could put into practice issues such as being able to trust one another and being trustworthy. Outside group interactions gave them a transitional period to try out establishing positive relationships. For one of the participants, they had a different take on establishing relations with others outside of the group. This is what she had to state:

This was a great opportunity to meet new people, but I intentionally chose not to engage with people in this group outside our sessions. I just feel like meeting them would draw me back to my difficult past. Each time I shared, it felt like I was removing the load and giving it to someone else. Seeing them again would just be a setback as I would start thinking about it all. I also did not want to ruin my chances of getting to know everyone by aligning with a particular participant(s). This platform worked for me as a place to speak about my experiences and heal.

In terms of finding a safe space and healing, the researcher considers this a positive outcome. This moment had been reached because the person had allowed themselves to be vulnerable. When someone is truly allowing themselves to be a part of the process, it can be difficult to distinguish this.

Other participants suggested that there was a need to shorten the amount of time. Most of them felt that it affected their personal schedules. The participants met on weekends, and some missed the meetings because of other personal commitments. Passmore stated that:

This was a good initiative; a lot of important issues were raised when people shared their stories. I think we needed more time to discuss and work through them as a group. Our life here and status of being migrants does not seem to give us much time for such as we are always busying working to make money to ensure our survival.

The feeling of not having enough time seemed to represent how well the group was received. The youth found the interactions and issues raised as valuable and requiring more time for them to engage with each other. The constraint of time stood in the way of gaining valuable input necessary for knowledge generation with the participants. As much as they were willing to spend time, their life situations at that time were not flexible enough. In related research, the value of spending the appropriate amount of time engaging with the participants has also been mentioned (Bunston, Franich-Ray and Tatlow 2017).

Some of the participants seemed to have been sharing information about the group with outside group settings. This was evidenced by the instances when the team had participants bring in their family members or friends. Hazvineyi stated that:

I told the women I stay with about your research and how it introduced me to a group of new Zimbabweans, how much fun had having conversations about our daily issues. I think they were just surprised at much how I have remained committed to attending these sessions. After having explained how everything worked, they invited me to their church event for women only. It was an event to bring together women and engage in dialogue over challenges they face.

Participation in the group had become a means of social capital with others outside the group. Hazvineyi had shown that she was interested in attending spaces for dialogue. Her commitment to the group had been witnessed by her housemates and had become a source of social capital.

As explained before, the participants were divided into three groups, and this was revealed to the participants. One group had women only, another one had men only, and the last one had both men and women. Often, there were times when the women's group would speak of the men's group. The women often did this to point out existing differences between them and the men. One of the comments, made by Mai Bee, was:

I would really want to hear what the men say to each other in their group. We are going to learn and have fun; as for the men, I doubt they will take this seriously. Men do not really take these things seriously. I am sure they will be talking about sport or cars and other things mostly.

This is an example of a they-story trying to point to the presence of differences between the women and men. There seemed to be other female participants who agreed with Mai Bee's comment. It stemmed from their previous experiences with men in different spaces and situations.

## **7.6 Gaining Acceptance and Support Through Listeners**

The participants shared how they felt about sharing their experiences in the group. Being part of a group afforded them a space where they could express themselves. They were appreciative of having someone listen to and validate their story. The validation was realized through being listened to and gaining acceptance from the other participants in the group. The participants were able to listen to others and understand them better. The researcher should add that it did not all happen at once for all the participants: "Sharing my experiences with the rest of the participants made me feel good. Throughout the sessions, people were listening to me as I was speaking."

There were times when listening and acceptance were a little challenging in the group. This can be attributed to how the differences influenced the level of participants listening to the lived experiences of others. Pamela was judged for a religious standpoint because it was different from that of other participants who were listening. This unfortunate incident provided an opportunity for the group to briefly speak on the importance of listening, being listened to, and respect for differences. Listening to others is an important component for society to function well. It entails observing respect for others as well as embracing and humanizing differences.

The listening facilitated the acknowledgment of difficult or joyous episodes of their lives. The young migrants were able to interact with one another without the usual judgment that they face from home and the host communities. For individuals in the group who had experienced some traumatic episodes, it provided a platform to begin their journey to recover. The downside was that they would be exposed to previously triggering environments and individuals who may have compromised their recovery.

## **7.7 Access to Social Support**

The group's positivism, which became a currency, also helped to elevate other members. Due to their many negative experiences, many people had stopped seeing themselves in a positive manner. The sharing of stories prompted feelings of empathy and solidarity, as well as a sense of belonging. One of the participants stated:

When all of this started, I really doubted myself and worth in many ways. In the group, I was motivated by the positive feedback I received from others. Their responses showed that they felt for me as I shared some of my most unfortunate encounters. It made me feel good about myself and feel more confident. This was the first time I really felt like I belonged and was welcome.

The participants were able to share their experiences in an environment that was blame and judgment free to a greater extent. They were able to establish a witnessing community through their experiences and engaging in dialogue with one another. This facilitated meaning making whilst adding to the existing body of knowledge. This social support helps limit anxiety, stress, and other mental health problems. It offers a protective layer for individuals who are part of the marginalized group. When one has access to social support, they are more confident, cope better, ask for help, reciprocate, and enjoy high quality interactions. This increases an individual's chances of (re)establishing positive relations, which contributes to social cohesion.

The above assertion is substantiated by earlier submissions by Plummer (1995: 174) about how people's stories facilitate connections resulting in solidarity. He is of the view that "stories gather people around them," and, in this context, it brought young Zimbabwean migrants together. They listened to one another and developed and

showed empathy. The narrative intervention was a relational and collaborative (Riessman 2001: 369) initiative that facilitated interpersonal and social processes in the pursuit of social change.

Other participants voiced concerns over various aspects of the intervention process. Within the groups, it appeared that some had succeeded more in bonding than others. Due to an enhanced bonding social capital, there is always the risk of smaller groups forming inside a group. As people linked together over age, hopes, origins, dreams, and educational backgrounds, this constituted a challenge in forming a single group (Fabiansson 2015; Pirkey 2015). The researcher had also noticed the presence of these ties and tried to pair people at random. Before each session, the researcher established a list of pairings that she would use for the day. However, this did not seem to solve the matter at hand. In another research study, in order to deal with this, during the group sessions, the researchers set a “no talking in groups rule” (Fellin *et al.* 2019). The participants could only speak if they were addressing the plenary. This type of rule would help prevent side chats among the participants who had bonded to form small groups.

## **7.8 Shaping Identity and Social Norms**

As the participants shared their experiences, they also shared stories that they had been told growing up. These stories had helped to gain an initial understanding of the surrounding world and the expectations that they had to fulfil as a male or female. More importantly, these stories had shaped their identities growing up. As these stories were shared, the group also got an opportunity to challenge and unpack some of these expectations set by society. The participants also discussed how the failure or success to meet these expectations had impacted on their lives.

The participants shared their experiences of conflict and violence in their stories related to their gender. These helped the researcher understand gender relations more and how they have been influenced by social and historical processes over time. This sharing and the exchanges facilitate a reframing of identities by individuals. This was a process that involved focusing on past and previous lived experiences. Denborough (2014: 3) highlighted that “while we cannot always change the stories

that others have about us, we can influence the stories that we tell about ourselves and those we care about. And we can, with care, rework or rewrite storylines of identity". In the end, as they reframed their stories, they also reframed their identities that had been affected adversely by the situation at home and their migration journey.

It also aided in the development of positive identities through affirmations. Most of the participants were given spoilt identity tags in past experiences:

I have learnt that sharing and speaking out is very important to me as an individual. It brings healing and a place to draw strength from to move forward. I am a knowledgeable person through my experience. My life experiences, when shared, can help someone. I will take whatever opportunity presented to me to share as well as listen to experiences of others. When we share, the world becomes a better place to live in.

In the group, I have managed develop friendship with two other participants. The phone-a-buddy arrangement was very helpful in helping me maintain connections with my newfound friends. I have committed to ensuring that these relations are positive by employing respect, providing, and seeking support when needed.

The duo was able to form positive relationships both within and beyond the group. They both assumed positive identities of being dependable, trustworthy, and supportive. The above demonstrates how agencies can assist people in finding networks or relationships that suit them. This is a sign of progress in the creation of social capital and helps in the pursuit of sustainable peace. On that very same note of positive vibes in another interview, the following sentiments were shared:

Previously, I felt that I was a failure and that my life in South Africa was one not worth celebrating. After sharing and listening to others, I now celebrate all the small achievements I have and continue to make. I am doing the best despite the circumstances, and, more importantly, I have not given up.

The above sentiment speaks to a shift in identity and a flicker of hope. The participant previously occupied a position of low self-esteem and "surviving each day". It was a common sentiment within most of the participants where they felt as though they had not made it. The *kukiya kiya* had turned into *ndiri kutosota ndiri kuikiya* (I am doing great). This points to a move from obsessing over failures and missed opportunities to celebrating each moment. This exercise enabled the participants to talk about themselves and their experiences in a variety of ways, potentially allowing them to

resist dominant constructs of themselves as “victims,” “wounded,” “damaged,” or “trapped in cycles of repetition” (Callaghan, Fellin and Warner-Gale 2017; Callaghan, Fellin and Alexander 2019). As a result, this area provided an opportunity for the Zimbabwean youth to reorient their sense of self, connections, and family systems.

Many of the follow-up interviews reflected the presence of (re)ignited hope and a willingness to preserve continuation. The participants believed that the TOL exercise had inspired them to strive harder to achieve all their goals. One of the interviewees responded in the following manner:

Interactions with others inspired me to be positive and proactive in terms of the future I want. I admire some of the people mentioned here who have achieved so much in their lives. They are an example that it can be done if you are positive and do not doubt yourself. It is important to never give up no matter the challenges that you encounter. My late father is my source of inspiration, and I draw strength from his leadership within the family. He would have not wanted to see me giving up on my dreams, which he worked so hard to support when he was alive. I hope that I will make him proud as I work towards realizing them.

The narrative intervention allowed people to connect over shared experiences while also establishing meaning and forming a community. This substantiates early assertions by (Ncube 2019) that people’s lives are, by far, much greater than the challenges that they face. In the case of the participants, their move was inspired by the hunger to fulfil dreams, achieve goals, and wanting a piece of the future. To be able to explore what other unfamiliar contexts have to offer, they required bravery. It is over these hopes and dreams that they bonded and formed healthy, long-term partnerships.

## **7.9 Development of Agency and Empowerment**

The ability to overcome hardship was influenced by these consistent positive interactions and displays of support. It was a setting that encouraged the formation of positive, healthy relationships while also encouraging positive adaptability. Other research points to the lack of social capital in migrants that leads to social exclusion (Fanning, Haase and O’Boyle 2011; Asgari, Farahani and Salehi Amiri 2018; Grabiec 2019; Aksakal and Schmidt 2021). This intervention provided an opportunity to

(re)build social capital, which facilitates access to receiving support. The participants also began working on repairing broken ties with family or friends. One way was through asking for forgiveness or granting forgiveness. Earlier on, Fiona had shared about the abusive relationship in which she had been involved. In a follow-up interview, this was what she had to state:

I sent my former partner a message expressing how I felt about he had treated me in our previous relationship. In the text message, I also let him know that I harbored no negative feelings towards him and forgiven him. Reaching this point was not going to come anytime soon if I had not met you guys. I learnt the importance of forgiving and how it results in healing and inner peace... The group had also helped me see I was not to blame for my experience. I feel better and lighter on the inside, and, who knows, I may start dating soon (chuckles).

The ability of the participants to exercise agency was harmed by their exposure to various forms of violence (Callaghan, Alexander and Fellin 2016; Katz 2016). Interactions with family, friends, churches, and workplaces exposed them to violence. Fiona had begun to exercise her agency by deciding to tell the group about her experience. Her willingness to participate and the amount of information that she shared was agency and authority in action (Knobel and Lankshear 2014). Following her interactions with others, she listened to their thoughts on her experience, and they shared their own. Fiona chose to not allow the painful experience prevent her from opening up to new dating experiences. She granted herself forgiveness and extended it to her former partner.

The narrative intervention was important in helping individuals realize their agency. It also brought empowerment for the participants using Fiona as an example. When people engage in dialogue, they increase the amount and type of authority that they possess in their lives. The participants realized that they had power over undesired situations, power within them (skills and attributes), the power to create new possibilities, and the power of being in a collective (Samman and Santos 2009: 14). This authority came about as the participants were slowly realizing that they were separate entities from the problems that they were facing.



## 7.10 Other Outcomes

The study anticipated that the participants would develop self-awareness toward building social cohesion. When one is self-aware, the chances of hurting oneself or those around one are decreased. In a follow-up interview, Sokostina shared the following:

I enjoyed all the sessions I attended but also had a feeling others may have not liked me. Naturally, I am just someone who enjoys making conversation and expressing myself. In the mixed group, I heard two of the men sharing with one another that I was too talkative. My first thought was they felt I should not be vocal because of my gender, and that made me unhappy. This has always been a challenge for and experience this with a lot of men. I confronted one of them who then explained that they felt I interrupted others too much. At that moment, it also came to me that in the women's group, I was the loudest and may have prevented others from speaking. This made me feel bad, and I want to be someone who allows others to speak as well as listen to them well. I am not proud of the approach I took with the other guy. It could have been handled better if I had not let my emotions get the best of me.

Sokostina had discovered that her actions had had an impact on people's opinions of her. She also recognized the importance of emotional regulation and how it affects people's interactions. Sokostina's previous experiences of being treated unfairly had caused her to become enraged and forget the value of listening. People had an unfavorable impression of her because of this. Through self-awareness, Sokostina was able to reach a point of reflecting on people's perception of her. She was then willing to put in the necessary work such that people around her could have a positive perception of her as an individual. She had learned the value of listening as well in this whole ordeal. Much conflict or tension comes because of failing to listen to each other. In certain cases, the presence of stronger characters in the group made facilitation extremely difficult. The researcher had to emphasize the necessity of allowing others to speak in the workshop. The researcher would simply check in with the more reserved participants.

The participants were also asked to share what they liked about the whole experience. One of the responses was as follows:

The experience was good in the sense that we got to speak about things we rarely get to speak about. One of the reasons is *hatina kwekutaaurira zvimwe zvacho* (we do not have platforms or spaces to speak out) we do not think these conversations are important, and I am not aware of such platforms. Social media started as a platform where we could express ourselves and connect with so many other people. Recently, it has become a toxic place where young people violate and belittle one another.

The Zimbabwean youth participants were able to detach from their immediate concentration on the self and place themselves in the shoes of the relational other, experiencing the potential for empathy with their family members, friends, etc. This was facilitated through the exchange of narratives and memories within the group. This managed to overcome polarized views of perpetrators as completely bad, allowing for a more realistic assessment that humanizes (Tausch, Schmid and Hewstone 2010) them as having strengths and weaknesses. Earlier, there had been a group consensus about locals hating these migrants: “*Vanhu vemuno havatide* (they do not like us),” “*hatidiwe muno* (they do not want us here),” “*vanhu vemuno vari rafu* (people here mistreat us),” and “*muno munotoda akashinga*” (you need to be strong).

The researcher makes use of two experiences shared in the group by the participants to show how the group moved from this frame of understanding. Valentine had been discriminated against by a SAPS officer when he had gone to report his stolen laptop. The SAPS officer interacted with Valentine based on a stereotype around migrants. One of the participants responded as follows:

The locals seem to believe that migrants are dangerous and criminals. It is something they seem to be constantly telling each other. We are always being treated badly and constantly under attack. They do not like us at all; even the leaders seem to be in support of such behavior.

The SAPS officer’s weakness lied in his failure to question or challenge the stereotype. In the context of his job, he may have come across migrant criminals, but this did not justify his treatment of Valentine. This means that he was not entirely a bad person, but one must not condone his actions toward Valentine.

Another incident was that involving one of the female participants at a public hospital. She was not given good service due to her not speaking isiZulu. Previous research may point to the instrumentality of language in xenophobia (Hunter-Adams and Rother

2017; Makandwa and Vearey 2017; Almohamed and Vyas 2019). Medical personnel do not use isiZulu while communicating with racial groups who speak English. This indicates that race and ethnicity have played a role in the genesis of xenophobia in South Africa. One of the participants gave the following comment:

Zimbabweans we think that speaking in English is a measure of intelligence. We were socialized into that speaking in English will get you far and command respect from those around you. That is a position we need to move from and try to embrace our traditions just like our South African counterparts who are proudly Zulu. They speak in their language and practice their traditions with pride. Now that we are here, it would not hurt to, at least, invest or commit to being part of the communities we live in fully. One way would be by trying to, at least, learn basic Zulu.

The role-play exercises were used to try and test all these and engaged the group in more discussions. The participants shared that they had found the engagements to have been a positive experience. Some of their responses included the following: “I liked that I got to interact with new people, and it was a fun experience,” and “It was a different but great experience for me, and I hope to use what I have learnt with those around me.”

The age range of the participants worked effectively for this study. It ushered in a process of assessing one’s abilities and resources as one progressed through the stages of being a youth. In some instances, mixing youth of different ages is discouraged due to different perceived levels of maturity, especially emotional (Fellin *et al.* 2019). By sharing their experiences and concerns over the process, the whole group became a resource for the researcher. Whenever a concern was raised, the group came together to ensure that it was addressed in the best way possible. Dismissing participants based on age would have further provided a platform for discrimination against and the exclusion of all these important voices.

The use of narrative inquiry aided in the disclosure of previously suppressed experiences or stories. In the preceding chapters, the participants let the research team into parts of their lives that they normally kept private. Some of the shared stories depicted bravery, future possibilities, and resilience, all of which encouraged the participants’ desire to enhance relationships with other participants and family and friends, among other matters.

This is an illustration of fermenting (Sim and Ananthi 2017), because they explored a variety of techniques to cope with conflict, such as nonviolent means. Some participants mentioned how difficult it was to work toward alternatives during the process. The only drawback was that the study had to be completed within a certain amount of time. One issue that exemplifies this is the situation of the free food vouchers. Even though the sessions were almost finished, there were conflicts about the failure to share information about food vouchers with everyone in the group. This incident necessitates that these initiatives run for a long time, not merely for the sake of study. Rather, people need platforms where they can engage others and peace education on a regular basis, premised on transformative learning.

## **7.11 Conclusion**

The chapter gave an evaluation of the intervention that was used in this research. It highlights context-specific interventions as being more effective as they resonate with the participants. The dialogue platforms allowed the participants to access social support, gain acceptance, shape their identity, and develop their sense of agency. More importantly, the participants were able to construct and deconstruct issues while learning, relearning, and unlearning as a collective. However, more time needs to be invested to achieve sustainable social change and social cohesion. There is a need for these spaces to be supported and normalized as essential in daily routines.

# CHAPTER EIGHT

## SUMMARY

### 8.1 Overview of Objectives

Below were the original objectives of the study at its beginning. However due to COVID-19 and other related matters, the study could not continue with the original set objectives (see Section 1.2 in Chapter one):

- To explore the experiences of young Zimbabwean youth living in South Africa
- To explore barriers to social cohesion
- To design and implement an intervention that is based on narratives
- To evaluate the outcome and impact of narratives in (re)establishing social capital

The study took an exploratory approach, and the following became the new objectives of the study:

- To explore the expectations of Zimbabwean youth before migrating to Durban and to compare these with their current lived experiences
- To identify the barriers to social capital and the coping strategies that they have adopted

### 8.2 Objective 1: To explore the experiences of Zimbabwean youth before migrating to Durban and to compare these with their current lived experiences

The experiences of the Zimbabwean youths were explored through a series of focus group discussions and interviews. Chapter six first traced back the reasons behind these young Zimbabweans migrating to South Africa. It helped to understand their current experiences and perspectives around issues that concern them. The chapter also gave an insight into some of the challenges that are a result of migration. In Chapter seven, the participants mainly singled out discrimination, mounting pressure

to marry, unemployment, and a restrictive documentation framework as main challenges in their experience of living in South Africa.

### **8.2.1 Discrimination**

The participants shared that they were discriminated against in public and private spaces because of their migrant status. Young Zimbabwean migrants are discriminated against because of their failure to speak the local language, origin, and physical attributes. To deal with this othering due to physical attributes, young Zimbabweans have resorted to skin bleaching to gain acceptance and “fit in”. The experience of being discriminated against has lowered their sense of belonging and exposed them to cultural, structural, and direct violence. Humiliation, killing, rape, detention, and denial of access to basic services are some of the examples. Being labeled *amakwerekwere* (illegal foreigners) stands in the way of them enjoying the benefits of belonging to a community.

### **8.2.2 Lack of Employment Opportunities**

One of the hopes after migrating was to secure formal employment opportunities. The reality was that securing employment has been, and is, a challenge for the young Zimbabwean migrants. The failure to secure employment opportunities has led to much frustration in the youth. The presence of frustration in the absence of positive coping mechanisms may lead to the use of violence or crime as a coping mechanism (Du Toit *et al.* 2018a). For some of the participants, the failure to secure employment had led to negative feelings of shame, low self-esteem, and isolation.

### **8.2.3 Restrictive Migrant Documentation Framework**

A restrictive migrant documentation framework was another challenge with which young Zimbabwean migrants were grappling. In this study, many participants were struggling to gain legal stay status. Narratives of criminality and the untrustworthiness of undocumented migrants had lowered their chances of being fully accepted and allowed to enjoy positive experiences. Intellect, motivation, family, and friends were some of the sources of resilience employed by the participants.

#### **8.2.4 Mounting Pressure to Marry**

There is an existing pressure to marry personally and from family as well as friends. For the young women, the experience has been much more difficult than that of the young men. The failure to secure marriage often leads to derogatory labels for young women, such as *hure* or *mvana*. Increasing pressure to marry and being found physically undesirable have led to young Zimbabwean women bleaching their skin. This coping mechanism is quite detrimental to their overall health. The study also found that young Zimbabwean men were involved in romantic relationships with South African women. Both the young men and women use this as a means of social capital in relation to their establishing and maintaining ties with family and friends as well as acceptance in host communities.

### **8.3 Objective 2: To identify the barriers to social cohesion and the coping strategies that they have adopted**

Chapter six highlighted barriers to social cohesion amongst the young Zimbabwean migrants: mistrust, competitiveness, and social networks that were failing and superficial.

#### **8.3.1 Mistrust of Individuals and Existing Social Networks**

The mistrust was due to the presence of differences and previous negative experiences with individuals or in social networks. It was also found that due to high levels of mistrust, young Zimbabwean migrants often avoided socializing with fellow Zimbabweans. The presence of high levels of mistrust have employed avoidance as a coping mechanism, limiting any chance of bonding or bridging.

#### **8.3.2 Competitiveness**

The presence of high levels of mistrust can also be linked to the presence of competitiveness. There seems to be an ever-present competition for access to resources and limited opportunities. The young men are more pressured to excel as providers by societal expectations. This leads to them displaying competitive masculinities when engaging with others. Many of these young men have been involved in multiple risky sexual encounters, putting them at risk of contracting HIV

and sexually transmitted infections. The female participants also spoke of how these competitive masculinities had affected their relations with men. One participant shared how she had suffered abuse at the hands of her male intimate partner.

### **8.3.3 Failing and Superficial Existing Social Networks**

The family and the church were identified as the most important networks for young Zimbabwean migrants. This was established as the participants shared their positive and negative experiences within these networks. Mistrust and competitiveness have largely influenced the quality of interactions in the existing social networks. The church and family networks are failing due to the failure to meet the expectations of the young Zimbabweans as well as to offer social support. There has been no trust or the free flow of information across the network members. In the absence of real-time social networks to cater for them, young Zimbabweans have resorted to online social platforms to form networks. However, these networks seem not to have conquered their own challenges, such as cyber-bullying.

### **8.3.4 Coping Mechanisms and Deviant Behavior**

The participants shared some of the coping mechanisms that they employ in their lives. Avoidance and compromise were used when dealing with locals as well as fellow Zimbabweans. This was largely influenced by the presence of mistrust and avoiding conflict. Both men and women bleach their skin to gain acceptance in their respective host communities. This puts them at risk of renal failure, damage to the liver, depression, and stillbirths, among many other factors. Dating and marriage are being used as social capital in the Zimbabwean and host social networks. Others have found themselves trapped in unsafe unions due to their need to belong and access social support. Social media has allowed participants to maintain relations with friends and family from home. More importantly, it has led to them forging new friendships as well finding entertainment on social media platforms. However, these online spaces are not free from ills, such as cyber-bullying, putting users at risk.



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## **APPENDIX 1**

### **Activity Outline**

#### Introductory session

- To give outline of the research and introduce the researcher.
- Allow participants to respond in terms of their expectations
- Facilitate setting common set of values that will govern the research process.
- Engage participants in game or exercise aimed at encouraging familiarization within the group

#### Structure of other sessions

- Set the agenda
- Facilitate perspective sharing in the group through dialogue and activities
- Mapping way forward as a group
- Reflection on whole process

## **APPENDIX 2**

### **Interview guide 1 – Profiling the participants**

- How old are you?
- Where do you currently live in Durban?
- What is your gender and marital status?
- What is your migration status?
- What is your highest level of education?
- What is your employment status and your current occupation?

### **Interview guide 2 – Participant migration journey**

- What influenced your decision to migrate to Durban from Zimbabwe?
- Please give an account of how you got to Durban.
- What resources were available if any to assist you in your migration to Durban?
- What are some of the challenges you face as a male / female migrant from Zimbabwe in Durban?
- What coping strategies do you use to deal with the challenges you have mentioned?

### **Interview guide 3**

- Describe your experience in the group?
- Has the experience been helpful for you?
- What have been the most or least helpful aspects of the group?
- Do you have any suggestions that you think would improve such group activities?

## **APPENDIX 3**

### **Focus Group Guide 1**

This study will make use of games and exercises that will enable self-affirmation and exchange of ideas and experiences:

- What is your idea and example of an ideal citizen and what it means to be Zimbabwean?
- How does it feel to be a young person and challenges the Zimbabwean young people face?
- What challenges do young Zimbabwean migrants face in Durban?
- What are their hopes for the future as Zimbabwean young people?
- What do you understand by the term violence and its forms?
- Give an account of an experience of violence if you have any?

### **Focus Group Guide 2**

- What was it like for you to participate in this research?
- What thoughts did you have before you started engaging with others?
- What thoughts or feelings did you have when we started engaging as group?
- What thoughts or feelings did you have after spending time with the group?
- Have your thoughts or feelings changed about other Zimbabwean migrants?
- What lessons did you take from all the activities and dialogues?
- What do you think worked or did not work during the activities and dialogues?
- Was there anything that you liked or did not like?

### **Observation Guide**

- Level of participation in group activities
- Interaction amongst group members
- Attitudes within the group towards each other

## APPENDIX 4

### *STANDING GROUND EXERCISE*

- Stand up if you have ever driven on a public road.
- Stand up if you have a driver's licence.
- Stand up if you found coming to south Africa confusing.
- Stand up if you are a parent.
- Stand up if you have more than five brothers and sisters.
- Stand up if you speak more than one language.
- Stand up if you have lost a relative or friend to political violence.
- Stand if you are the first member of your family to be in the diaspora.
- Stand up if you are the only member of your family in the diaspora.
- Stand up if you are registered to vote.
- Stand up if you went to a wedding in the last 12 months.
- Stand up if you went to a funeral in the last 12 months.
- Stand up if your current job was your first choice.

## APPENDIX 5

### COMMON SET OF VALUES

Respect

Listening

Being Non-judgmental

Trust

Confidentiality

Empathy

Not giving advice

Assurance of not subjecting any group member to any form of ridicule

Knowing each other better

Reflection

Self-ownership

Love, affection and compassion

Honesty

Integrity

No communication should be made in a confronting manner

Reduce hate /jealousy

An open mind

## **APPENDIX 6**

### **Fear in a bowl activity**

Materials required:

- Bowl
- Pens
- Pieces of paper

The topic of fear was introduced and participants were asked to share their fears. Thereafter each participant anonymously wrote down their fear(s) on a piece of paper. They all began with the statement with “I fear...” or “Ndinotyá” as they could write in Shona or English.

After writing they put their pieces of paper in a bowl in the center of the group. Participants were asked to pick a piece of paper from the bowl and read out to the rest of the group. This led us into a discussion around fear, experiences of fear, and how to deal with them.

## **APPENDIX 7**

### **Questions for Tree of Life –**

These questions used for this exercise were from the Catholic Relief Services (2016) Tree of Life manual.

#### **Roots – Your history**

- Where do you come from? (Region, village, town)
- What is your family history? (Origins, family name, ancestry, extended family)

#### **Ground – Your life now**

- Who are the people you love the most (they can be alive or dead)?
- Who do you live with now?
- What do you do every day?
- What is your favorite song or place when at home?

#### **Trunk – Your skills**

- What are you good at and proud of?
- What do you do well?
- What do other people say you are good at?
- (These can be things like sport or school work or they can be special skills like being kind to others, taking care of others).
- What values do you live by such as kindness, courage and respect?
- Who taught you these values and skills?

#### **Branches – Your hopes, dreams and wishes**

- What are your hopes dreams and wishes?
- What is the history of these hopes, dreams and wishes?
- How are these hopes, dreams and wishes linked to important people in your life (who may be alive or may have passed away)?
- How have you been able to hold onto these hopes dreams and wishes even through difficult times



## **Leaves – People who are important to you**

- Who has been important to you in your life? These people can still be alive or they may have died?
- Did you have lovely times with this person?
- What was special about this person to you?
- If this person has passed away, would this person like it that you remember them in these ways?

## **Fruits**

- Gifts that you have been given (including both material and nonmaterial gifts)
- What gifts have you received in your life?
- Why do you think the person gave you this?
- What did they appreciate about you that would have led them to do this?
- What do you think you might have contributed to their life?

How did the Tree of Life exercise help you?

Did you learn anything new from the TOL exercise? What was that?

Has anything changed in the way that you feel about the bad things that happened to you?

What did you like or not like about the TOL exercise

*Gatekeeper letter*

ZIM-AMIGOS FOOTBALL CLUB  
PO BOX 3301, BISHOPSGATE 4000

12 April 2018

Dear Ms Runyaoro

I write on behalf of the Z AFC board to say that we are happy for you to do your research among our Club's members

Yours sincerely

CLUB PRESIDENT. ANTON INNOCENT MOYO  
SECRETARY. PATRICK MURAMBADORO



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