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**A FRACTURED DIASPORA: STRATEGIES AND IDENTITIES
AMONG ZIMBABWEANS IN BRITAIN**

by

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**A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of
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Declaration

Some of the work contained in this thesis has been discussed in the following publications:

Pasura, Dominic, (2006) Mapping Exercise: Zimbabwe International Organisation for Migration, London, Available at

<http://www.iomlondon.org/doc/mapping/Zimbabwe%20Mapping%20Exercise%20Final%20Report.pdf>.

Pasura, Dominic, (2008) 'Diaspora' in Social-Pastoral Dictionary of Migrations Rome, Scalabrini International Migration Institute (forthcoming).

Abstract

This thesis analyses the experiential, performative and lived realities of the Zimbabwean diaspora in Britain. It is based on an innovative multi-sited ethnography, comprising 33 in-depth interviews and participant observation in four research sites, and draws upon concepts of diaspora and transnationalism as theoretical and analytical frameworks. Whereas the concept of diaspora typically emphasises group cohesion and solidarity, this thesis argues that the Zimbabwean diaspora in Britain has to be understood as fractured and fragmented. The diaspora is fractured in terms of ethnicity and gender; the various strategies and routes used to enter Britain; migrants' contrasting characteristics and degrees of participation in diaspora politics; the diverse meanings of the homeland and the multiple diasporic identities etched in the hostland.

On the basis of data from Coventry, Birmingham, London and Wigan, the thesis examines the triadic relationship of the diaspora to the homeland and to the hostland, as well as to the group itself. Core themes and sub themes that are addressed include the phases and patterns of migration from Zimbabwe; transnational diaspora politics; the participation of the diaspora in paid work; the configuration of gender relations and roles; and the meanings of diaspora and attitudes towards return or settlement.

The thesis is distinctive in the following respects: its use of multi-sited ethnographic methodology to generate data; the theoretical and empirical demonstration of how migrants participate in transnational diaspora politics; the investigation of the ability of social actors to resist institutional structures in their everyday lives in the hostland; the exploration of how gendered identities are configured in the public and private spaces of the diaspora; and the conceptual and theoretical interpretation of the Zimbabwean diaspora vis-à-vis other accounts of global diasporas. This research represents a contribution to our knowledge of the Zimbabwean diaspora in particular and to the field of diaspora and transnational studies in general.

Abbreviations

The Asylum and Immigration Tribunal (AIT)

Central Intelligence Organisation (CIO)

Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP)

European Union (EU)

National Economic and Consultative Forum (NECF)

Land Reform and Resettlement Programme I (LRRP I)

Land Reform and Resettlement Programme II (LRRP II)

International Monetary Fund (IMF)

National Democratic Party (NDP)

Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC)

Qualified Lawyers Transfer Test (QLTT)

Scientific and Industrial Research and Development Centre (SIRDC)

Southern African Migration Project (SAMP)

Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI)

United Nations (UN)

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

Witwatersrand Native Labour Association (WENELA)

Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU)

Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF)

Chapter 1: Introduction

Earlier studies of international migration assumed that migration was unidirectional and that migrants make a sharp and definitive break with their homelands when fully assimilated in destination countries. However, there has been a marked shift in the literature from the politics of immigration and discussions about how migrants are assimilated and integrated in the hostland to focussing on how they maintain bi-focal or multi-focal identities, thus challenging territorially defined identities. From the early 1990s, there has been a remarkable intellectual, political, economic, cultural and social interest in diasporas and transnational networks and their impact on both hostlands and homelands (see, for example, Basch et al. 1994; Cohen 1997; Safran 1991; Tololyan 1996). Consequently, the intertwined concepts of diaspora and transnationalism are now key contemporary frameworks in understanding international migration.

Diaspora and transnationalism provide tools that transcend national boundaries; thus, they are deployed to explore the multi-dimensional aspects of cross-border mobility and its impact on individuals, groups, communities and societies in both the hostland and the homeland. As Vertovec and Cohen (1999, xiii) point out, 'one of the major changes in migration patterns is the growth in diasporic populations anchored (socially and culturally as well as physically) neither at their places of origin nor at their places of destination.' Einri emphasises the same argument and regards diaspora studies as 'a decentred approach in which migration, migrants and their multi-generational societies and cultures are seen as phenomena in themselves and not simply in relation to the countries of origin and reception' (2000, 1). Correspondingly, transnational scholars have investigated migrants'

simultaneous connection to the country of destination and the country of origin, what has been referred to as ‘multi-sited transnational social fields’ (Faist 2004; Levitt and Schiller 2004, 1003). Diasporas and transnationalism are not novel phenomena in human experience (Castles and Miller 2003; van der Veer 1995), but rather, they represent a new analytical perspective (Portes and DeWind 2007).

1.1 Focus of research

Drawing on the concepts of diaspora and transnationalism, this thesis explores the lived realities of the contemporary Zimbabwean diaspora in Britain. The thesis is based upon a multi-sited ethnographic research methodology that made use of in-depth interviews and participant observation as the main methods of data generation. The methods gave the author the opportunity to reach out to groups such as undocumented migrants, where establishing trust with respondents was essential in conducting research. The thesis concerns the everyday experiences of the diaspora members in the hostland, the articulation of the diaspora in particular settings, the complexity and contradictions experienced by migrants in living in two social worlds. Most diaspora theorists (Clifford 1994; Cohen 1997; Safran 1991) have been concerned about defining the origin and meaning of the term diaspora (see chapter two). The thesis will return to the questions posed by these theorists at the end of the thesis (see chapter nine), but will do so only after concentrating on the articulation, production and performance of the diaspora in Britain. Although there has been a dramatic increase in the scope and impact of diasporas and transnational communities within the ‘new world disorder’ (Sheffer 2003, 248), more in-depth studies are needed to understand the nature of contemporary diasporas.

In a country of thirteen million people, it is estimated that between three to four million Zimbabweans across all racial, ethnic, political and gendered boundaries have embarked on phases of voluntary and involuntary migration to South Africa, Botswana, Britain, Mozambique, Zambia, Namibia, Australia, the US, New Zealand and Canada. It would be difficult to find families in Zimbabwe who do not have at least one or two members living abroad. Although the migration of Zimbabweans abroad can be attributed to several factors, the considerable movement of the population happened after the formation of the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) in 1999 and the launch of the Land Reform and Resettlement Programme II (LRRP II). In the face of a strong political challenge from the newly formed MDC, the Zimbabwean government launched the LRRP II, resulting in the transfer of land from large-scale commercial white farmers to black peasant farmers. The process was characterised by violence against farm owners, commercial farm workers and supporters of the opposition MDC (Makumbe 2003; McGregor 2002; Shaw 2003). While opponents of the ZANU-PF government criticise the regime through the language of human rights and democracy, Mugabe relies on the discourse of anti-imperialism and anti-colonialism to win support from the majority of African countries (Phimister and Raftopoulos 2004).

It is within this context of high political tension and deepening economic crisis that we have witnessed the large-scale arrival of Zimbabwean asylum seekers, refugees, labour migrants and students in Britain, generating significant public interest in political and economic events in Zimbabwe. Zimbabweans who migrated to Britain are of particular economic and political significance because of the deeply embedded colonial, economic, cultural and political history linking the

two countries. Although there are no precise figures for the number of Zimbabweans in Britain, estimates suggest that there are more than 200,000¹ Zimbabweans in the country (Home Office 2002; Home Office 2003; Home Office 2004; Home Office 2005; Home Office 2006). Hence, the visible presence of a large population of Zimbabweans in Britain is a phenomenon worthy of significant study.

The literature about the migration of Zimbabweans both to neighbouring countries and beyond Africa has been relatively scarce. The primary and secondary literature has been characterised by a strong emphasis on regional migration (McDonald et al. 2000; Tevera and Zinyama 2002) and, in most cases, on respondents' intention to move, rather than the experiences of those who have left (Logan 1999; Tevera 2005). Meanwhile, recent scholarship has sought to address this imbalance. Drawing on data from a survey of 1000 Zimbabweans in the UK and South Africa, Bloch (2005; 2006; 2008) provides a comparative overview of the impact of structural barriers in both the UK and South Africa on the economic experiences of Zimbabwean migrants. Her work demonstrates evidence of deskilling among the majority of Zimbabwean migrants and its negative impact on remittances and other forms of transnational activities. In another empirical study, Mbiba (2005) highlights the structural barriers faced by Zimbabwe's 'global citizens' in Britain in their efforts to resolve the social, political and economic crisis in the homeland. More recently, McGregor (2006; 2007) uses the interrelated themes of inclusion and exclusion to explore the narratives of highly skilled Zimbabwean men and women working as carers in Britain, and how these professionals negotiate work

¹ See discussion in chapter four about movement of the population from the country and the phases of migration.

and family. A recurring theme of the emerging literature about the Zimbabwean diaspora in Britain relates to the structural constraints faced by migrants and the way they are concentrated in the health-related sectors of the British economy (Mbiba 2005; McGregor 2007).

Apart from these notable studies, the study of the Zimbabwean diaspora in Britain is still in its early stages. Some of the under-researched areas of Zimbabwean diaspora which this thesis seeks to explore are: the nature of transnational diaspora politics;² how migrants negotiate and construct diasporic identities; the participation of migrants in the labour market and the gendering of the diaspora. The thesis intends to examine how the diaspora was dispersed, how it is constituted in the hostland and how it maintains connections with the homeland. The aim of this study is to explore the making of the Zimbabwean diaspora in Britain insofar as migrants' experience relates to three components of diaspora: the 'hostland', the 'homeland' and the group itself. Thus, the thesis constitutes a contribution to the growing literature about Zimbabweans migrants in Britain, as well as a contribution to the literature on diaspora and transnationalism.

1.2 Key themes

The thesis follows a thematic discussion of the following topics: vintages and patterns of migration; transnational diaspora politics; migrants' experience of the labour market; the configuration of gender relations and gender roles in the diaspora; and the meanings of diaspora and migrants' attitudes towards return and settlement.

² This thesis uses the term 'transnational diaspora politics' and 'diaspora politics' interchangeably, see discussion in chapter five.

The different vintages and patterns of migration to Britain demonstrate that the Zimbabwean diaspora is not a monolithic 'community', but divided by race, place, ethnicity, gender, politics, immigration status and time of arrival. Diaspora politics is one of the interesting themes captured in this study. It is defined broadly as political activities pertaining to the domestic or foreign policy of the homeland and also political activities that advance migrants' rights in the country of settlement. This thesis formulates a four-fold classification of the Zimbabwean diaspora as visible members, epistemic members, dormant members and silent members. This is an innovative heuristic device to understand the degree and mode of participation in diaspora politics and the characteristics of diaspora members.

Migrants' experience of the labour market is another important theme explored in this study. Employment is one of the core features used in evaluating the successful settlement of migrants in destination countries. In spite of their human capital, the majority of respondents do not utilise the skills they acquired in the country of origin but work in unskilled service industries. The participation of migrants in the labour market is premised on several factors. The thesis demonstrates the role played by immigration status, social capital, labour market conditions, ethnicity, gender and other structural factors in shaping migrants' participation in the labour market.

Another significant theme examined by the thesis is the relationship between migration and radical changes to gender relations and roles between men and women in the diaspora. The diaspora has been a space in which women renegotiate their gendered identities. By providing an analysis and comparison of both public

and private spaces of the diaspora, the thesis shows the internal tensions and power struggles between men and women.

The last major theme identifies respondents' understanding of their experience and conditions in Britain. Furthermore, how their experiences shape attitudes about return to the homeland or settlement in the hostland. Respondents in this study describe their experience in the diaspora in complex ways: 'diaspora as reverse colonisation'; 'diaspora as Babylon and Egypt'; and 'diaspora as Wenela'.³ The variety of meanings ascribed to the diaspora demonstrate that there is no universal migrant experience upon which deductive reasoning could be applied, as each migration phenomenon needs to be located within its own specificity. Similarly, settlement and the idea of return provide both purpose and contradiction in people's lives.

1.3 Contributions of the study

There are several characteristics which make this thesis distinctive: the original, innovative and pioneering multi-sited ethnographic methodology that was used to generate data (see chapter three); the theoretical and empirical demonstration of how migrants participate in transnational diaspora politics (see chapter five); the ability of social actors to resist institutional structures in their everyday lives in the hostland (see chapter six); the exploration of how gendered identities are configured in the public and private spaces of the diaspora (see chapter seven); the several meanings respondents give to their conditions and experiences in Britain

³ Witwatersrand Native Labour Association (WENELA) was a recruiting agency in South Africa that was given exclusive rights to recruit labour for working the mines in the Southern African region during the colonial period. The mines were over one thousand kilometres away from Zimbabwe, then Rhodesia.

(see chapter eight); and the conceptual and theoretical interpretation of the Zimbabwean diaspora vis-à-vis other accounts of global diasporas (see chapter nine).

The strength of the empirical investigation lies in the yearlong multi-sited ethnographic methodology that was used to generate data in Coventry, Birmingham, London and Wigan. Identifying narratives and following them across sites was a means of exploring the similarities and differences in experiences, behaviour and attitude in different locations.

- First, a Zimbabwean pub in Coventry and *gochi-gochi*⁴ in Birmingham, both public-private spaces for leisure and socialising. These are spaces where cultural identities are expressed and performed through food, language, music and a sense of belonging. They were also points of access to undocumented migrants.
- Second, two diaspora congregations,⁵ Forward in Faith Mission International (FIFMI) in Coventry and the Zimbabwean Catholic Church in Birmingham, which are public spaces for the performance of cultural and religious identities. Diaspora congregations, dominated by women, are platforms for expressing diasporic identities and enhancing social networks.

⁴ '*Gochi-gochi*' is a Shona word for barbecue, an event where people gather and spend cash with friends roasting meat and drinking beer. In the diaspora, *gochi-gochi* has come to mean both the actual place where the roasting of meat takes place and the activity itself.

⁵ Diaspora congregations are extensions of Christian churches in Zimbabwe. Some of the churches identified during fieldwork include Apostolic Faith Mission, Methodist, Reformed Church and Family of God. Church services are conducted mainly in traditional languages, that is, Shona or Ndebele. All of the diaspora congregations valorise connections with the homeland.

- Third, the Zimbabwe Vigil's⁶ street demonstrations outside the Zimbabwean Embassy in central London. This is a public space that has symbolic significance because of its nearness to the House of Commons and Trafalgar Square (a rallying point for anti-apartheid activism). The Vigil is a space where Zimbabweans from different racial, ethnic and gendered boundaries hold public demonstrations against human rights abuses in the homeland.
- Lastly, people's homes in Wigan provided an opportunity to experience diasporic life in private spaces. Wigan provided access to asylum seekers and refugees, dispersed as part of the UK government's dispersal policy. More importantly, the geographical location of Wigan, in the north-western part of the UK, provided an opportunity to compare respondents' experiences with those of migrants living in more multicultural places, such as London and the West Midlands.

As the thesis will show, these sites embodied both public and private spaces privileging different gender/race profiles, geographical spaces, immigration status and thus different identities. Participating in these sites provided the author with rich ethnographic data, and the sites were also crucial points of access to the in-depth interviews that were conducted. Furthermore, a multi-sited ethnographic methodology provided important niches within which to capture the lived realities of the Zimbabwean diaspora. From the pub, *gochi-gochi*, diaspora congregations, the Vigil and people's homes in Wigan the thesis explores the articulation of diasporic identities by people in different social, cultural, religious and political

⁶ Sometimes the thesis refer to the Zimbabwe Vigil just as 'the Vigil' since this is what Zimbabweans call it among themselves.

settings. The value of multi-sited ethnography is that it enables empirical comparison to be made between different sites.

The thesis provides evidence of the agency of migrants in manoeuvring various strategies, which help them to survive and cope with life in a hostile environment. For example, migrants configure different routes to enter Britain, adopt various strategies to participate in the labour market and to gain settlement in the hostland. Thus, in spite of such structural barriers in the hostland, evidence from this study suggests that the Zimbabwean diaspora is not a disempowered group but rather, one that individually and collectively shapes and determines its future by combining and embracing different approaches in response to challenges in the hostland.

While this research focuses on Zimbabweans and the particularities of their lived experience in Britain, the questions that are asked and analysed can be applied more broadly to the study of diasporas and transnational communities. The thesis provides a complex elaboration of the notion of diaspora, encompassing diaspora as a concept; diaspora as a process; diaspora as a condition; and diaspora as exile. Diaspora as a concept has been stretched to accommodate various intellectual, cultural and political agendas (see discussion in chapter two). Diaspora as a process explains how the Zimbabwean diaspora is constructed and reconstructed through migration and movement, as well as imagined through thought, cultural production and political struggle. The thesis traces some of the migration patterns of the Zimbabwean diaspora, how the diaspora is performed and expressed in different locations and sites and the different meanings people attach to their experience of the diaspora. The conception of diaspora as a state pertains to the

specific historical experience of the dislocation of people from their places of origin to destination countries. Consequently, the idea of diaspora as a state can be used as a marker for exclusion of migrants from full social, economic and political participation in the hostland. The notion of diaspora as exile suggests the forced departure of migrants from the country of origin and expresses the urgency to make a quick return to the homeland. Diaspora as exile provides a theoretical basis for understanding political activism in the diaspora. This thesis qualifies the classical conception of diaspora, which emphasises homogeneity by demonstrating how the Zimbabwean diaspora is fractured and fragmented.

The thesis contributes to the gendering of the diaspora by exploring the construction and reconstruction of gendered identities in both the public and private spaces of the diaspora (see chapter seven). Feminist critiques of diaspora have included the argument that the concept tends to obscure or even silence internal differentiations and power dynamics within migrant groups. Furthermore, the thesis contributes to broader issues of social integration and exclusion in the UK. Thus, it is of relevance in terms of both policy-making and intellectual endeavour. It has been acknowledged that ‘there are few issues more relevant to today’s society, both in the UK and elsewhere, than those relating to migration and diasporas and their impact on identities and cultural practices’ (AHRB 2004, 1).

Another distinctive feature of this study is that it is written by a diasporan with special interest in the study in question. In fact, the motivation for embarking on this study is not mere academic interest but it emanates from my lived experiences. I am a male researcher, born in Zimbabwe where I completed most of my academic education. Indeed, most of my family members are in Zimbabwe. I

belong to the Shona ethnic group and have experienced the political and economic conditions that pushed many Zimbabweans out of the country. Hence, my research interests come not just from the mere fact of being a Zimbabwean but also, and most importantly, from the complexity of being embedded in two social worlds. Researching the Zimbabwean diaspora in Britain makes me feel I am both the subject and object of my research. This is analogous to what Mills (1959, 15) called the sociological imagination, that is, 'a quality of mind that seems most dramatically to promise an understanding of the intimate realities of ourselves in connection with larger social realities.' Perhaps there is some truth in the idea that people who are living a certain social reality are usually better positioned to identify that reality, and to provide a good explanation of it.

1.4 Thesis structure

Following this introductory chapter, the second chapter reviews the literature and develops a theoretical framework, exploring literature from the fields of migration, diaspora, transnationalism, feminist studies and international reports about Zimbabwe. First, the chapter undertakes a review of literature relating to Zimbabwean migration. Next, the chapter examines the concepts of diaspora and transnationalism as conceptual frameworks underpinning the study. Finally, the chapter concludes by formulating research questions based on a review of the existing literature.

The third chapter discusses the justification behind deploying a multi-sited ethnographic methodology in studying the Zimbabwean diaspora. The chapter begins by discussing qualitative and quantitative research strategies and provides a rationale for adopting a qualitative methodology. It then provides an analytic

discussion of the concept of multi-sited ethnography and its relevance in studying diasporic and transnational communities. The chapter then considers the main methods of data generation: that is, in-depth interviews and participant observation. The next section reflects on how my position as a Zimbabwean was a salient feature in negotiating access to social settings and respondents. The chapter then discusses ethical considerations pertaining to this study. The final section of the chapter evaluates data analysis techniques used in this research.

As a way of contextualising the respondents' narratives, chapter four situates the diaspora historically, illustrating through a brief history of Zimbabwe the vintages and patterns of migration and the changing profile of Zimbabwean migrants in Britain. The chapter is divided into four sections. The first section contains a brief history of Zimbabwe as a way of contextualizing this study. On the basis of secondary literature and findings from this study, the second section identifies five main distinctive phases of migration from Zimbabwe to other countries. Building on this, the third section explores the routes taken by migrants in their journeys into Britain. The last section discusses the different patterns of migration generated by the movement.

The essence of chapter five is to understand the scale and nature of diaspora politics, contributing a classification for comprehending the mode and degrees of participation in the politics of the diaspora. The chapter is divided into five sections. The first part of the chapter seeks to clarify conceptually the terms diaspora politics and transnational politics. The second part of the chapter develops a four-fold classification of diaspora members, which is used as a heuristic device in identifying the characteristics of members and their motivation

for participating in transnational diaspora politics. This is followed by a descriptive and analytical account of research sites and how they contribute to respondents' participation in transnational diaspora politics. The next section explores the nature of transnational diaspora politics from the perspectives of the respondents. Finally, the chapter explores the complicated relationship between the diaspora and the homeland government.

Chapter six examines the role played by immigration status, social capital, labour market conditions, ethnicity, gender and other structural factors in influencing migrants' participation in the labour market. This chapter firstly reviews the discussion about the integration of migrants in western labour markets. More specifically, it examines the intersection of labour market participation and ethnic minorities in Britain. The chapter then provides an overview of respondents' migration characteristics in relation to the labour market. Next, the chapter identifies competing explanations as to why the majority of skilled migrants are concentrated in certain sectors of the labour market. The chapter identifies a number of structural barriers that devalue migrants' human and social capital thereby leaving them on the margins of the labour market. The section also analyses the social mobility of migrants in the hostland and the impact of working in 'feminised' occupations for migrants' diasporic identity.

Chapter seven provides a gendered analysis of the diaspora, in both public and private spaces, taking into account the cultural 'traditions' of the country of origin, the conditions under which the diaspora was constituted and conditions in the country of settlement. The chapter is divided into five sections. First, it attempts to show the nature of gender relations in contemporary Zimbabwe based on primary

and secondary literature. Second, the chapter provides explanations of the changing gender relations and gender roles within the diaspora. Third, the chapter discusses the impact of these changes on both men and women. Building from this, the next section then explores how public spaces are used by men to resist changes that are happening within diaspora households. The last section briefly examines the various marriage forms emanating in the diaspora in contrast to the ‘traditional’ Shona and Ndebele marriage.

Chapter eight draws on the narratives of respondents to examine the meanings of diaspora and consider questions of remittances, return and the connection between hostland and homeland. The first part of the chapter uses the stories of respondents to generate multiple meanings of their diasporic conditions and experiences. In the second part, the chapter explores what influences respondents’ attitude towards the idea of return and settlement. Building on the empirical findings of this study and based on arguments developed in earlier chapters, chapter nine provides a nuanced argument as to why Zimbabweans in Britain should be called a fractured diaspora.

1.5 Preliminary definition of terms

For the purposes of the immediate discussion, the following terms need to be clarified: homeland, hostland, diaspora, Zimbabwean diaspora and Zimbabwean. (These core concepts are further developed in chapter two.)

There are varieties of meanings attached to the term ‘homeland’; however, the thesis uses homeland specifically to describe respondents’ country of origin. Furthermore, the term ‘hostland’ is used conveniently in the thesis to refer to the country of settlement, in this case Britain, even though the term ‘host’ suggests

that migrants are welcome and their stay is temporary. The term diaspora is used to signify the dispersal of a population from the place of origin to foreign lands. Though the notion 'Zimbabwean diaspora' will be questioned (see chapters two, five and nine), the phrase is used in chapter one to signify Zimbabweans living abroad. The expression Zimbabwean diaspora raises a prior question about who is a Zimbabwean. Citizenship is a contentious subject that has attracted voluminous research (Cesarani and Fulbrook 1996). This study does not intend to be exhaustive on this subject, but points out some of the ambiguities in the use of the term when applied to Zimbabweans.

The advent of globalisation, new international labour markets, decolonisation and political upheavals, among other factors, have undercut the foundational principles of citizenship and have contributed to the expansion and membership of citizenship beyond the boundaries of national collectiveness (Menyhart 2003; Soysal 1996; Turner 1993). Hence, the nation-state is beginning to lose its primacy as a source of identity, as many people now have multiple identities. As Yuval-Davis describes it,

There exist immigrant communities which are culturally and politically committed to continue to 'belong' to their 'mother country' – or more specifically to the national collectivity from where they, their parents or their grandparents, have come. At the same time they see their own and their children's futures as bound up with the country where they live (1999, 126).

Similarly, the emergence of a Zimbabwean population abroad has seen some migrants acquiring dual nationality in their country of destination, and this is particularly so for those early migrants living in Britain and those granted refugees

status. However, the Citizenship of Zimbabwe Amendment Act, 2003 prohibits dual citizenship and requires a person with dual citizenship to renounce foreign citizenship so as to retain Zimbabwean citizenship. For the sake of this study, a Zimbabwean is any person who is culturally and politically committed to belong to the national collectivity, even if the person holds dual citizenship that disqualifies him/her from being a Zimbabwean.

Chapter 2: Literature review and theoretical framework

2.1 Introduction

Diaspora and transnationalism are significant theoretical frameworks for understanding the dynamics of international migration. As Castles (2007, 352) argues ‘migration research in the era of globalisation is a transnational undertaking, which requires theoretical frameworks and analytical tools that transcend the nation-state.’ These two concepts broaden and deepen our analytical lens beyond national boundaries in order to understand how migrants are immersed in two or more social worlds. The purpose of this chapter is to review the relevant literature and situate this study within it; and select a conceptual framework upon which to base the case study. This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section focuses on migration literature in relation to Zimbabwe. The next section reviews the literature on diaspora and transnationalism and provides the theoretical framework that underpins the study. The last section formulates the research questions based on the literature review.

2.2 Zimbabwean migration

There is sparse literature on the migration of Zimbabweans to other countries. However, it is possible to delineate three set of literatures relating to migration from the country. The first group of studies pay particular attention to the loss of skilled personnel, particularly from the health and education sectors (Chikanda 2005; Gaidzwana 1999; Logan 1999). Within these studies, significant focus is placed on migrants’ intention to leave rather than those who have left the country. In the majority of these studies, the migration of Zimbabwean professionals, such

as nurses and doctors abroad, is given scholarly prominence as compared to other migratory dynamics. The second body of work focus on the impact of Zimbabwean migration within the Southern African region. Similarly, some of these studies focus on attitudes of respondents towards emigrating to other countries (McDonald et al. 2000; Tevera and Zinyama 2002; Zinyama 2002). The last group of studies refers to an emerging literature on the experiences of Zimbabweans in destination countries, particularly Britain (Bloch 2005; Bloch 2008; Mbiba 2005; McGregor 2007).

Chikanda's (2005, 1) research on the magnitude of migration of the health professionals from Zimbabwe reveals that 'Zimbabwe was losing an average of 20% of its health care professionals every year to emigration and that each of the country's five main hospitals was losing 24 senior nurses and three doctors every month.' The study, carried out in 2002, was based on a survey of health professionals in Zimbabwe, focus groups and interviews. The research concludes that the United Kingdom is the major destination for Zimbabwean trained nurses and pharmacists, while doctors have mostly migrated to Botswana and South Africa.

In another study, Gaidzwana (1999) studied the impact of the IMF/World Bank prescribed Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) on professionals. The study, carried out in 1996, was based on individual interviews, focus group discussions and questionnaires administered to medical professionals in Zimbabwe, Botswana and South Africa. The research concluded that ESAP had brought severe hardships to the people and many professionals such as teachers, nurses and doctors had adopted migration as a strategic response.

A few studies have analysed the attitudes of Zimbabwean professionals and students towards leaving the country. Logan's (1999) study investigates the potential of a reverse transfer of technology (brain drain) from Zimbabwe, and is based on academic staff at the University of Zimbabwe. The study concludes that institutional, professional and cultural factors influence the decision to migrate to other countries. Likewise, Tevera's (2005) survey of final-year college and university students in Zimbabwe reveals that three quarters of the respondents expressed their intention to leave the country after graduation

The Scientific and Industrial Research and Development Centre (SIRDC), under contract with the National Economic and Consultative Forum (NECF) and with funding from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), examined [one report] the trend, rate and level of the brain drain from Zimbabwe, looking at the associated push factors in Zimbabwe and the pull factors in the diaspora countries. The report establishes that from 1990, over 490,000 Zimbabwean professionals have left the country in search of 'greener pastures' in the region and the world over (Chetsanga and Muchenje 2003). As with previous studies, the report is focussed on departures and not migrants' experiences abroad.

In another study, Zinyama (2002) provides an historical account of international migration trends from Zimbabwe since independence, and identifies two major patterns of migration. He points to the exodus of white Zimbabweans soon after independence and that of skilled professionals when the government introduced the ESAP. The study shows that 'it is generally better-educated and skilled people who have, since the turn of the twentieth century, been involved in documented permanent migration into and out of the country' (Zinyama 2002, 7).

Drawing on national surveys conducted by the Southern African Migration Project (SAMP) in Lesotho, Mozambique and Zimbabwe, McDonald et al. (2000) reveal that much of the negative stereotyping relating to cross-border migration from these three countries to South Africa is unfounded. The research argues that 'cross-border migration is an integral part of the political, social and economic landscape of the region and that cross-border migration will continue to be an important part of regional linkages for many years to come' (McDonald et al. 2000, 839).

Recent scholarship has taken steps to rectify the tendency of earlier studies to be confined to the attitudes of respondents towards emigrating. Based on twenty five questionnaires, Mbiba (2005) investigates the problems confronted by Zimbabwe's 'global citizens' in Britain in their efforts to resolve the social, political and economic crisis in the homeland. In the study, Mbiba points to the concentration of the recent Zimbabwean migrants to Britain in the health and care industries. The study also demonstrates how some Zimbabwean migrants engage in entrepreneurship in London and in the South East of the country. However, as Mbiba (2005) admits, this was a limited exploratory study designed to make indicative conclusions about an otherwise unexplored phenomenon.

A qualitative study⁷ about the experiences and perspectives of Zimbabwean nurses and teachers in Britain explored how the professionals reconfigured their family life, the strains of transnational mobility on marriages/partnerships and debates about whether or not to bring their children into the country (McGregor 2006). The research focussed on black middle class professionals, whereas this study investigates both black and white Zimbabweans' lived experiences of the diaspora.

⁷ The findings are part of McGregor's broader Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) study on inclusion and exclusion of the Zimbabwean diaspora in the UK, involving interviews with more than 80 black Zimbabweans between October and April 2004-2005.

In the same study, McGregor (2007) investigates the narratives of Zimbabwean women and men working as carers in the UK, making a contribution to the literature on 'global care chains' and constituting a welcome addition to a sparse literature. McGregor (2007) explains how on the one hand political and severe economic conditions in Zimbabwe influenced the 'highly educated, middle-class migrant group' to leave the country and look for opportunities abroad. On the other hand, acute labour market shortages in Britain, particularly in the care industry, and other structural constraints facing these migrants have forced many of them to become care workers. The study concludes that the majority of Zimbabweans experience deskilling, stress of working long hours and racism, resonating with my own research findings about the diaspora's labour market experiences (see chapter six). As the findings of this study will show, respondents are not just passive victims, but adopt various strategies that enable them to participate in the labour market.

Similarly, Bloch's (2005; 2006) survey of 1000 Zimbabweans in the UK and South Africa explores the impact of migration and the ways in which the potential benefits of migration might be better facilitated both for sending and destination countries. In the study, Bloch concludes that

any real commitment to alleviating global poverty on the part of the world's migrant receiving countries must include a re-examination of barriers to employment, education and the use of skills, since these barriers not only have a short-term impact on remittances to the sending country and fiscal capacity to contribute in the receiving country, but will also impact on longer-term development should the migrants return to their country of origin (2006, 67).

Based on the survey, Bloch (2008) examines the economic, political, social and cultural transnational exchanges among Zimbabweans living in Britain and the ways in which motivations for migration and immigration status impact on the type of transnational exchanges. 'The analysis shows that Zimbabweans have strong social and economic ties to Zimbabwe and the inter-connectedness of these ties is evidenced by regular contact with family members in Zimbabwe and the sending of regular monetary remittances' (Bloch 2008, 302). However, the study found little evidence of organised activities at the institutional level. These empirical studies are some of the notable academic studies to emerge focusing on the experiences of Zimbabweans in Britain, inevitably there is a lot left to research.

While numerous international reports have been published to analyse the crises in Zimbabwe in the wake of the controversial LRRP II, few of them focus on the phenomenon of migration from the country. Human Rights Watch (2002) chronicles stories of war veterans and associated ZANU-PF militia occupying commercial farms, intimidating, assaulting, and sometimes killing white farm owners and their workers. Similarly, the International Crisis Group (2002, 7) reports on how the ZANU-PF party use 'torture' as a tool to silence the opposition and suppress freedom of speech and association. The same report alleges that 'rape continues to be used [as a tool] for political control.' In addition, Amnesty International (2003, 2) claims that 'in 2002 alone, there were over 1,046 reported cases of torture and at least 58 politically motivated deaths.' Despite the different origins and authorship of these reports, they concur on the nature of state-sponsored intimidation, unlawful arrests and torture perpetrated by the police, ruling party supporters, youth 'militia' and other state agents. Yet what remains conspicuous by its absence in the international reports is detailed research on the

out-migration dynamics of Zimbabweans. International attention has focussed on how to remove Mugabe and his associates, the plight of opposition supporters and white farmers, the internal displacement of farm workers, violence against teachers, civics and the use of food as a political weapon.

As the review above has shown, the literature about migration from Zimbabwe mainly focuses on regional migration flows, and only a few studies give attention to the contribution Zimbabwean migration makes at a global level. In addition, most of the studies explored the magnitude of brain drain among those who ‘stayed behind’ or ‘think about leaving’; by contrast, this study investigates the experiences, identities and strategies of those who have actually migrated, in the destination country. In addition, the majority of existing studies start from 1990 and do not capture earlier migration phases; nor are they concerned with links and remittances. Thus, the focus of this study on Zimbabweans in Britain provides a valuable contribution to this gap in the literature. Significantly, this research takes a gendered approach as another point of departure from the few studies that explore the experiences of Zimbabweans in Britain. The study also explores the relationship between the diaspora and the homeland, and tensions within the group itself (see chapter seven).

2.3 Diaspora and transnationalism

As mentioned earlier, this study is informed by diaspora and transnationalism as theoretical frameworks, which are useful in understanding contemporary forms of international migration. Hence, it is imperative to explore the origins of the terms diaspora and transnationalism and trace their variant meanings in order to provide

a conceptual basis for this study. The section will differentiate between the concepts but will also emphasise points of commonality.

2.3.1 Diaspora

Diaspora is perhaps one of the most over-theorised, yet most elusive terms in both academic and social usages. Many scholars recognise the extent of conceptual slippage and the lack of theoretical clarity in the notion diaspora. Tololyan (1996, 5) notes that the term diaspora, once a preserve for describing Jewish, Greek and Armenian dispersion, ‘now shares meanings with a larger semantic domain that includes terms like immigrant, expatriate, refugee, guest worker, exile community, overseas community, ethnic communities.’ Hence, diaspora has been described as a ‘travelling term’ (Clifford 1994, 302), in that it is a single signifier for a necessarily heterogeneous and disparate set of experiences. Anthias (1998, 557) describes it as a ‘kind of mantra being used to describe the processes of settlement and adaptation relating to a large range of transnational migration movement...’. Authors refer to the semantic malleability of the term diaspora, denoting a variety of vastly different ethnic groups. Indeed, the meaning of diaspora has been stretched to accommodate various intellectual, cultural and political agendas and ‘this has resulted in what one might call a “diaspora” diaspora—a dispersion of the meanings of the term in semantic, conceptual and disciplinary space’ (Brubaker 2005, 1). For the purposes of creating some analytic order and to retain the concept’s explanatory power to facilitate comparative analysis, there is a need to re-draw the boundaries around what can be called diaspora.

Etymologically, diaspora is derived from the Greek term *diasperien*, from *dia-*, ‘across’ and *-sperien*, ‘to sow or scatter seeds’. The term was first used in the

Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible, the Septuagint, referring to exiled Hellenistic Jews in Alexandria, and then came to be used to describe the plight of Jews outside Palestine. The Greeks understood the term as migration and colonisation (Cohen 1997). Hence, most early discussions of diaspora refer to the Jewish diaspora as the concept's defining paradigm (Brazier and Mannur 2003; Cohen 1997; Safran 1991). Consequently, diaspora came to be understood as referring to groups who were forcibly expelled from their homelands and who remained socially marginal in hostlands as they waited to return.

Safran (1991) argues that the degree of force initiating a population's dispersal tends to legislate what counts as a diaspora, semi-diaspora or non-diaspora. Only if a population faces a destroyed homeland and/or its own expulsion, and collectively experiences trauma as a result, can we talk of a diaspora. The diasporic community should share several of the following characteristics viz:

- 1) They, or their ancestors, have been dispersed from a specific original 'centre' to two or more 'peripheral' or foreign, regions; 2) they retain a collective memory, vision, or myth about the original homeland [...]; 3) they believe they are not—and perhaps cannot be—fully accepted by their host society and therefore feel partly alienated and insulated from it; 4) they regard their ancestral homeland as their true, ideal home and as the place to which they or their descendants would (or should) eventually return—when conditions are appropriate; 5) they believe they should, collectively, be committed to the maintenance or restoration of their original homeland and to its safety and prosperity; and 6) they continue to relate, personally or vicariously, to that homeland in one way or another... (Safran 1991, 83-84).

Safran's quotation offers a number of definitive features as to what constitute a diaspora and this explication has been criticised for that. Likewise, Sheffer (1986; 2003, 9) defines an ethno-national diaspora as 'a socio-political formation, created as a result of either voluntary or forced migration, whose members regard themselves as of the same ethno-national origin and who permanently reside as minorities in one or several host countries...'. Unlike Safran (1991), Sheffer's definition encompasses both voluntary migration and forced migration as features of a diaspora. However, the definition differentiates diasporas from other transnational networks by emphasising ethnicity and connection to a homeland. Elaborating and expanding on key characteristics developed by other theorists, Cohen (1997) identifies five types of diasporas as victim, labour, trade, imperial and cultural. The value of Cohen's work is that it makes us aware of the many ethnonational communities whose members live outside their homelands, a recurring phenomenon in this age of globalisation.

A review of the term diaspora, as formulated and popularised by classical diaspora theorists (Cohen 1997; Safran 1991; Sheffer 2003), reveals the three major building blocks or core features of the term which differentiate it from similar phenomena: history of dispersal; connections with the homeland (in term of myths, memories, desire for eventual return); and a collective identity or boundary-maintenance (Brubaker 2005).

The post-modern notion of diaspora, a response both to the rigid notion of diaspora posed by classical theorists and to the perceived failures of the ethnicity and 'race' paradigms (Anthias 1998), makes no specific reference to ethnicity, a 'homeland'

or to a particular place of settlement but emphasises hybridity and deterritorialised identities and multiple belonging. As Al-Ali explains,

In the context of post-modern and post-colonial approaches and the increasingly appeal of cultural studies, the terms 'diaspora' and 'diasporic communities' have gained new meanings and dimensions [...] more and more, it has been used in a metaphorical sense, referring to hybrid identity formations, arguing against reifications of ethnicity and culture and explaining cultural shifts in general (2007, 40-41).

Clifford (1994) claims that the notion of homeland need not be central to the articulation of transnational communities. He insists that a shared and ongoing history of displacement, suffering, adaptation and resistance are other key features. Nonetheless, the characteristics of diaspora as espoused by Safran (1991), and indeed those developed by Cohen (1997), 'oscillate around the idea of homeland' (Kalra et al. 2005, 12) leaving little space for groups which establish no relationship with their place of origin.

In his later work, Safran (2005, 52) points to two extreme positions in the debate about the relationship between diaspora and homeland, that is, 'imagining a homeland where none can be clearly pinpointed (as in the case of the Romany and Sinti) and rejecting any connection with a homeland that exists.' Clifford (1994) and Gilroy (1993), for whom the homeland is less relevant to the reality of the diaspora than orientations and activities within the hostland, occupy the middle ground. Gilroy's (1993) concept of Black Atlantic sees the African diaspora as a transnational and nonterritorial collective identity that challenges the fixed geographies of Africa, America, Europe and the Caribbean. Thus, Gilroy and

Clifford comment on the categorisation of diaspora as too essentialist and see diaspora as a process.

Reviewing the significance of the idea of homeland in defining diasporas, Cohen (2007, 1) argues that social constructionists have deconstructed the ideas of homeland and community, giving rise to an elastic notion which can be characterised 'as "solid", "ductile" and "liquid", on a diminishing scale from historical reality to postmodern virtuality.' The 'solid' idea of homeland has been re-asserted by the emerging field of applied diaspora studies that seek to explain the role of diasporas as agents of economic, social, cultural and political development of their countries of origin. The weakening of the solid idea of homeland gives rise to what Cohen calls 'ductile homeland'. For instance, European and American Jews' productive years in the diaspora have reduced their connection with Israel by creating 'virtual homes' in the diaspora, thereby experiencing a process of 'dezionization' (Cohen 2007; Safran 2005). The 'liquid' idea of homeland happens when migrants construct new deterritorialised identities and subjectivities 'having lost their conventional territorial reference points, to have become in effect mobile and multi-located cultures with virtual or uncertain homes' (Cohen 2007, 10). Examples of these 'deterritorialized diasporas' are Roma (Gypsies), Caribbean peoples and religious diasporas. Cohen (2007, 14) rejects 'unsupported postmodernist critiques' that conceive the idea of homeland as a 'one-way movement from solid notions of homeland to liquid notions of home' and argues for 'empirical and historical support for any notion of home/homeland.' However, the classification of the idea of homeland as 'solid', 'ductile' and 'liquid' implicitly assumes the homeland is a *sine qua non* in defining diaspora and thus differentiates 'real' diasporas from semi-diasporas or informal

diasporas. Yet, as social constructionists argue, the homeland is not a necessary condition in defining diaspora.

Sheffer (2003) argues that the appropriation of the term diaspora to non-ethnic transnational entities such as 'global religions', 'political ideological dispersal', 'transnational linguistic communities' and 'the global youth culture' is a misnomer. Baumann (cited by Brubaker 2005, 3) point to transethnic and transborder linguistic categories, such as Francophone, Anglophone and Lusophone 'communities' which have been described as diasporas. In addition, references to religious diasporas include Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Confucian, Huguenot, Muslim and Catholic diasporas. The designation 'religious diaspora' is contentious because 'whereas members of ethnic diasporas regards certain territories as their actual homelands, most members of the global religions, with the notable exception of Judaism, are attached to a spiritual center that is not the actual historical birthplace of forebears of the group...' (Sheffer 2003, 66). Moreover, religious diaspora derive their source of value and religious identities from the 'transcendental realm'; ethnic diasporic identities are based on primordial cultural sentiments, subjective leanings and instrumental consideration (Sheffer 2003). The major distinction is that whereas ethnic diasporas are trans-state, other groups are transnational entities. Thus, Sheffer (2003, 11) introduces the hyphenated term 'ethno-national diasporas' as an attempt to distinguish the term from transnational formations in explaining what has been termed 'deterritorialized identities'. The discussion is between a rigid categorisation of diaspora as developed by classical diaspora theorists, that accommodates no other, and a loose classification advanced by social constructionists that admits

everything of a similar nature. Where to draw the line remains a subject for intense debate.

Apart from analysing the salient features of the term diaspora, scholars have also classified four contrasting 'forms' in which the term has been used, particularly by the different academic disciplines. These are diaspora as social form; diaspora as a type of consciousness; diaspora as a mode of cultural production and diaspora as political orientation (Cohen 2001; Vertovec 1997). Firstly, diaspora as social form, advanced by sociologists and business studies scholars, points to the maintenance of transnational social organisations and networks as a collective identity. Secondly, cultural studies emphasise diaspora as consciousness, a moving away from essentialist notions and a celebration of the fluidity, hybridity and deterritorialisation of identities. Thirdly, diaspora as a mode of cultural production, as popularised by anthropologists, shows the duality of social and cultural identities characterised by a 'here' and a 'there'. Lastly, political scientists and international relations theorists illustrate diaspora as political orientation (Cohen 2001).

In addition to classifying diasporas according to general characteristics and according to academic disciplines, scholars have also examined the concept in terms of historical periods. Sheffer (2003, 21) categorises diasporas into three phases, that is classical diasporas (those whose origins were in antiquity or the Middle Ages), modern diasporas (those that have become established since the seventeenth century) and incipient diasporas (those in the making). Similarly, Reis (2004) departs from the literature that characterises the Jewish diaspora as the prototype, and discusses diaspora in the three principal historical epochs, as

classified by Sheffer (2003), namely the classical period, the modern period and the contemporary period. The classical diaspora is primarily associated with the ancient period and Greece. The central theme around the modern period involves days of slavery and colonisation. The contemporary period starts after World War II, and this period 'illustrates the progressive effect of globalization on the phenomenon of diasporization' (Reis 2004, 42). Diasporic groups in the contemporary period, unlike the classical period, have numerous reasons for leaving their homeland. As Reis argues, contemporary diasporas are dynamic and unpredictable as political conflict, economic instability, opportunity seeking and globalisation trigger the phenomenon.

Recently, Safran (2005, 50) differentiates between 'classic' diaspora and 'generic' diaspora. As a generic concept, diaspora denotes a variety of aspects: 'immigrants and their descendants, ethnic minorities, and any communities trying to keep their collective identities. It also implies a consciousness of being different from surrounding society, and "an awareness of multilocality".' The conceptualisation of diasporas in historical phases is an attempt to expand the concept from its previous narrow focus on victimhood, homeland and the Jewish diaspora and attempt to explain the myriad contemporary forms of international migration.

From the discussion above, it can be inferred that the concept of diaspora is not limited to a historical experience. Rather, it functions as both a theoretical concept and a complex analytic discourse that invites a kind of theorizing that is always embedded in particular maps and histories (Clifford 1994). Some consider diaspora theory as referring to the 'triadic relations between ethnic diasporas, their host countries and homelands' (Sheffer 1986, 1; Shuval 2000). These three actors

relevant to the diaspora theory interact in a multi-faceted, changing set of relationships, which may be viewed at a bifocal or trifocal level. In instances where diasporas have ‘become independent centers of cultural creation’ (Safran 2005, 50), displacing an earlier emphasis on homelands as the focal point of a diaspora, then a bifocal relationship exist between the group itself and the ‘hostland’. As illustrated in the discussion above, post-modern notions of diaspora emphasise hybridity, deterritorialised identities and syncretism and thus go beyond the ‘Jewish-centred’ definition and beyond the homeland connection as well. Having explored the diaspora concept, does the Zimbabwean dispersion fit into the sociological classification of a diaspora? I will return to the conceptual questions posed by diaspora theorists at the end of the thesis (see chapter nine), but will do so only after concentrating on the experience, performance and diversity of the Zimbabwean diaspora.

Although it is fruitful to consider diaspora theory on its own it is important to know how it is linked to other theoretical frameworks (Shuval 2000). While diaspora has gained wide currency in conceptualising international migration, transnationalism and exile are other important concepts, and these are now considered.

2.3.2 Diaspora as exile

Diaspora and exile seem to be expressions of the same idea; however, upon scrutiny they exhibit crucial differences. Braziel and Mannur (2003) attest that diaspora was once conceptualised as an exilic or nostalgic dislocation from homeland. Similarly Safran (1991, 83) defined a particular usage of the term diaspora as ‘the exile of the Jews from their historic homeland and their dispersion

throughout many lands...'. It is not surprising that the concepts of diaspora and exile have sometimes appeared side by side or been used interchangeably. What is of significance here is not the definition of diaspora itself, but the use of the word 'exile' in defining diaspora. The implication is that diaspora and exile have close affinity, as if to mean that diaspora is a consequence of life in exile that fails to achieve the objectives of imminent return to the homeland.

Alluding to the fact that no perfect or complete definition of exile is possible, Tabori (1972, 37) defines an exile as 'a person who is compelled to leave his homeland—though the forces that send him on his way may be political, economic or purely psychological.' Emphasizing the ephemeral nature of exile, Shahidian (2000) succinctly claims that exile is not a once-and-forever status; it is a dynamic process, a state of flux. Perhaps, the only thing that has some kind of permanence is the exiles' attitude towards their homeland.

Brah (1996) makes a vital distinction between diaspora and exile, in that diaspora people feel 'at home' and anchored in the place of settlement, even if their homeland is elsewhere, whereas exiles do not. Clifford (1994, 308) provides a similar distinction: 'Diaspora involves dwelling, maintaining communities, having collective homes away from home (and in this it is different from exile, with its frequently individualistic focus)' (Clifford 1994, 308). By referring to the individualistic focus of exile, Clifford (1994) overlooks examples such as the ANC in exile, who maintained a collective vision of the future forming a 'government in exile'. It must be noted that whereas diasporas develop 'some significant social and symbolic ties to the receiving country', the same cannot be said of exile communities who 'are single-mindedly drawn to the former homeland' (Faist

2000, 197). This is the point where diaspora and exile diverge. This thesis uses the expression 'diaspora as exile' to analyse the experience of political exiles engaged in transnational diaspora politics. Diaspora as exile suggests the forced departure of migrants from the country of origin, and their desire to make a quick return to the homeland.

2.3.3 Transnationalism

The emergence of the concept of transnationalism has been an attempt to explore migrants' simultaneous embeddedness in more than one society (Levitt and Schiller 2004). The majority of scholars agree that 'many contemporary migrants and their predecessors maintain various kinds of ties to their homelands at the same time that they are incorporated into the countries that receive them' (Basch et al. 1994; Levitt and Jaworsky 2007, 129). It worthwhile remembering that 'whereas global processes are largely decentred from specific nation-state territories and take place in a world context above and below states, transnational processes are anchored in and span two or more nation-states, involving actors from the spheres of both state and civil society' (Faist 2000, 192). What, then, is the nature and form of transnational activities? Moreover, how are diasporas differentiated from transnational communities? First, it is important to provide an analytic description of transnational studies and then attempt to differentiate the two concepts.

Once again, there is evidently lack of conceptual clarity in the use of the term transnationalism. As Yeoh et al. (2003, 215) argue, 'the field of transnational studies is still a fragmented one, and no one conceptual frame has emerged to define the shape of transnationality, or the quality and nature of the projects,

relations and practices that it encompasses.’ This point is supported by Al-Ali et al. (2001, 618), who observe that ‘there is no clear and accepted existing typology of what constitutes a ‘transnational activity’ and what does not.’ Transnationalism, like diaspora, has become a catchword appropriated by researchers in social science disciplines. Thus, it is important to provide an incisive review of how the concept has been used so far by scholars.

Basch et al. (1994, 7) define transnationalism ‘as the processes by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement.’ Since then, several scholars have tried to delineate the types, form and content of such transnational activities. Faist (2000, 189) argues that

whether we talk of transnational social spaces, transnational social fields, transnationalism or transnational social formations in international migration systems, we usually refer to sustained ties of persons, networks and organizations across the borders across multiple nation-states, ranging from little to highly institutionalized forms.

Similarly, Guarnizo et al. (2003, 1213) consider transnationalism as ‘the rise of a new class of immigrants, economic entrepreneurs or political activists who conduct cross-border activities on a *regular* basis, that lies at the core of the phenomenon that this field seeks to highlight and investigate.’ Hence, the regularity and intensity of these cross-border activities are some of the key features of transnationalism.

However, other authors have broadened transnationalism to include migrants engaged in intermittent cross-border activities. Guarnizo (cited by Levitt 2001a,

198) introduces the concepts of 'core' transnationalism to mean activities that are regular, patterned, sustained and an integral part of an individual's life, while 'expanded' transnationalism refers to more occasional practices. This is a useful way of differentiating transnational practices, which this study will appropriate. However, Levitt (2001a, 199) argues that 'the concepts of core and expanded transnationalism must also be extended to include the transnational practices of those who stay behind.' Those who migrated and those left behind are in a larger network of shared identities, political and economic culture and hence occupying the same 'transnational village' (Levitt 2001b). Furthermore, Levitt and Schiller (2004, 1010) distinguish between 'ways of being in social fields as opposed to ways of belonging'. Whereas 'ways of belonging' refers to practices that signal or enact an identity which demonstrates a conscious connection to a particular group, 'ways of being' refer to individuals who engage in social relations and practices across borders as a regular feature of their lives.

Smith and Guarnizo (1998) contribute to the debates of demarcating the term by distinguishing the 'transnationalism from above' of corporations and states, and the 'transnationalism from below' of international migrants. However, Waldinger and Fitzgerald (2004, 1180) argue that the description of nation-states as transnational 'deprives the concept of analytic leverage, as it is meant to distinguish cross-border, non-state actors from states and to show how the two constrain and shape one another.' It remains open to debate whether nation-states can also be classified as transnational actors.

In one study, Vertovec (1999, 447) outlines six different ways to conceptualise transnationalism: 'transnationalism as a social morphology, as a type of

consciousness, as a mode of cultural reproduction, as an avenue of capital, as a site of political engagement, and as a reconstruction of “place” or locality.’ Transnationalism, as a social morphology, refers to the social formations of structures spanning across borders. Diasporas are a good example. Transnationalism as a type of consciousness is marked by migrants’ awareness of their multiple identifications, that is, simultaneously being ‘here’ and ‘there’. As a mode of cultural reproduction, ‘transnationalism is often associated with a fluidity of constructed styles, social institutions and everyday practices [...] often described in terms of syncretism, creolization, bricolage, cultural translation and hybridity’ (Vertovec 1999, 451). Transnationalism is also grounded as an avenue for capital. Transnational corporations and transnational communities play a significant part in the flow of capital across the globe through remittances, technology transfer, investment and marketing. Advances in communications technologies have created a ‘global public space or forum’ (Vertovec 1999, 454) to influence, manipulate and participate in transnational politics.

However, the majority of scholars on diasporas and transnationalism neglect the political aspect in favour of cultural, economic and social analyses (Sheffer 2003; Wald and Williams 2006). As Rogers (cited by Østergaard-Nielsen 2003b, 764) observes, there is less attention to and research available on migrants’ transnational politics in Europe than on the other side of the Atlantic. European-based research has tended to focus on migrant political participation if it relates to improving their situation in the country of settlement rather than as a phenomenon in its own right. As Østergaard-Nielsen (2003b, 764) puts it, ‘while European-based research is (pre)occupied with the implications of transnational political practices on receiving countries, the role of the sending country as a mobilizing

factor is at the forefront of US-based studies of transnational political practices.’ Several scholars have noted the emergence of political transnationalism and its transformative potential in both the hostlands and homelands, but the literature ‘says little about the actual numbers involved or their characteristics and motivations’ (Guarnizo et al. 2003, 1215). This study addresses this gap in the literature by analysing how the Zimbabwean diaspora, as a transnational community, engages in transnational diaspora politics. The study will provide tentative conclusions based on the actual members involved in diaspora politics and their characteristics (see chapter five).

How, then, do we differentiate between diaspora and transnationalism? As shown in the above paragraph, Vertovec (1999) considers diasporas as a subset of transnationalism. Similarly, Tololyan (1991, 5) regards diasporas as ‘the exemplary communities of the transnational moment.’ As Faist (1999, 46) puts it, diasporas are a distinct form of transnational communities in that ‘there is a vision and remembrance of a lost or an imagined homeland still to be established, often accompanied by a refusal of the receiving society to fully recognise the cultural distinctiveness of community members who are dispersed to many diverse regions of the world.’ Moreover, Levitt (2001a, 200) describes transnational communities as occupying the space between what Smith and Guarnizo (1998) call ‘transnationalism from above’, or global governance and economic activities, and ‘transnationalism from below’, or the everyday, grounded practices of individuals. As Levitt (2001a, 202-203) put it,

Transnational communities are building blocks of potential diasporas that may or may not take shape. Diasporas form out of the transnational communities

spanning sending and receiving countries and out of the real or imagined connections between migrants from a particular homeland who are scattered throughout the world.

For instance, Zimbabweans who identify themselves as belonging to a diaspora might be transnational migrants if they share a sense of belonging to a homeland they are not living in. Hence, it is sensible to talk of transnational diasporas or transnational diaspora politics. However, not all diasporas have continuing transnational relations as some diasporas have ceased to maintain homeland linkages. It can be inferred that diasporas with no homeland connections cannot be defined as transnational.

As Braziel and Mannur (2003, 8) argue ‘while diaspora may be accurately described as transnationalist, it is not synonymous with transnationalism.’ Diaspora is essentially a human phenomenon, while transnationalism includes the movements of information, goods, products, capital across political borders. Thus, not all diaspora communities are transnational but only those whose activities maintain a sustained regularity which transcends borders. Insofar as Zimbabweans engage in sustained diaspora politics (core transnationalism) and remit (see chapter five and eight), it may be appropriate to refer to them as a transnational community. Moreover, a diaspora only becomes a diaspora at the moment of relocation, rather than being formed at the point of displacement (Clifford 1994). This differentiates diaspora from broad transnationalism, as conceptualised by Levitt (2001a), as encompassing even those who stayed behind, non-migrants.

2.3.4 Gendering the diaspora

Diaspora and transnationalism are both gendered. However, little attention has been paid to the gendering of the diaspora. As Al-Ali (2007, 142) puts it, ‘ little attention has been paid to the various ways in which transnational fields and activities are gendered, i.e. the ways in which women and men are positioned differently in terms of the prevailing gender ideologies and relations within the country of residence and the country of origin.’ Feminist authors interested in migration have problematised the general tendency in migration studies to generally posit the migrant as male (Buijs 1993; Kofman 2004; Mahler 1999; Pessar 1999; Phizacklea 1983; Silvey 2006). It has been observed that the majority of quantitative studies on gender and migration fail to capture the experiences of women who are, in most cases, considered as non-migrants or not primary migrants (Curran et al. 2006).

Feminist ethnographers, making use of qualitative methodologies, are ‘bringing gender into migration studies [...] attempting to remedy many decades during which migration scholarship paid little attention to gender’ (Mahler and Pessar 2006, 27). Consequently, studies have analysed the consequences of migration for the position of men and women within households. On the one hand, scholars suggests that migration creates opportunities for women in destination countries when they enter the productive sphere, thereby increasing their decision-making power within households (Dannecker 2005; Erman 1997; Meertens and Segura-Escobar 1996). On the other hand, other studies imply migration re-enforces gender inequality within households (Gold 2001).

Although this study focuses on international migration rather than internal migration, it is important to refer briefly to two studies that explore the gendered impact of migration in a rural-urban migration context. Carrying out a study in the aftermath of political violence in Colombia, Meertens and Segura-Escobar (1996) analyse the effects of forced displacement on women and men in terms of intra-household relationships, survival strategies and gender identities. They apply two analytic categories in unravelling the gender dimensions of displacement, 'the division between a "before" and an "after" time and space, and a parallel distinction between destruction/rootlessness and survival/reconstruction in conceptual terms' (Meertens and Segura-Escobar 1996, 171). Meertens and Segura-Escobar conclude that in comparison to men, women are more vulnerable during displacement, due to the loss of a socially and physically familiar environment, whereas men are better equipped to deal with displacement because of their broader participation in public life and social mobility. However, the scholars further argue that in the subsequent period of reconstruction of everyday life, these possibilities are reversed as men experience a loss of status as breadwinners and a rupture of their sense of masculine identity, something never questioned before. Despite the difficulties women face, they are better equipped to navigate their new spaces as new opportunities arose for them. The study points out that twice as many men as women preferred to return 'home', and this was attributed to a variety of reasons. The depth of the trauma and fear of violence deter women from dreaming of returning. The new kind of identities, possibilities and opportunities within which women find themselves may be much more attractive than what they experienced before displacement.

Similarly, Erman (1997) explores the meaning of city living for Turkish women and the role women play both in the migration process and in establishing their lives in the city. Moghadam (cited by Erman 1997, 264) observes that Turkey provides an appropriate example of the divide between a highly patriarchal countryside and an urban context where gender and family relations are more egalitarian. Power and property entitlement are the preserve of men in rural Turkey, and consequently, women have low status. Studying women who migrate to cities as part of a nuclear family, Erman argues that women are not just passive followers of their husbands in the migration process but they are active participants whose hard work and initiative brings positive changes to their lives. Peasant women who migrated to the city work both inside and outside the home, thus increasing their sphere of influence, status and decision-making roles in the family. As Erman (1997, 274) argues, 'when women find the opportunity to improve their situations, they do it, taking risks to this end.' The two case studies from Colombia and Turkey reveal the scope for gender identities and relations within households to be reshaped through rural-urban migration. Can the same experience be replicated in an international context? This study raises similar questions about the impact of migration on gender relations and roles among the Zimbabwean diaspora.

Many studies go beyond analysing the gendered impact of migration from a rural-urban migration context to an international setting. Scholars point to a feminisation of migration, whereby unskilled women migrate and take up jobs as sex workers and domestic workers in destination countries (Anderson 2001b; Phizacklea 1994; Westwood and Phizacklea 2000) while others work in caring professions. Writing on domestic workers, Anderson (2001a) points to the increasing globalisation of

reproductive labour. Similarly, Westwood and Phizacklea's (2000) study which involved interviews with domestic workers in London, point to the concentration of migrant women in sex work and domestic work because it is the only form of work available. In spite of the difficult conditions faced by sex workers and domestic workers 'their migration represents an attempt to bring a better life to themselves and their families in face of prodigious external constraint' (Westwood and Phizacklea 2000, 145).

In another study, Lutz (2004, 47) refers to foreign domestic workers in Germany and their experiences as part of 'the transnationalisation of care services.' Hochschild (2003, 17) describes the movement of care workers from the south to north as a 'care drain [...] the importation of care and love from poorer countries to rich ones.' Similarly, as Raghuram argues, 'such forms of migration highlight the globalisation of the caring industry and the subordination of women within this newly emergent international division of reproductive labour' (2004, 306). This study provides two interesting aspects to add to the global care chain analysis. First, while the literature is mainly focussed on unskilled migrant women, the majority of respondents in this study have higher educational qualifications yet they are employed in the care industry. Second, and most fascinating, is the participation of men in this study in care work, something they have not experienced before in their country of origin.

Having reviewed studies that explored the relationship between migration and gender in a rural-urban environment and in an international setting, it is appropriate to explore the impact of migration on gender relations within diasporic

and transnational communities. As I have demonstrated in the definition of diaspora, not all movements and migrations are diasporic.

Gray (2000) observes that with the exception of Brah's (1996) work, most diaspora theorists pay only passing attention to how diaspora might be gendered. Yet, as Clifford (1994, 313) argues, 'diasporic experiences are always gendered [...] but there is a tendency for theoretical accounts of diasporas and diaspora cultures to hide this fact, to talk of travel and displacement in unmarked ways, thus normalizing male experiences.' The conceptualisation of a Jewish diaspora, African diaspora, Eritrean diaspora and likewise 'Zimbabwean diaspora' implies unity, thereby suppressing issues of difference and diversity. One of the reasons why classical diaspora theorists paid less attention to the workings of gender in their studies relates to their conception of diaspora as an ideal type, a static and fixed notion upon which diasporic communities may be judged by how far they deviate from the typology. In contrast, feminist ethnographers conceptualise gender as a process, wherein gender identities, relations and ideologies are fluid and not fixed (Mahler and Pessar 2006).

Relatively few studies explore the impact of gender relations in diasporic and transnational communities. The majority of such studies adopt the concept of diaspora in analysing the experiences of women in transnational settings (see, for example, Barber 2000; Gray 2004; Walter 2004). Barber (2000) examines cultural politics, gender, and class relations in the provisional Philippine diaspora, constituted through women's labour migration, through six years of ethnographic research in Philippines and Canada. Similarly, Walter (2004) explores the inclusion and exclusion of Irish women in the diaspora.

In one of the studies, Gold (2001) carried out a comparative study of transnational Israeli migrants in the USA and Britain and returnees in Israel, considering how social characteristics and settlement contexts shape access to the networks through which migrants acquire resources and information. The majority of the Israeli women had migrated as dependent spouses. As Gold (2001) argues, migration had a clearly distinct effect upon family and gender relations, with married Israeli women being much more interested in the country of origin than their partners or offspring. In contrast, Al-Ali's (2002) study demonstrate how the transnational Bosniak (Bosnian Muslim) refugees reproduce, contest and construct their ethnic and religious identities. Al-Ali's findings (2007, 57) relating to Bosnian and Iraqi refugee families in Britain and the Netherlands shows that 'gender relations and family dynamics have shifted in various directions, accounting for empowerment and increased opportunities as well as impediment and loss among migrant and refugee women.'

In a study of Chilean exiles, Kay (1988) not only examines exiled political parties and exiled people's relationship with the 'host country', but also extended the analysis to include the private sphere of marriage and the family. As Kay (1988, ix) argues, 'areas of life once regarded as "private" or "non-political" may become politicised.' Adapting this schematic from Kay's study, this research examines the lived reality of the diaspora in both public and private spaces, problematizing the role of gender in diasporic activities. Hence, this research represents a pioneering contribution to the literature on gender and migration in two respects. First, it attempts to 'bring gender in' to diaspora studies. Second, the gendering of the

Zimbabwean diaspora offers a niche through which to analyse men and women's experience of the diaspora in both the private and public sphere.

Diasporic identity is another useful concept that helps us to understand the lived reality of the Zimbabwean diaspora. This research delineates the various ways in which Zimbabweans have constructed and negotiated multiple identities in the UK, identities based on politics, gender, religion, occupation and perceptions of return. Hence, it is important to define what it means.

2.3.5 Diasporic identity

Boundary maintenance is one of the core characteristics in defining the concept of diaspora. Whereas classical diaspora theorists emphasise the group's collective identity, shared history, memory and myths of return, in contrast, scholars influenced by postmodernism focus attention on hybridity, fluidity, creolization and syncretism. It is possible to discern a tension in the diaspora literature between 'boundary-maintenance and boundary-erosion' (Brubaker 2005, 6). Hence, it is important to explore what constitutes diasporic identity formation in transnational social spaces.

The concept of identity has received extensive scholarly attention across social science disciplines but it remains under-theorised and illusive (MacInnes 2004; Ve 2006; Woodward 2002). From a sociological point of view, as Kearney and Beserra (2004, 3) observe, the 'concern with social class has been eclipsed by a fascination with identity and identity politics.' In an attempt to clear up the conceptual ambiguity of the term identity, Hall (2003, 234) identified two contrasting ways in which the term 'cultural identity' has been theorised. First 'in

terms of one, shared culture, a sort of collective “one true self” hiding inside the many other, more superficial or artificially imposed “selves,” which people with a shared history and ancestry hold in common.’ In this sense, identity is fixed, and thus, reducible to some essential characteristic, something fundamental to the group’s being and existence. Second, cultural identity has been understood as unstable, ‘fragmented and fractured’ and even contradictory—an identity marked by multiple points of similarity, as well as differences.

Similarly, Jenkins (2004, 5) argues that scholarly attention to the concept of ‘identity treats it as something that simply *is*’ giving inadequate attention to ‘the social construction of identity in interaction and institutionally.’ He defines identity as ‘our understanding of who we are and who other people are, and reciprocally, other people’s understanding of themselves and of others (which includes us)’ (2004, 5). Essentially the process of identity construction is constituted by ‘the internal-external dialectic, what people think about us is no less important than what we think about ourselves’ (Jenkins 2004, 19).

The approach to identity as a process being made within particular contexts contrasts sharply with a much more fixed or static notion of diasporic identity suggested by classical theorists. However, Brubaker and Cooper (2000, 2) are critical of the social constructivist stance on identity describing it as an ‘attempt to “soften” the term, to acquit it of the charge of “essentialism” by stipulating that identities are constructed, fluid, and multiple.’ They argue that this ‘leaves us without a rationale for talking about “identities” at all and ill-equipped to examine the “hard” dynamics and essentialist claims of contemporary identity politics’ (Brubaker and Cooper 2000, 2).

In contrast, (Huang, Teo and Yeoh cited by Yeoh et al. 2003, 212-213) emphasise the fluidity and flexibility of transnational identities and diasporic identities.

Transnational understandings of identity formation ‘disavows essentialist and unchanging notions of identity and emphasizes interconnectedness across borders’, highlighting the notion that identities are constantly (re)worked, not in a freewheeling manner but through simultaneous embeddedness in more than one society.

As transnational subjects, diasporic identities are not derived in relation to the specific contexts of a particular space, but draw on and contest national identities (Yeoh et al. 2003). Anthias (1998) notes how the identity of some diaspora groups in hostlands become syncretic, as in the case of British Blacks, German Jews, Russian Jews and Irish Americans. Equally, Clifford (1994) refers to ‘the desire to stay and be different’ as selective accommodation. One of the aims of this research is to examine the process by which Zimbabwean negotiate boundaries, assert meanings, interpret their own pasts and define themselves in relation to others in the hostland. Is their identity based on primordial features or it is something that is contingent and subject to reworking as new environments impinges?

2.4 Research questions

This research explores the origin, formation and articulation of the Zimbabwean diaspora in Britain. From its contemporary, empirical and political dimensions, the Zimbabwean diaspora raises a number of theoretical questions in a globalising society. Drawing on the above literature review, this study investigates the Zimbabwean diaspora in Britain in terms of migration patterns, its relation to the

nation-state, participation in paid work, configuration of gender relations and roles and the diasporans' attitudes towards return or settlement.

1. One of the objectives of this study is to contextualise respondents' narratives and make sense of the conditions under which they lived in Zimbabwe before migration. What factors influenced people's decisions to migrate into the diaspora and how can these phases be classified? What were the common narratives of the journeys and routes taken into Britain? What types of migration patterns characterise Zimbabweans' migration to Britain?
2. Furthermore, the study seeks to explore the nature of transnational diaspora politics. To what extent, and in what ways, do the Zimbabweans in Britain participate in diaspora politics? How do the different conditions and contexts shape, alter and influence respondents' attitudes and participation in diaspora politics? What is the nature of transnational diaspora politics? What is the relationship between the diaspora and the homeland government?
3. Classical diasporists accentuate how diasporic groups believe that they can never be accepted in the hostland, and thus feel partly alienated from the society. This study explores this issue further by examining respondents' experiences of the job market and of employment. More substantially, this study seeks to provide answers to the following questions: In what ways do human capital, social capital, immigration status, labour market conditions, ethnicity and gender configure the participation of Zimbabwean migrants in paid work? Are undocumented migrants passive victims in a labour

- market that constructs them as ‘other’? How can the concentration of Zimbabwean migrants in certain sectors of the labour market be explained?
4. While various studies have analysed the gendered impact of migration from a rural-urban migration context to an international setting, most diaspora theorists pay only passing attention to how diaspora might be gendered. Taking gender as a process rather than state, this research explores the conflicts and contestations as men and women respond to life in Britain. To what extent, and in what ways, does migration shape gender relations and gender roles in both private and public spheres of the diaspora? How do men and women respond to new gendered identities in the diaspora? To what extent do public spaces influence the negotiation of gender relations and gender roles within and outside diaspora households?
 5. Classical diaspora theorists (Cohen 1997; Safran 1991; Sheffer 2003; Tololyan 1991) reveal the three major building blocks or core features of the term which differentiate it from similar phenomena, namely history of dispersal, connections with the homeland (in term of myths, memories, desire for eventual return) and a collective identity or boundary-maintenance (Brubaker 2005). Drawing on the narratives of respondents, the thesis aims to provide a framework for understanding the meaning of diaspora among Zimbabweans in Britain. What meanings do Zimbabweans give to their condition and experience in the diaspora? How do such meanings influence and shape attitudes of return to the homeland or feelings of belonging to the hostland?

2.5 Conclusion

Due to the relative scarcity of literature on Zimbabwean migration to Britain, this research provides a valuable contribution to this gap. As this chapter has argued, diaspora and transnationalism offer theoretical frameworks and analytical lenses that transcend nation-states boundaries, and thus are well equipped for exploring the experiences of migrants enmeshed in two or more social worlds. Transnationalism is not synonymous with diaspora, but diasporas are regarded as examples of transnational communities. More so, transnational communities can be seen as the building blocks of potential diasporas. Insofar as some diasporas maintain connections with their original or imagined homeland, they may be referred to as transnational communities.

The diaspora and transnationalism literature has tended to narrow itself to the marking out and placing of boundaries at the conceptual level. The thesis, informed by the diaspora and transnational theoretical frameworks, seeks to investigate the triadic relationships between the diaspora and itself, the diaspora and the hostland and the diaspora and the homeland. What makes the thesis distinctive is its empirical focus; while still contributing to the elaboration of the core concepts of diaspora, transnationalism and identity, this study mainly seek to explore the making of the Zimbabwean diaspora and how it is experienced, reproduced, contested and performed in particular settings Britain. The investigation is based on multi-sited ethnographic methodology, which is explored fully in the following chapter.

Chapter 3: Research methodology, process and production

3.1 Introduction

Conventional assumptions about doing ethnographic research in fixed places have come under scrutiny in this ‘age of migration’ (Castles and Miller 2003), where communities are more fragmented than ever before. This chapter argues for multi-sited ethnography as a productive methodology in researching diaspora and transnational communities. The chapter is divided into five sections. The first section briefly explores the quantitative/qualitative divide and provides a justification for adopting a qualitative methodology in studying the experiential and lived reality of the Zimbabwean diaspora. In addition, the section interrogates the concept of multi-sited ethnography and demonstrates its usefulness and challenges in understanding diasporic communities. The second section provides a rationale for appropriating in-depth interviews and participant observation as the main methods in data generation. The third section describes how my position as a Zimbabwean was a salient feature in negotiating access to research sites and respondents. The fourth section explores issues related to ethical considerations, and the last section evaluates the data analysis techniques used in this research.

3.2 A qualitative methodology

Research paradigms in social research can be broadly categorised as positivism, interpretivism and post-positivism, though any categorisation is likely to be imprecise and leave out more than it contains (Bryman 2004). The positivism/interpretivism paradigm is understood as similar to the quantitative/qualitative divide. Quantitative approaches depend on a positivist

tradition of the natural sciences with an emphasis on objectivity, generalisability and validity. By contrast, qualitative research is usually multi-method in focus, involving an interpretive approach to the researched (Bryman 1999; Bulmer 1984). The basic thrust of interpretivism is that reality is socially constructed (Robson 2002). What underpins each paradigm is a different way of perceiving and understanding the world. Hence, the general tendency among social scientists has been to treat quantitative and qualitative research as mutually antagonistic thus constituting divergent modes of the research process (Bryman 1999). As Oakley (2000, 25) puts it, 'what for one side is a set of "facts" is for the other a complex and impenetrable kaleidoscope of heavily constructed social meanings.' Thus, the two epistemological poles offer competing claims as to what constitutes knowledge.

However, as Bryman (1999, 46) suggests, although quantitative and qualitative research approaches are distinctive they can be 'appropriate to different kinds of research problem, implying that the research issue determines (or should determine) which style of research should be used.' Walker (cited by Bryman 1999, 47) argues that 'certain questions cannot be answered by quantitative methods while others cannot be answered by qualitative ones.' Thus, the choice of a particular method depends on its suitability in relation to a particular research problem.

Nevertheless, some authors encourage researchers to make use of both qualitative and quantitative methods of data production, and avoid seeing them as oppositional but rather as a continuum (Bryman 1999; Hughes 1996). Supporting this point, Oakley (2000, 303) agrees that 'the referent quantitative and qualitative

has been unhelpful as technical guides to research methods [...] and we would be better off to get rid of the paradigms.’ Bryman (2004) coins the term ‘multi-strategy research’ to refer to the integration of quantitative and qualitative research within a single project. However, other scholars argue that combining the two research strategies ignores underlying epistemological and ontological assumptions of each research strategy (Gilbert 2001; Robson 2002).

The aim of the study is to demonstrate how the Zimbabwean diaspora is experienced, performed and expressed in particular settings in Britain. Hence, a qualitative methodology is the most suited to understanding social actors’ meanings, contradictions and narratives of the diaspora. Although the study is based on qualitative in-depth interviews and participant observation, quantitative data was collected from respondents on a series of issues, such as age, ethnicity, sex, and dates of migration (see appendix 1). The study also analyses statistical information from secondary sources pertaining to Zimbabweans in Britain. This research begins from an assumption that the majority of Zimbabweans in Britain are undocumented migrants. Hence, it is not easy in such a situation to work with randomised samples of people in order to arrive at statistically sound conclusions based on structured questionnaires.

3.2.1 Ethnography in the age of transnational and diasporic communities

Ethnography is not an alternative paradigm, but a method or set of methods (Hammersley and Atkinson 1983). Social scientists have used ethnography in order to understand the subjective meanings of social actors. According to Marcus (1995, 99), ‘ethnography is predicated upon attention to the everyday, an intimate knowledge of face to face communities and groups.’ Similarly, Gille (2001, 321)

reminds us that ‘doing ethnography is a commitment to study an issue at hand by understanding it from the perspective(s) of people whose lives are tied up with or affected by it...’.

Recently, scholars have problematised how ethnography can remain useful in an age of globalisation and transnationalism in which the assumption of a well-bounded site is harder to maintain than ever (Fitzgerald 2006; Gille 2001). Concepts such as ‘global ethnography’ and ‘multi-sited ethnography’ have been introduced to challenge the ‘narrow boundaries of the traditional ethnographic “site” as conceived by the Chicago school’ (Gowan and Riain 2000, xii; Marcus 1995). The new concepts are perceived as useful in understanding the relations between the local, the transnational and the global. Fitzgerald (2004) asks how one might go about doing ethnography of transnational migrants without misrepresenting them when starting and ending in one locality. This research adopts a multi-sited ethnography to address some of the epistemological and methodological challenges of studying diaspora communities and transnational or global social relations.

3.2.2 Multi-sited ethnography

The concept of multi-sited ethnography was developed and popularised by Marcus (1995). Multi-sited ethnography refers to the practice of studying how any given phenomenon takes shape in, and across, multiple sites. In other words, multi-sited research looks at the event from different locations and may call for a multidisciplinary focus. Marcus (1995, 95) defines multi-sited ethnography as an emerging anthropological research methodology that moves away from the ‘conventional single-site location, contextualised by macro-constructions of the

large social order, such as the capitalist world system, to multiple sites of observation and participation that cut dichotomies such as the “local” and the “global,” the “lifeworld” and the “system”.’

The distinctiveness of multi-sited ethnography lies in its capacity to make connections or note distinctive discourses from site to site. Its contribution hinges on its ability to explore the relationships between apparently disparate elements, that is, connections between contexts. Hannerz (2003, 202) describes the conception of multi-sited field work as that which involves ‘being there...and there...and there!’ The strength of multi-sited ethnography lies in the comparative dimension that is integral to it. Hence, multi-sited ethnography fieldwork is conducted with an awareness of being within a landscape, and as the landscape changes across sites, so the identity of the ethnographer requires renegotiation (Marcus 1995). As Hannerz (2003, 206) points out, ‘the sites are connected with one another in such ways that the relationships between them are as important for this formulation as the relationships within them; the fields are not some mere collection of local units.’ Thus, multi-sited ethnography presents an opportunity to explore the relationships and connections between sites as units of analysis as well. However, practical and methodological issues arise from the use of multi-sited ethnography.

3.2.3 Problems and challenges

As Fitzgerald puts it, ‘multi-sited work tests the limits of a method usually thought to rely on deep, local knowledge of everyday interactions as a means to understand members’ experience’ (2006, 4). Similarly Clifford (1997, 57) asks, ‘how many sites can be studied extensively before the ‘criteria’ of depth are compromised?’

Hence, doing multi-sited ethnography may mean the researcher could risk forgoing the ethnographic richness that accompanies conducting research in one place over time. Gille and Riain (2002) note that multi-sited research (even when based on many return and follow-up trips) still runs the risk of being too thinly spread, and demanding a sacrifice of the normally leisurely pace of traditional ethnographic work.

Furthermore, as multi-sited ethnography entails a selection of sites from among those which could potentially be included in the research design, deciding which of them are worth pursuing may seem somewhat arbitrary (Hannerz 2003). Marcus (1995) urges those who use this methodology 'to follow people', 'the thing', 'the metaphor', 'the plot, story or allegory', 'the life or biography' and 'the conflict'. However, the actual combination of sites included in a study may certainly have much to do with a research design which focuses on particular problems, or which seeks out particular opportunities for comparison. Hence, the researcher must have a principle of selection of sites that are relevant to the research questions. The field itself does not guide the research, but it suffices to say that 'site selections are to an extent made gradually and cumulatively, as new insights develop, as opportunities come into sight, and to some extent by chance' (Hannerz 2003, 207).

Added to this, researching multiple sites is logistically and financially daunting. From my personal experience, I have had to travel, observe, respond, reflect and write more quickly than I was accustomed to. In spite of this, multi-sited ethnography is a valuable methodology to study transnational migrants and diaspora communities. This 'mobile ethnography' (Marcus 1995, 96) challenges grand theories, assumptions and the tendency of transnational literature to treat

diaspora communities as homogeneous entities. Despite the practical and methodological difficulties of conducting multi-sited fieldwork and ‘regardless of one’s ideological predispositions and view of the proper relationship between practicing social science and politics, following migrants as they travel across multiple sites is a productive way to understand their experiences’ (Fitzgerald 2004, 7).

3.2.4 A multi-sited ethnography of Zimbabweans in Britain

The Zimbabwean diaspora in Britain as an object of study requires a multi-sited ethnography as a methodological approach. This study, built on the challenge of understanding a mobile diaspora, involves investigating the formation of racial, ethnic, gendered, and political identities from people in multiple locations. Zimbabweans in Britain are geographically, socially and conceptually fragmented. There are asylum seekers and refugees, notably the most visible group in the country, labour migrants, students, those who have acquired British nationality and undocumented migrants. Rather than remaining focused on a single site for intense investigation, this research required a strategy that acknowledges the multiplicity of sites, the mobility of the people involved, the shifting immigration status and the different topics to be covered.

As discussed in the Introduction, the inadequacy of a reliable statistical estimation of the number of Zimbabweans in the UK poses difficulties for creating a sampling frame. Besides, it is difficult to come up with a sampling frame for a shifting population, when some are arriving and others disappearing underground. As Lee (1993, 60) points out, ‘sampling becomes more difficult the more sensitive the topic under investigation, since potential informants will have more incentive to

conceal their activities.’ It has been suggested that when there is no accessible sampling frame within the population from which the sample is to be taken and difficulty in creating one, snowball sampling is the only feasible alternative (Arber 2001; Bryman 2004). Lee (1993, 65) explains that ‘in network [that is snowball] sampling the researcher starts from an initial set of contacts and is then passed on by them to others, who in turn refer others and so on.’

However, snowballing tends to produce samples that are relatively homogeneous, making it difficult to make internal comparisons within cases. At the same time, as Seale (1999) argues, sampling within a case guards against the assumption that views gained from one vantage view are representative of the whole. The researcher should monitor and control referral chains, perhaps identifying specific kinds of respondents who would illuminate emerging theoretical formulations (Lee 1993). My own biographical details meant that I was a resource for my investigation and received support from other Zimbabweans in the diaspora. I started from the networks and contacts that I knew and moved beyond to networks that I had never known before. Through snowballing, I selected different people from widely dispersed geographic locations for interview, so that the complexity of the Zimbabwean diaspora is adequately represented.

3.3 Methods for generating data

This research involves the use of in-depth interviews and participant observation as the main methods for data generation. It is important to make a distinction between data sources and methods for generating data. Data sources are those places or phenomena from or through which data can be generated while data generation methods are the techniques and strategies used to do this (Mason 2002).

This research encompasses the following data sources: people (as individuals or groups); organisations and institutions; texts (published and unpublished); events and happenings; settings and environment. From data generation based on individual interviews and participant observation in key settings, it then becomes possible to identify routes and migration patterns into the diaspora, analyse migrants' experiences in the hostland in relation to paid work, gender relations and roles, and their relationship with the homeland. As Levitt and Schiller (2004, 1013) explain, 'participant observation and ethnographic interviewing allow researchers to document how persons simultaneously maintain and shed cultural repertoires and identities, interact within a location and across its boundaries, and act in ways that are in concert with or contradict their values over time.'

3.3.1 My biography and the research process

Inevitably, my location in this research, as a member of the Zimbabwean diaspora, influences the questions that I asked, as well as those I did not ask. The researcher and those people in the research carry with them a history, a sense of themselves and the importance of their experience (May 1997). For example, concern about immigration status among Zimbabweans in Britain meant that I avoided any questions related to it. At the same time, my position as a black Zimbabwean allowed respondents in Wigan to share, for the first time with someone from outside their community, their experiences of racism. Several respondents asked how my research would help them successfully claim political asylum in Britain or how the study would contribute in bringing political change in Zimbabwe. Knowing I was dealing with people's lives that were at risk, I never promised that

my research would do much to alleviate their problems, but only that it may be of use someday.

3.3.2 Interviews

I conducted 33 in-depth interviews over a period of 12 months from July 2005 to June 2006 (see appendix 2 for fieldwork timetable). The majority of respondents were middle-aged and married with children. In terms of ethnicity, six were white Zimbabweans; 17 were from the Shona ethnic group and ten from the Ndebele ethnic group. Of the respondents, 18 were male and 15 were female. Eight interviews were conducted in each of the following cities, Coventry, Birmingham and Wigan. The remaining nine interviews were undertaken in London. At the time of the interview, the indications were that 23 respondents were documented migrants while ten were undocumented. However, because of the constant shifting of a person's immigration status, the distinction between documented and undocumented is merely indicative rather than definitive. All undocumented migrants were black Zimbabweans who had arrived in the country after 1997. Documented migrants comprised naturalised British citizens, refugees, asylum seekers whose case was still pending, students and labour migrants. From my sample, the earliest migration date to Britain was 1967 and the latest date was 2002. Although many Zimbabweans continued to migrate to the country after 2002, visa restrictions imposed in that year reduced significantly the number of people entering the country.

Due to undocumented migrants' strategy of constant movement to evade immigration officials, second interviews were only possible with 21 of the original 33 interviewees. The interviews were conducted in English, taped, transcribed and

analysed. Given the sensitive character of this research, gaining the trust of informants and establishing a rapport was important before interviewing them. The use of a tape-recorder initially unsettled a few respondents, especially undocumented migrants. For example, Tigere is an undocumented migrant in his late thirties, who came to the UK in 2001 as a visitor and then overstayed his visa. Although I had known Tigere for two months before the interview and had established a rapport, he told me just before we began, ‘are you not from the Home Office?’ The interviews were held in respondents’ homes, workplaces, restaurants and cafes, and they lasted between one and two hours.

Although I had a guide of interview questions (see appendix 3 for interview guideline), respondents were encouraged to tell their stories in response to open-ended questions based on the following themes: biographical details, migration dynamics, settlement and marginality, transnational ties, gender and identities, diaspora politics, plans and aspirations. However, over time this approach had to be adjusted. For example, Blessing an undocumented migrant who has been in this country since 1999 and is now married to a documented Zimbabwean nurse, told me that some of my questions reminded her of her interview with the Home Office. Mindful of this, I continually updated the questions; removing those that bordered on immigration and engaging a narrative technique of letting respondents tell their own stories.

A purposive sampling technique was used in selecting people for interviews. The overarching aim was to try to draw out people from different categories, probing differences within the diaspora in terms of race, ethnicity, gender, immigration status, vintages of migration and political belonging. An important question in

searching for interviewees was to consider who might not be captured by any particular approach.

3.3.3 Participant observation

Participant observation was one of the key research methods used in gathering data. Participant observation is generally described as a research method in which the researcher immerses him/herself in 'a social context with the aim of uncovering through an empathetic understanding the meaning systems of participants in that social context and hence to see the world from their point of view' (Bryman and Burgess, 1999, xvii). Whereas using questionnaires assumes the researcher already knows what is important, participant observation makes no firm assessment of what is important. Although, participant observation may seem to be a method that lacks structure or guidelines, it is less likely to lead the researcher into imposing his or her own view of social reality. This method was used at the social, political, religious and cultural events in the diaspora that I attended.

In devising the research design, I paid particular attention to the varied geographical contexts of the Zimbabwean diaspora Britain. I selected four locations, Coventry, Birmingham, London and Wigan, in order to take account of many factors which could affect migrants' experiences. The pub and *gochi-gochi* in Coventry and Birmingham respectively provided migrants with a space in-between the public and private in which to socialise. My other key point of access was the Forward in Faith Ministries International church in Coventry, a Zimbabwean Pentecostal church with 56 missions in the world and lead by Dr Ezekiel Guti as its prophet and founder. In addition, I visited a Zimbabwean

Catholic church in Birmingham, where they celebrated weekly Sunday masses in Shona. In London, migrants held street demonstrations as part of the Zimbabwe Vigil. Lastly, Wigan provided an opportunity to interrogate how the diaspora is expressed and performed within households. Thus, the Vigil, diaspora congregations, the pub, *gochi-gochi* and Wigan's neighbourhood were my main points of access to respondents. The inner logic of the sites is that they provide insight into the political, social, religious and cultural realities of the diaspora. The assumption of multi-sited ethnography is that altering context will alter responses, for example, responses from the pub will be different from responses from the church.

During fieldwork visits, I stayed with family and friends and I took time to type out my thoughts, conversations and experiences as I went along. Therefore, writing was an integral part of the research process, not just an add-on once the 'real' research had been done (Punch 2005).

I made 20 separate visits to a Zimbabwean pub in Coventry, a place of congregation for many Zimbabwean men in the West Midlands. It may be improper to call it a Zimbabwean pub, because it bears an English name, unrelated to Zimbabwe. Male black adults, predominantly Ndebeles and Shonas, frequent the pub. Despite the frequent visits that I made to the pub, I rarely found women there. The pub had become not only a drinking place but also a place to create a 'home' in the diaspora. It is owned by a Swaziland-born British woman who sells Zimbabwean beer, that is, Zambezi, Castle Lager, Bohlingers and Lion. Access-givers are often key informants about the organisation and its members, but at the same time, they can also influence one's account. However, the owner of the pub

allowed me to talk with patrons freely, though she stressed the importance of confidentiality in case my research might scare off her customers.

As a public-private space in a multi-ethnic city, the pub was a point of access to undocumented migrants. I conducted interviews with four such respondents I met in the pub. It was difficult to establish a rapport with respondents in the pub as new customers would always come in. This explains the many visits that I made as compared to other research sites. More so, the pub opened everyday whereas the Vigil and diaspora congregations assembled only once a week. The pub, as a public space, provided an opportunity to pick out how social and cultural identities are negotiated and re-negotiated in the diaspora. It was also a space where feelings of belonging were articulated through music, language and dance. In addition, patrons discussed subjects ranging from politics of the homeland to their condition and experiences of work and life in the hostland.

One of the objectives of this study is to explore the extent to which migration shape gender relations and gender roles in both private and public spheres of the diaspora. Thus, in order to pick out females voices, diaspora congregations were used as points of access. Given the importance of religion as a site of identity making, I made 12 separate visits to the Shona-dominated FIFMI in Coventry. FIFMI members worship in a hall belonging to the City Council for four hours every Sunday. During the service, the congregation sing and dance, waving their hands. As a Catholic in a Pentecostal environment, it was hard for me to follow their rhythm, let alone feel at ease. When everyone stood up and started to dance, I just stood up and clapped my hands, barely shaking my body. Often, the charismatic pastor walked up and down the middle of the church urging everyone

to 'be liberated by the spirit.' It was as if he was referring specifically to me. Four interviews were conducted with respondents from FIFMI.

During the course of my fieldwork in Coventry, about 20 police officers, 18 immigration service officers and two officials from the Department for Work and Pensions picked up more than 50 suspected undocumented migrants as they packed Walkers Crisps, in a dawn raid at a Coventry factory (Griffin 2005). Some Zimbabweans were among those who were picked up. In these circumstances, negotiating access became even more problematic, as people thought I worked for the Home Office. This illustrates how sites, because of external and internal forces around them, might influence patterns of identity and identification.

I made 12 separate visits to the Shona-dominated Catholic Church in Birmingham and carried out four interviews there. Furthermore, I conducted informal interviews over time, and this meant that my research did not only rely on the vicissitudes of the scheduled in-depth interview moment. I attended the weekly Sunday masses in the afternoon, and my own position as a Catholic helped me to gain the necessary trust and confidence, as I was able to participate actively in their activities. The Catholic Church, like FIFMI, was dominated by women.

Still in Birmingham, I also made frequent visits to the *gochi-gochi* on Sunday evenings. *Gochi-gochi* is a Shona word for barbecue or braai, a place where people gather and spend cash with friends roasting meat and drinking beer. People from both Shona and Ndebele ethnic groups would come to *gochi-gochi* to socialise. *Gochi-gochi* is located in the African and Asian neighbourhoods of Birmingham. The owner Ndunduzo uses the backyard of a Jamaican pub. He came to the UK in 1997, is in his late thirties, married with two children. Ndunduzo was a mechanical

engineer in Zimbabwe, but now runs the popular *gochi-gochi* as his source of income. He calls himself a marketing adviser for Zimbabwean musicians such as Oliver Mutukudzi and Aleck Macheso, because of his close network with Zimbabweans in the diaspora.

Ndunduzo first started the idea of a *gochi-gochi* in a disused shop, operating it more like a *shebeen*.⁸ For two years, he was roasting *bruvosi* (meat sausage) and cooking *sadza*⁹ for people who were coming from work tired. From his new site, Ndunduzo travels to Milton Keynes,¹⁰ just like many nostalgic Zimbabweans, to buy beef, *bruvosi* and other traditional products.

There are no signs outside the Jamaican pub describing the Zimbabwean *gochi-gochi*, yet it is central to the pub's survival. Ndunduzo does not sell beer to his customers; he simply plays Zimbabwean music (*miseve*¹¹) and cooks *sadza* and roast *bruvosi* for sale. A plate of *sadza* and *bruvosi* cost £7. Normally several people would eat from the same plate and bowl standing. During winter, the turnout is low but Ndunduzo would not go home without over £120.

On one of my visits, the table was littered with flyers about Zimbabwean and South Africa artists coming to perform in the UK. The physical environment is not prosperous—old chairs, a scruffy floor and broken windows. The *gochi-gochi*, just like the pub, represents 'home' through music, food, beer, dance, language and memories.

⁸ For Ndebele people, a *shebeen* is an illegal drinking place predominantly operated by widowed women.

⁹ *Sadza* is a Shona word for hard porridge.

¹⁰ In Milton Keynes there is a butcher operated by a British Indian person, which specialises in cheap African food products. The majority of Zimbabwean in the diaspora drives hundred of miles to this butcher to buy Zimbabwean products.

¹¹ *Miseve* is a plural Shona word for arrows yet in the diaspora it is being used to refer to the Sungura Zimbabwean music rhythm.

One of the research questions seeks to understand the nature of diaspora politics in Britain and how different conditions and contexts shape, alter and influence respondents' attitudes and participation in diaspora politics. In addition, the study seeks to explore the relationship between the diaspora and the homeland government. Thus, I wanted to focus on the Zimbabwe Vigil in London as a visible site of political activism by those in the diaspora. For three months, I participated in all the Vigil's singing and dancing during 12 separate visits.

The Zimbabwe Vigil demonstrates outside the Zimbabwe Embassy in central London, approximately five hundred metres east of Trafalgar square and fairly close to Charing Cross tube station and the Thames River. There are other foreign Embassies nearby, notably the South African Embassy. The place is a hive of activity as shoppers and tourists mill around admiring the beauty and magnificence of London.

The Vigil is the epitome of opposition politics in the diaspora; Morgan Tsvangirai and several opposition Members of Parliament from the country of origin have visited this place to offer their moral support. According to Vigil coordinators, the idea of protesting weekly at the Zimbabwean embassy was suggested to them by Roy Bennett, MDC MP and Tony Reeler of the Amani Trust,¹² as an effective way to raise awareness in the UK about the plight of the Zimbabwean people. As a result, the Central London Branch of the MDC set up the Zimbabwe Vigil in October 2002, inspired by the successful pickets outside South Africa House during the apartheid era. Trafalgar Square was the focal point of anti-apartheid resistance in London and there is a strong feeling among Vigil members that they

¹² Amani Trust is a Zimbabwean community-based care organisation that caters for survivors of torture and organised violence.

are replicating the anti-apartheid protests, though directed to a different focus. By allowing demonstrations outside the Zimbabwe embassy and the House of Commons, the British government provides a symbolic gesture of approval, a kind of implicit validation of the Vigil's activities and intentions.

Although the Vigil is open to all Zimbabweans, it draws its participants primarily from asylum seekers, refugees, MDC members and white Zimbabweans. White Zimbabweans, more than ten being present during each of my visits, are central to the organisation and logistical operation of the Vigil, bringing tents, table, fliers and other material. The number of participants ranged between 40 and 80 and would be lower on a rainy day. Predominantly white Zimbabwean women coordinate the Vigil activities, though black women are part of them. Both Shona and Ndebele speaking people come to the Vigil, as was clear when they conversed with each other.

Whether through choice or necessity, dozens of women come to the Vigil to try to have their immigration problems addressed. In all of my visits, it was abundantly clear that women formed the majority of Vigil participants, as compared to men, particularly young women in their twenties and thirties.

New members are encouraged, if not coerced, by the Vigil atmosphere to sing and dance. Occasionally passers-by would also join in the drumming and singing. It was easy to separate the familiar faces from those who were attending for the first time. While ordinary members were used to the drumming and singing, new members would struggle to find the beat and rhythm of the drums and songs. As I sang and danced, constantly being urged to raise my legs higher, I realised the

difficulty of doing multi-sited research. In this instance, I become an activist-researcher.

Asylum seekers, who are expected to know the content of the MDC manifesto and the names of party leaders as ‘proof’ of being genuine political refugees, consider the Vigil as a first place to go when seeking asylum. The Vigil’s composition embodies the racial, ethnic, and gender diversity characteristics of the Zimbabwean diaspora. This makes it distinct from other research sites.

In-depth interviews were conducted with nine people accessed via the Vigil, that is, five women and four men. Four interviews were conducted in a nearby restaurant, while the remaining five were carried out in the research participants’ homes. Given that the Vigil was inundated with researchers and reporters, soliciting for interviews was difficult. Multi-sited ethnography assumes sites and contexts influence people’s response. If my research had begun and ended at the Vigil, then I would only have had a partial view of how Zimbabweans participated in diaspora politics and their attitudes towards homeland government.

The Vigil, the diaspora congregations and the pub are in public and public-private spaces. In Wigan, my access point to private homes of asylum seekers and refugees was through my cousin, a refugee himself. I decided to interview people in Wigan to provide an important counterpoint, and as a contrast with the two large cities of London and Birmingham.

The majority of Zimbabwean asylum seekers and refugees in Wigan were forced into the diaspora, and again forced to live in Wigan through the asylum dispersal policy in the hostland. Most of them live in council houses in two residential areas

of Mbare and Highfields,¹³ and their life can best be summarised as a triangular routine, that is, home, work and the local Methodist church. Almost every family owns a family car, a common feature among the Zimbabwean diaspora in Britain. Almost all of them are Christian worshipers at the local church. They also hold weekly Monday prayer meetings in each other's homes as a way of visiting each other and keeping the group together. Despite the patterns of interaction that link Zimbabweans together, the group's linkages to other social networks are limited. What inhibits this is not the group's own resistance to integration, but institutional forces that make them unimportant and force them to remain as invisible as possible.

My fieldwork in Wigan spanned the course of three months and I conducted eight in-depth interviews. Unsurprisingly, most people were eager to tell me their stories; interviews were an opportunity for them to be heard and a medium for transmitting concern about the racial abuse and violence they experienced in the city. Most of the respondents found the interviews empowering as they narrated to me the difficulties they were facing. After my fieldwork, we (including my supervisors) wrote a letter to the mayor of the city explaining some of the disturbing research findings. The council's Community Safety Team invited me to make a presentation, on the 2nd of October 2006, to a panel of eight members, which included a police officer from the Greater Manchester Police, a church minister from the Methodist church, a representative from a refugee organisation, an anthropological researcher from the University of Manchester and city council officials. The uninterrupted thirty-minute presentation was followed by two hours of discussion. Every member of the panel was shocked by my findings about the

¹³The exact locations have been altered to protect respondents.

nature of racial violence experienced by Zimbabwean asylum seekers and refugees. From this productive meeting, a working group was formed to address the issue.

Doing ethnographic research in multiple sites is challenging, as one has to negotiate one's access and adjust an appropriate identity in each site. For example, in Coventry, I was a worshipper in one site and a pub customer in another. Drinking alcohol or visiting the pub and attending a church service are activities socially constructed as contradictory, according to church teaching. Thus, every time I visited the pub I was anxious not to be seen by anyone from the church.

There were moments when I had to restrain my cultural baggage from filtering into my research. For example, one day on a Wednesday evening, I entered the pub with a Zimbabwean friend. Three women sat behind the counter; two were black women and the other one was a white woman. The white woman served us with drinks as the other women were talking in Ndebele, a Zimbabwean language. One of the black women was chain-smoking and the sight of her smoking disturbed my sensibility, as it is strange to see women smoking in Zimbabwe. After my initial response, I came to understand this as an important example of the way women were renegotiating their identities in the diaspora, claiming access to the public sphere.

Supplementing the interviews and participant observations was academic literature on diaspora, transnationalism and gender. I used online bibliographical databases to search the existing literature. I selected the databases because they offered a variety of subject disciplines under consideration: that is, social sciences, humanities and natural sciences. Furthermore, secondary statistics from the Home

Office publications were analysed in order to have an analytic estimate of the population of Zimbabweans in Britain, and comparable information on Zimbabweans migrants. The study also made use of Zimbabwean websites especially, NewZimbabwe, The Zimbabwean and Zimdaily.

3.4 Gaining access

Oakley (2000) argues for interaction between the researcher and the researched, contrary to the model of a distanced, controlling researcher who is dependent upon a hierarchical division that separates the researcher and researched. However, it is important to maintain a certain detachment in order to gather data and interpret it (Fielding 2001). My biography was salient to my research in terms of gaining access to sensitive issues, for example, narratives of undocumented migrants. Thus, sharing diasporic experiences was often the basis for a trusting relationship between us. However, negotiating access to the researched was not taken for granted, as this was a continuous process for the entire research period. One of the dangers of qualitative research is that the researcher may 'go native', whereby the researcher loses his or her awareness of being a researcher and is seduced by participant's perspectives (Bryman and Burgess 1999). Researchers are called on to engage themselves critically in order to 'rethink the familiar', being on guard against the risk of subtly translating one's own demands for affirmation and validation (Blaxter et al. 2001). My own biographical details were used reflexively in order to understand the narratives of migrants.

Yet I must acknowledge that there were challenges to the research process, as research participants wanted to know where I stood politically. I generally maintained neutrality in terms of my political affiliation, yet this was not possible

at the Vigil where I was almost an activist-researcher. However, some aspects of my identity, such as gender, ethnic background and class were less in doubt. My class position as a university researcher initially created a sense of distance and unease for some undocumented migrants, who were suspicious of anything that is 'official'.

3.5 Ethical considerations

As I moved from site to site, the magnitude of Zimbabweans living as undocumented migrants became more apparent. A number of problems are associated with the task of interviewing undocumented migrants. Foremost amongst these is the suspicion held not only of researchers, but also of anyone who appears in an 'official' capacity. Working with a community that is both hugely diverse and living underground limits the nature of the investigations that are possible. It is difficult to access people who spend much of their time trying to avoid detection, trying to be invisible. Hence, issues of confidentiality are of particular importance when dealing with persons who feel insecure and at risk of deportation. The author discussed the nature and the purpose of the study with research respondents to solicit their informed consent in participating in the interviews. To avoid compromising in relation to the Home Office or CIO, all names in this study have been changed to protect respondents (Bryman 2004; BSA 2002). Pseudonyms are used throughout to protect interviewees' identities. Moreover, the study does not provide a detailed overview of respondents to avoid giving away details that might be identifiable and thus put informants at risk.

It follows, therefore, that the greatest dilemma that I had was in the writing process, what to write and what to exclude. I was worried that information

contained in my writing might reveal the locality and contexts of the research, thereby putting my research participants or their families at risk. The present research is politically sensitive because it reveals information that could be potentially harmful to people's lives; it can lead to arrest, and subsequent deportation.

Furthermore, as Black correctly observes, 'by revealing migrants and asylum-seekers strategies that lie outside the defined legal limits, research might simply assist states in the process of controlling both the individuals and groups and thus breach the accepted ethical guideline of doing no harm to those being researched' (2003, 49). Similarly, as De Genova (2002) argues, undocumented migration is a juridical status that entails a social relation to the state. Hence,

the familiar pitfalls by which ethnographic objectification becomes a kind of anthropological pornography—showing it just to show it, as it were—become infinitely more complicated here by the danger that ethnographic disclosure can quite literally become a kind of surveillance, effectively complicit with if not altogether in the service of the state (De Genova 2002, 422).

Only a limited amount of ethnographic material has been used here, because rich ethnographic details about respondents and locations might potentially be used by state authorities to identify respondents. Hence, without compromising the theoretical integrity of the work and the ethical principle of confidentiality, I have altered specifics so that information regarding locations and people's names would not be divulged.

3.6 Data Analysis

Multi-sited approaches require both multiple methods of gathering research materials and multiple approaches to data analysis (Green 1999). Just as the writing up of the thesis was not a distinct exercise at the end of fieldwork, the analysis of data was an integral part of the research process. During field work I kept analytic notes, that is, the preliminary analyses worked out in the field (Burgess 1984). As I moved from site to site, I produced preliminary reports based on each research site. However, I decided ultimately to adopt a thematic approach instead of writing up on a site-by-site basis.

Bryman (2004, 400) points to the general strategies of qualitative data analysis as analytic induction and grounded theory. 'Analytic induction is an approach to the analysis of data in which the researcher seeks universal explanations of phenomena by pursuing the collection of data until no cases that are inconsistent with a hypothetical explanation (deviant or negative cases) of a phenomenon are found.' This study does not begin with a hypothetical explanation of the research problem but rather seeks to examine the formation, articulation and experiential reality of the Zimbabwean diaspora. There are no presuppositions and assumptions about what the research problem could be, but rather examining phenomenon as it is. However, in as much as qualitative investigations depend on induction, 'analytic induction' is useful as a general term rather than its specific usage.

Glaser and Strauss (1967) advocate a grounded theory, which is a methodology of generating theory from data. The promise of theory and model development makes grounded theory an attractive methodology to follow (Bringer et al. 2006). Through the use of theoretical sampling and coding, grounded theory aims at

developing concepts, categories, hypothesis and substantive theory (Bryman 2004). Although data analysis techniques based on 'segmenting, coding and categorization are valuable in attempts to find and conceptualise regularities in the data' (Punch 2005, 216), they also tend to 'decontextualise' and fragment the data. It is for this reason that a narrative approach was used as the main method of data analysis. However, the core processes of grounded theory, such as memos and allowing theoretical ideas to emerge from the data have been appropriated in this study.

Narratives and stories are valuable ways of studying lives and lived experiences (Punch 2005). Narrative analysis is 'concerned with the search for and analysis of stories that people employ to understand their lives and the world around them' (Bryman 2004, 412). Riessman (cited by Bryman 2004, 412) distinguished four models of narrative analysis, namely thematic analysis, structural analysis, interactional analysis, and performative analysis. This thesis follows a thematic analysis where there is 'an emphasis on *what* is said rather than *how* it is said.'

From the in-depth interviews and participant observation in different research sites, the aim was to identify stable features and patterns. I consistently looked for emerging patterns from the data and used them as a starting point to probe into the complex and internally diverse diaspora. Ryan and Bernard (2003) provide a list of techniques of identifying emerging themes. Some of these techniques were repetition, indigenous categories, metaphors and analogies, and similarities and differences.

The recurrence of particular stories and narratives from many of the respondents across different sites was an indication of an emerging theme. Some of the themes

that emerged were shifting gender relations, the struggle of undocumented migrants in the labour market, problematic issues of Zimbabwean identity, fear of deportation, deskilling, and 'othering' in relation to the dominant culture.

One of the aims of sociological research is to make the familiar strange and the strange familiar (Hammersley and Atkinson 1983). There were surprising moments during fieldwork as I learned how respondents used indigenous categories, such as describing care work as *dot.com*, or BBC (British Bottom Cleaners). I was also surprised when I asked my respondents if they were proud to be identified as Zimbabweans that most of them find this identification problematic. Having identified these surprising responses, I developed them into coherent themes for analysis. Indeed, the comparative element inherent in multi-sited research provided an opportunity to look for similarities and differences across sites and among respondents.

Furthermore, analysis of data was aided by the computer-assisted data analysis software program, Nvivo. I started using Nvivo during my fieldwork. The programme allows data to be integrated into the project. In-depth interviews and ethnographic material from research sites were the main sources of data so they were kept as individual files. Nvivo allows the researcher to link to external material that is books, audio or internet pages, that are relevant to the research project. This made it easy to retrieve and manipulate files without sifting through lots of papers.

3.7 Conclusion

Although there are practical and methodological challenges involved in conducting multi-sited ethnography, I have argued that it is the best-suited methodology for studying diasporic communities. This mode of pursuing ethnographic research enables one to think about the connections and relationships that the migrants construct across different sites and how each site helps to alter migrants' responses. Despite the practical and epistemological problems of multi-sited fieldwork, it offers advantages for gaining access to members of multi-sited networks and offers opportunities for comparison. Multi-sited ethnography has the capacity to make theoretical arguments through discovering, delineating and describing particular relationships, connections, associations and circulations that are otherwise taken-for-granted, or not recognised.

My biography as a Zimbabwean was significant in gaining access to research and respondents. For the majority of respondents, our shared history and shared diasporic experiences were often the basis for a trusting relationship. Furthermore, this study conforms to what scholars point out as researching sensitive areas, when those under investigation tend to hide their identity for moral, legal, ideological or political reasons (Lee 1993). The majority of respondents feared the Home Office or the Central Intelligence Organisation (CIO) or both. Thus, issues of confidentiality and anonymity of respondents are important in this study.

The writing up of the thesis was not a distinct exercise at the end of fieldwork but rather an integral part of the research process. Because data analysis techniques based on segmenting, coding and categorisation tend to 'decontextualise' and fragment the data, this study adopts a narrative approach as the main method of

data analysis. From the in-depth interviews and participant observation in different research sites, the objective of this study was to identify stable features and patterns and use them as a starting point to probe into the complex and internally diverse diaspora.

Chapter 4: Vintages and patterns of Zimbabwean migration to Britain

4.1 Introduction

Colonialism and Zimbabwe's socio-economic and political history are important factors for understanding international migration from the country. This chapter attempts to contextualise respondents' narratives and make sense of the conditions under which they lived before migration. This chapter seeks to answer the following questions: What factors influenced people's decisions to migrate into the diaspora and how can these phases be classified? What were the common narratives of the journeys and routes taken into Britain? What types of migration patterns characterises Zimbabweans' migration to Britain?

The chapter is divided into four sections. The first section presents a brief history of Zimbabwe, focussing on key events and moments crucial in the development of the country. The second section delineates the historical context and the complex set of factors influencing five different phases of migration. The third section explores the stories and narratives relating to the journeys taken in migration to Britain. The last section analyses patterns of migration associated with dispersal of Zimbabweans from their country, demonstrating how the out-ward migration relates to the political, social and economic processes of the country, the region and the world.

4.2 Zimbabwe: history of the nation

Zimbabwe is a country in Southern Africa that lies between the Zambezi River to the north and the Limpopo River to the south. It attained its independence from Britain in 1980, after a hundred years of colonial rule. In most cases, nation histories are told in particular ways, offering grand narratives of the past that sometimes deny history to particular groups. This historical profile, while being aware of other ethnic minorities in Zimbabwe such as the Tonga, Shangani, Shangwe, Nambia and people of Asian-origin, takes a Shona and Ndebele bias.

It is generally argued that the area south of the Zambezi River was dominated by Shona-speaking people from the late first century (Beach 1980). The word Shona came into use in the nineteenth century. Beach (1980) points out that the Ndebele used the word Shona to describe the people of the south-west Plateau,¹⁴ especially the Rozvi. Later Shona was used as a collective term for a group of dialects, namely the Zezuru, Karanga, Kalanga, Korekore, Manyika, Nyanga and Ndau dialects. As Beach argues, 'one of the salient features of Shona history is the fact that the Shona people have never been united under one rule at any point in their history, a point emphasised by the absence of any single name accepted by all the people before the twentieth century' (1980, xii).

The dominance of Shona-speaking chiefs was threatened by the arrival of the Ndebele and white settlers. Conflict in Zululand among the Nguni people resulted in splinter groups fleeing to the north from the wrath of Shaka, king of the Zulu. The *mfecane* (the crushing) happened around 1820, and eventually reshaped the whole pattern of ethnic settlement in Southern Africa. The *mfecane* of the

¹⁴ The land south of the Zambezi River and north of the Limpopo River

nineteenth century, caused by economic and environmental pressures, resulted in the Nguni-speaking Ndebele people settling in western parts of present day Zimbabwe around 1840 (Beach 1980; Samkange 1968). The relationship between the Ndebele state and some Shona-speaking areas were fractious, marked by a complex politics of alliance and raiding (Bowman 1973).

In the meantime, Cecil John Rhodes' hopes of finding rich deposits of gold to the north of the Limpopo to parallel the discovery of the gold reef on the Witwatersrand in 1886 provided the impetus for the colonisation of Zimbabwe. Colonisation in 1890 by white settlers led by Cecil John Rhodes provided an important historical turning point. In Kay's (1980, 95) words, 'Rhodesia was conceived and developed as a white man's country, as a colony rather than a protectorate, in which commercial economic activity was to be fostered primarily by white settlers...'. It is within this context that African nationalist movements emerged to challenge Africans' subjugated condition and fight for political independence.

Although the Shona and Ndebele were traditional rivals, they organised a sustained resistance against white settlers from 1896–1897, in what is described as the First Chimurenga (war of liberation). As Ranger (1979) argues, the uprisings were instigated, led and co-ordinated by the spirit mediums of the Mwari cult.¹⁵ In the wake of the uprising, white settlers retained the land and cattle and forced many African people to work on their farms, in what was to be known as *chibaro* (coerced labour). Another reason why white settlers turned their attention to farming was that they had discovered lower quantities of gold than expected. The

¹⁵ The Mwari (God) cult refers to the religious system of the Rozvi people, based at Matopo Hills in Matebeleland. The place was a focus of religious rituals.

British South Africa Company ruled the country until 1923 when 35,000 whites opted to govern themselves as a colony rather than in union with South Africa (Stoneman and Cliffe 1989).

White settlers were granted unrestricted access to the country's resources and this was done through the exploitation of the indigenous population. Several pieces of legislation were enacted, designed to discriminate against the indigenous population. For instance, the Land Apportionment Act of 1930 institutionalised the racial land divide, an act that remained the cornerstone of Rhodesian segregation until the passage of a similar Land Tenure Act in 1969. The land issue was the rallying point of African resistance to white settlers. It became the focal point of protest by a new generation of educated black Zimbabweans in the 1950s and 1960s (Bowman 1973; Stoneman and Cliffe 1989). By 1922, 64 percent of the African people were forced to live in the so-called Native Reserves. Consequently, this led to the development of a capitalist economy, with the bourgeois farmers and miner owners on one side and the proletariat black Africans on the other side (Astrow 1983). The emergence of the African working class in the post World War II threatened the position of the white settler community.

The Second Chimurenga began in the early 1960s as primarily urban forms of protest against an increasingly repressive state; however, African nationalist movements emerged to challenge the unequal distribution of land and fight for political independence. In 1960, the National Democratic Party (NDP) was formed, with the goal of achieving African rule by gradual means. When the NDP was banned in 1961, the group was reconstituted under the name of the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) a year later and led by Joshua Nkomo. The white

Rhodesians also recognised the revolutionary nature of ZAPU, and banned it in 1963. Meanwhile, internal conflict within the party led to a split and the formation of the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) under the leadership of Ndabaningi Sithole. The split occurred loosely along ethnic lines, with the ZANU being more strongly aligned with the Shona and ZAPU with the Ndebele. From 1963 to 1979, ZANU and ZAPU, the two formidable liberation movements were engaged in armed struggle with the Rhodesian Front. The fragmentation¹⁶ of the nationalist movement meant that it was only from 1972 onwards that the war of liberation intensified (Astrow 1983).

After Ian Smith unilaterally declared independence from Britain in 1965, Rhodesia became the pariah of the international community (Bowman 1973). By the end of 1965, the colonial regime had outlawed all African nationalist organisations. African leaders were either restricted or detained in Rhodesia, or forced into exile. It was from neighbouring countries that exiled Zimbabweans organised themselves and fought a protracted war of liberation that eventually came to an end in 1979 when the Lancaster House Agreement was signed, bringing to an end almost a hundred years of racial oppression (Astrow 1983; Stoneman and Cliffe 1989).

4.3 Diaspora formation and migration to Britain

Drawing on the primary research of the author and a range of published and unpublished sources, the thesis develop five overlapping phases of international migration from Zimbabwe, beginning in the 1960s to the present, as Table 4.1

¹⁶ Ethnic differences between ZANU and ZAPU caused the war of liberation to be fought on two fronts until the formation of the Patriotic Front, a unified alliance. ZAPU continued to advocate for multi-ethnic mobilisation; historians have sought to explain the growing regional/ethnic allegiance partly in terms of the role of the two liberation armies, as old ZAPU committees existed in the Midlands, Manicaland etc but the areas became ZANU having received ZANLA freedom fighters.

illustrates. The preferred destinations for migrants are Botswana, Mozambique, South Africa, Zambia, the United Kingdom, the United States, Australia, New Zealand and Canada.

Table 4. 1 Zimbabwe's five phases of migration, 1960–2006¹⁷

Period	Nature of emigrants	Size of emigrants*	Destinations
1960–1979	Migration of political exiles, labour migrants to S.A	210,000 75,000	Zambia, Mozambique, Botswana, Britain, South Africa
1972–1989	Flight of white Zimbabweans	142,000	South Africa, Britain, Australia, Canada, New Zealand
1982–1987	Ndebele migration	5,000	Botswana, S.A and Britain
1990–1998	Migration of skilled professionals	200,000	South Africa, Botswana, Britain, the US and Australia
1999–present	The great exodus	3-4 million	South Africa, Britain, Botswana, Australia, the US, Canada, New Zealand

Sources: Chetsanga and Muchenje 2003; Godwin 1993; Jackson 1994; Makanya 1994; Nkai 2003; Selby 2006; Tevera and Crush 2003; UNHCR 2000; Zinyama 1990.

*= The size of emigrant population is in so far as it can known or analytically estimated based on secondary sources.

The criteria for selecting these five phases of migration are as follows. The periods involve a large movement of people from the homeland to neighbouring countries and beyond. The movements were largely prompted by political uncertainty, the

¹⁷ The phases should not be seen as mutually exclusive and unrelated discrete events but rather as a conceptual tool designed to analyse a complex phenomenon. For example, labour migration to South Africa has persisted throughout the documented period.

disintegration of the economy and the opening up of global opportunities. Most of these movements are not confined to the Southern African region, but span the globe to places far afield, such as the UK, Canada, the US, Australia and New Zealand. As a consequence of these movements, durable and transient communities were formed in destination countries.

The first phase relates to the migration of black political exiles within the context of the war of liberation and labour recruitments to South Africa's gold mines. The second phase comprises the flight of white Zimbabweans prior to, and post independence in 1980. The post-colonial conflict in Matebeleland precipitated people to move out of the country and this relates to the third phase. The next phase outlines the migration of skilled professionals from the early 1990s as a response to the shrinking economy and opportunities abroad. The last phase describes the recent exodus of both black and white Zimbabweans, skilled and unskilled, men and women, because of the country's political instability, rapid economic decline and growing unemployment.

4.3.1 Institutionalisation of migration

It has been variously suggested that by the time Zimbabwe attained its independence, 'migration had become thoroughly institutionalized' (Mazur 1986, 62; Potts 2006; Ranga 2003; Ranney 1985). Defining who should move, when, why and where was part of the Rhodesian government's efforts to control and exploit people, and this may be applied to the whole of Southern Africa. As Mazur argues (1986, 62) 'the control of a migrant labour force was a fundamental characteristic of Rhodesia's development throughout the 20th century. Taxes were imposed to force labourers to migrate to white-controlled mines and commercial

farms.’ This is supported by Stoneman (1989, 63) who argues that the settler government ‘fostered racial barriers to various avenues of social mobility of blacks and generated an essentially migrant class of worker-peasants.’ Ranney (1985, 511) summarises the three options that a potential black migrant faced as ‘no migration; temporary migration; and permanent migration.’ Hence, pre-independence settler governments curtailed the movement and migration of black Zimbabweans either inside or outside of the country.

4.3.2 Migration of political exiles and labour migrants

The first phase of migration, from the 1960s to 1979, describes the migration of political exiles to neighbouring countries and abroad and the labour recruitment of Zimbabweans to work in South African goldmines. Stoneman and Cliffe (1989, 22) point out that many Zimbabwean freedom fighters escaped the widespread detentions of 1963 and 1964, and went into exile. This is supported by Jackson (1994, 138), who argues that ‘building on the experiences of labour migration and as a consequence for the limited educational opportunities for blacks in the colonial Rhodesia, the first exiles were drawn from those educated male elites who almost inevitably found themselves spearheading a political struggle against the settler state.’ Generally young black Zimbabweans followed educated nationalist leaders who had fled the country and went into exile. Examining the exodus of refugees and exiles from Zimbabwe to Botswana, Zambia and Mozambique during the liberation war, Makanya (1994, 107) observes that ‘the flight from Zimbabwe started as a trickle soon after the UDI in 1965 and reached its peak in the period between 1977 and 1978.’ By 1979, it was estimated that there were over 210,000 Zimbabwean refugees in Mozambique, Botswana and Zambia (UNHCR 2000).

For the majority of people who went into exile during the war of liberation, migration was seen as temporary, with no intention of permanent settlement. While the academic literature is replete with analyses of the migration of Zimbabwean refugees to neighbouring countries in the region (Jackson 1994; Makanya 1994), it is silent on those who sought political asylum in other countries abroad. Stories of return and 'successful repatriation of refugees' (Makanya 1994) were popularised, yet not all political exiles returned. This is something that comes out clearly in my research. Mthokhozisi and Mathew are two respondents who migrated to Britain during the liberation war and did not return when the country attained its independence uncertain about the country's future. Mthokhozisi migrated to Britain in 1967 to further his studies in nursing; now, he works as a nurse in one of London's hospitals. Mathew migrated to the UK in 1976 and was granted refugee status at the height of the liberation war. Now he is working as a pastor. The lack of data and invisibility of black Zimbabweans who have remained in exile contrasts sharply with the visibility of white Zimbabweans who fled the country during this period. However, the argument has often been made in the reverse – white Zimbabweans being invisible because of their race making it easy to integrate in hostlands.

Within the same period, Zimbabwe became a source, destination and corridor for migrants going to work in South African goldmines. On the one hand, Zimbabweans worked in South Africa's gold mines for many years. On the other hand, Zimbabwe was a recipient of and corridor for labour migrants from Zambia, Malawi and Mozambique en route to South African goldmines (Tevera and Zinyama 2002). Witwatersrand Native Labour Association (WENELA) was a recruiting agency in South Africa that was given exclusive right to recruit labour

for working the mines in the Southern African region during the colonial period. The mines were over one thousand kilometres away from Zimbabwe, and by 1966 an estimated 75,000 black Zimbabweans were working in South Africa, and the figure increased in the mid-1970s as supplies from Malawi and Mozambique were unreliable at the time (Nkau 2003). However, Zinyama (1990) put the estimate of Zimbabweans working in South Africa rather lower at around 37,000 during the same period.

4.3.3 The flight of white Zimbabweans

The second period of emigration, between 1972 and 1989, consists of white Zimbabweans running away from the war, military call-up and general unhappiness about the changed political situation after the country's independence (Astrow 1983; Selby 2006). The war of liberation intensified from 1972 onwards and the resultant political instability in the country forced many white Zimbabweans to leave the country.

David is a white Zimbabwean and pharmacist who moved to Britain in 1979 at the height of the liberation struggle. He is now settled and integrated into British society. David migrated to Britain to avoid 'conscripted into the Rhodesian army.' Unsure of the new 'political environment', Precious left the country on the eve of the country's independence. Hence, despite Mugabe's call for racial reconciliation, some whites were unable to come to terms with black rule and preferred to emigrate to South Africa, the UK, Australia and Canada (Zinyama 1990).

According to Tevera and Crush, 'between 1980 and 1984, 50,000 to 60,000 whites left the country because they could not adjust to the changed political

circumstances and the net migration loss was over 10,000 per year' (2003, 6). Equally, Selby (2006, 118) points out that many Afrikaners returned to South Africa while 'liberals, moderates and progressives who had welcomed or accepted the prospects of majority rule' stayed. The scattering of white Zimbabweans from the country has been phenomenal. Godwin (1993, 315) estimates that 'the white population of 232,000 in mid-1979 become about 80,000 in 1990.' As Selby (2006, 116) further argues, the pattern of emigration 'suggests that significant numbers of whites were unwilling to accept the prospects of living as a minority group under majority rule.' However for Stoneman and Cliffe (1989), the majority of white skilled artisans who left were also scared of competition with black Zimbabweans in the job market.

4.3.4 Ndebele migration

The third phase of migration, from 1982 to 1987, describes the post-independence conflict in Matabeleland and parts of the Midlands, which led to the exodus of 4,000 to 5,000 refugees to Botswana, South Africa and abroad (Jackson 1994). In an attempt to overcome the divisions between ZANU and ZAPU and to reassure the white community after a period of political instability, Mugabe adopted a policy of reconciliation soon after independence (Stoneman and Cliffe 1989). ZAPU members, including Joshua Nkomo, were co-opted into the new government. However, the discovery of 'a large arms cache' on a farm belonging to ZAPU in 1982 sparked a 'near civil war' in Matabeleland and the Midlands (Blair 2002; Jackson 1994). Mugabe's government sent out the North Korean-

trained Fifth Brigade, known as Gukurahundi,¹⁸ to root out dissidents in Matabeleland, and this resulted in the massacre of many people from that region (Astrow 1983). A report on the disturbances in Matabeleland and parts of the Midlands claims that between 2,000 and 4,000 people were killed (CCJPZ and LRF 1997).

Joshua Nkomo escaped to Botswana, and then went into exile in Britain (Blair 2002). Some political exiles from the Ndebele ethnic group also fled into exile, uncertain of their future in the Shona-led government. Phumuzile, Mduduzi and Patricia are some of the respondents in this study who left the country and settled in Britain at this time. Phumuzile, together with her husband, fled from the violence in Matabeleland in 1985 and migrated to Britain to claim political asylum. Mduduzi left the country in 1984 because of 'political harassment and Mugabe's ill-treatment of his fellow Zimbabweans.' Similarly Patricia remarks: 'I came to England in 1986 because of Gukurahundi but I took it also as an opportunity to further my studies and to experience a different environment and culture.'

4.3.5 Migration of professionals

The fourth phase of migration relates to the period from 1990 to 1998 when predominantly skilled professionals left the country to seek better opportunities abroad. During the first decade after independence, Zimbabwe had a stable and prosperous economy and was labelled the 'breadbasket' of Southern Africa. In 1990, the government introduced the International Monetary Fund (IMF)/World

¹⁸ *Gukurahundi* is a Shona word meaning the early rains that sweep away the chaff before the spring rains.

Bank prescribed Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) designed to restore the economy to high growth. The programme brought severe hardships to the people and many professionals such as teachers, nurses and doctors adopted migration as a strategy (Chetsanga and Muchenje 2003; Chikanda 2006; Gaidzwana 1999; Tevera and Crush 2003).

ESAP recommended the liberalisation of the economy, the privatisations of state companies and the cutting of state subsidies. These measures resulted in the retrenchment of some workers and saw a rise in inflation. Thus, the period is marked by constant conflict between workers and their employers resulting in general strikes. As Potts (2006, 536) observes, during the 1990s 'urban livelihoods in Zimbabwe began to suffer a series of economic stresses, which accelerated in 1997 and then accelerated again, with the inception of fast-track land reform, from 2000.' The same period witnessed the rise in women involved in cross-border movements to and from South Africa and Botswana in search of employment and for purposes of trading, which enabled them to survive and sometimes prosper within the context of the market reforms (Muzvidziwa 2001; Nkau 2003).

Some of the respondents of this study, such as Rudo, Ndunduzo and Prosper, migrated to Britain during this period. Rudo was married, but is now divorced, and is a nurse graduate who has been living in the UK since 1998. Ndunduzo came to the UK in 1997, is in his late thirties, married with two children. He was a mechanical engineer in Zimbabwe but now runs the popular *gochi-gochi* as his source of income. Prosper came to Britain on a work permit to work in the telecommunications industry. As he explains, 'many Zimbabweans are here on work permits and of late they have been given residence status because of the level

of their education. I am well aware of many Zimbabweans who have been given the Highly Skilled Migrant status.’ Although Fidelis came on a scholarship to further his education, he changed his immigration status to the Highly Skilled migrant category.

4.3.6 The land question as generic to multiple crises

A brief examination of colonial policies on land, labour and resettlement has revealed that they were designed to serve racist ends. ‘The colonial administration deliberately and methodically institutionalized the exclusion of a group from resources that were rightfully theirs’ (Mwaniki 2004, 9). Soon after attaining independence, the new government embarked on land reforms intended to improve the welfare of the poor and the landless. The Land Reform and Resettlement Programme Phase I (LRRP I) ran from 1980 to 1997, and resulted in only a few people benefiting from it. As the government had correctly argued, the Lancaster House Agreement was a major constraint in the redistribution of land soon after independence. ‘The constitution stipulated that property rights could only be transferred on a willing-seller/willing-buyer basis. In other words, the Zimbabwe government could not appropriate land, mines, factories etc., unless the owners were interested in selling’ (Stoneman and Cliffe 1989; Weiner 1991, 57). However, in 1998 the government embarked on the LRRP II, which was characterised by a militant approach to resolving the land question.

Meanwhile, as the 2000 parliamentary election approached, the MDC rose as an organised and formidable political opponent to the ruling ZANU-PF party. Makumbe (2003, 16) argues that ‘the widespread support that the MDC was able to attract in a very short time frightened Mugabe and his party to such an extent

that they realised that the land issue, racism, violence and intimidation were the only effective weapons that could be used against political rivals, whom Mugabe referred to as “enemies of the state”.’ A point generally accepted by many people is that Mugabe ‘isolated white Zimbabweans—and anyone who sided with them—identifying them as the enemy, vestiges of a racist and separatist past in which blacks were exploited’ (Mwaniki 2004,7).

Summing up the essence of the Zimbabwe crises, Kagoro (2003) argues that it is a confluence of several colonial and post-independence experiences, among them: a violent and fraudulent process of colonisation and domination that dehumanised black people; hegemonic struggle for decolonisation that culminated in a largely symbolic independence devoid of material gain for the majority black population; the failure by the independence leadership to transform the repressive colonial state structure into a democratic institution; the dismal failure of IMF/World Bank structural adjustment policies; a corrupt, self-seeking and authoritarian political elite leading the state; a culture of intolerance and impunity that was inherited from the country’s colonial past (Kagoro 2003).

4.3.7 The great exodus: a nation on its feet

The fifth phase of migration began in 1999 and continues today as both black and white Zimbabweans escape multiple crises gripping the country. It is in this period that the term ‘diaspora’ begins to emerge among Zimbabweans abroad and in the homeland. The scale of the movement and the migration networks that emerged was enormous, as Zimbabweans used different routes to come into Britain. Zimbabwe’s land policy, political instability, industrial decline, growing

unemployment and repeated years of drought coalesced to spark an exodus of both skilled and unskilled, men and women into the diaspora.

It is estimated that three to four million Zimbabweans live in the diaspora. A Canadian civil society report estimates that three million Zimbabweans are living in South Africa, two million of whom had arrived since 2000. The report further claims that some 400,000 Zimbabweans are currently residing in Botswana, equivalent to nearly 25% of that country's population of close to 1,7 million (Anand et al. 2004). As mentioned in the Introduction, estimates suggest that there are more than 200,000 Zimbabweans in Britain. If all Zimbabweans who visited the UK during the period 1971–2006 did not return to the home country then 417,052 Zimbabweans would be in the UK (Chetsanga and Muchenje 2003; Home Office 2002; Home Office 2003; Home Office 2004; Home Office 2005; Home Office 2006; Pasura 2006). According to the UK census, there were 47,158 Zimbabweans in the country in 2001. The importance of these figures may not lie so much in what they reveal, but what they fail to reveal. The census is held once every ten years, hence it cannot capture or reflect rapid changes in international migration (Bilsborrow et al. 1997). Most of the Zimbabwean population dispersed from the country prior to, and after, the parliamentary and presidential elections in 2000 and 2002 respectively, thus, the probability of them being included in these statistics is low given that they may have arrived in the country during or after the census. Moreover, the majority of Zimbabweans in Britain are undocumented migrants, less likely to take part in a formal process like the census. As Bilsborrow et al. (1997, 52) argue, the degree of accuracy with which a census covers international migrants is lower 'if international migrants have a vested interest in avoiding being counted or in misreporting their migrant status.' The majority of

respondents in this study moved to Britain during the fifth phase of migration (see appendix 1). It is also interesting to note that in contemporary Zimbabwe, emigration has become a way of life—so much so that the International Organisation for Migration has started a campaign specifically to advise and help those considering migration (Pearce 2005).

4.4 Journeys to Britain

It is beyond the scope of this research to analyse all the routes and journeys taken by Zimbabweans as they entered Britain. However, it is possible to tease out general trends and patterns from people's migration stories and narratives. Much of the movement of Zimbabweans into Britain can be classified as being by one of the following means: the visitor route, the asylum route, the student route, the work-permit route and the dual nationality or ancestral route. Migration laws, institutional structures and border control procedures have been tightened in the US, EU countries and other immigration countries—as part of the broader efforts to control the mass influx of migrants and combat terrorism (IOM 2005). Measures to restrict entry into Britain have driven migrants and refugees to use more sophisticated routes and migrant networks to enter the country. Appendix 4 provides a timeline of the hostland's immigration policies designed to restrict entry into the country.

4.4.1 Visitor route

The post-1990 migration movements relied on networks established by migrants in earlier periods of migration, which are movements from the mid 1960s to the 1980s. The year 1990 marked the end of Zimbabwe's ten years post-independence

economic prosperity and heralded the dawn of economic and political chaos. Most respondents from the post-1990 migration movements acknowledged knowing a relative or a friend who has dual nationality or was in Britain at the time and who facilitated their entry into the country. For example, Phathisa migrated to the UK because she had ‘immediate and extended family members living here at the time.’

Steven is in his 30s, and runs an estate agent in a predominantly African and Asian community in the West Midlands. He came to the UK in 1998 with his wife on a visitor visa, and then changed it to a student visa, and then to a work permit. Equally, Steven explains, ‘during the liberation struggle so many Zimbabweans came and settled in this country. We have uncles who settled in this country since 1970s, so before we came to settle we came to visit, this makes it easy for me [to] come here rather than any other country.’ Hlangani is a refugee in his late thirties. He is married and has three children. Like other Zimbabwean men, he came on his own and left his family in Zimbabwe. It was only after being granted refugee status that he brought his family into Britain. Consider his example, ‘my uncle came here in 1976 through a UN scholarship and decided to settle here permanently. He is married and has two children. So my uncle was instrumental for me to come to the UK in 1999.’ Hence, earlier movements provided the impetus and networks upon which subsequent movements merge, and reinforced a sense of collective belonging to those living abroad.

4.4.2 Asylum route

In order to suppress the popularity of the MDC, the ZANU-PF government unleashed war veterans and the youth militia onto the general populace, white commercial farmers and MDC supporters, causing untold damage to the socio-

economic situation in Zimbabwe (McGregor 2002; Shaw 2003). Thus, Zimbabwe's increasingly repressive social circumstances, its increasing human rights abuses and its severely polarised political framework are crucial for understanding the context within which thousands of its people migrated to Britain and claimed political asylum. As Table 4.2 below shows, asylum and refugee statistics show a rise in the number of applications lodged from the year 1997 onwards, and this suggests that Zimbabweans had realised political asylum was one of the potential routes for entering Britain.

Table 4. 2 Zimbabwean asylum applications, those granted settlement and nurses registered with NMC in the UK, 1996–2006.

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	Total
A+	130	60	80	230	1,010	1,140	7,655	3,295	2,065	1,075	1,630	19,370
S*	360	345	405	435	955	1,040	3,530	3,675	3,765	4,520	2,545	21,575
N#	–	–	–	52	221	382	473	485	391	311	–	2,315

Sources: (Home Office 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006; NMC, 2004).

A+ = Asylum applications in the UK, excluding dependents.

S* = Zimbabweans granted settlement in the UK, excluding dependants.

N# =Zimbabwean nurses registered with NMC, UK.

In 2002, asylum applications from Zimbabwe surged to a record 7,655. The increase in applications led to new legislation in the UK, the Nationality Immigration and Asylum Act of 2002, and the tightening up of border controls (Home Office 2003). From 2003, more than three quarters of the applicants applied in the country (UK), as opposed to the port of entry. The decline in statistics with respect to the number of Zimbabwean nationals making asylum

applications from 2003 can be attributed to the new visa requirements introduced by the British government in November 2002 (Heath et al. 2004). Unsurprisingly, the rate of asylum application refusal increased after the UK government imposed visa restrictions on Zimbabweans intending to travel to the country.

Respondents used diverse strategies in order to migrate to Britain. Farai is a refugee and the former MDC spokesperson for the UK and Ireland, who worked as a journalist in Zimbabwe. As he explains:

A big number [of people] have moved out of Zimbabwe because of the practices of the present government especially those people who were very active in the political practices of Zimbabwe. I have been in contact with people that have lost their relatives, families, you see women who have lost their husbands.

In contrast, Fidelis considers that ‘the overriding reason why we are all here is purely economic. I have helped a lot [of] people fill applications for asylum but I believe there are very few Zimbabweans who made politically conscious decisions to come to the UK.’ Consider the example of Kudakwashe, a woman in her 30s, explaining how God worked miracles in her life:

I came to this country (UK) on a 6-month visa with the intention of working and making money quickly and then return home. I had the impression that it’s easy to get work and you don’t need papers.¹⁹ I was actually surprised to see that all employers wanted papers for me to work. But God worked miracles for me, I got the papers.

¹⁹ By ‘papers’ she is referring to being granted refugee status, enabling her to work and bring her family to Britain.

What Kudakwashe refers to as 'papers' means being granted a refugee status. The quotation suggests how the asylum route has also been used by people who had no experience of persecution but who were 'economic migrants'.

4.4.3 Student route

Simultaneously, a significant population of the Zimbabweans came to the UK as students. Fidelis had a college in the West Midlands and facilitated the entry of many Zimbabwean students into the country. Prior to 2002, it was possible for people who entered the country as visitors to switch to a different immigration category, for instance to the student category. Rudo was a journalist in Zimbabwe but when she came to the UK in 1998, she enrolled at a college and trained as a nurse. The availability of British government nursing bursaries until the end of 2002 attracted a number of Zimbabweans to join the nursing profession. Furthermore, it assured them of a job at the end of their course and the possibility of being granted a work permit.

Having arrived in the country as a visitor, Steven and his wife joined the nursing profession. As Steven describes, 'I then decided to go into nursing and I got a bursary together with my wife and we were getting £580 individually. This was more than enough for the basics.' A further example is Tapfumanei, who came to the UK in 1997 as a visitor and later enrolled at a college to study nursing. Tapfumanei has just completed his studies and works in a nursing home. He explains:

I was a schoolteacher for 8 months and because my elder brother was here I wanted to join him and further my education. We hoped as a family that I should

do access to dentistry and medicine. My brother was prepared to pay half the fees and we were going to apply for [the] remaining half of the fees from the British government. But things didn't work out as we planned, so I joined nursing because the British government was paying it.

While the quotation emphasises the student route taken by some respondents, it also highlights that some conceived migration as a family strategy. The student route illustrates how Zimbabweans diversified the means of entry into the country from the visitor route and the asylum route.

4.4.4 Work-permit route

Work permits and family reunion are also other key routes Zimbabweans have used to migrate to Britain. The increasing demand for labour in the service sectors in the UK, particularly in the health and education sectors, has led to the recruitment of nurses, carers and teachers from Zimbabwe. As McGregor (2006, 6) points out, 'from the late 1990s until 2002, private recruitment agencies supplying the British labour market with nurses, teachers and social workers had offices in Zimbabwe, and held periodic recruitment drives in public venues.' As a result of this, especially (but not exclusively) Zimbabwean women took the opportunity to start working in such sectors in the UK. Some of them were later joined by their husbands as dependent spouses. Bernard is one such example in this study, coming as the dependent spouse of a nurse on work permit

4.4.5 Dual nationality or ancestral route

The majority of white Zimbabweans entered the country either because they had dual nationality or through the ancestral route. As John explains, 'like everyone

else I left Zimbabwe to escape the hard times that Mugabe has brought on his own people. The political situation had become so bad that I decided to migrate to Britain because I have dual nationality.’ Similarly, Memory describes the reasons why she came to Britain via the ancestral route. She explains, ‘I was harassed many times because of the colour of my skin and was told jokingly that after Mugabe was finished with the whites they would come after us coloureds as well. Because my mother was of British origin, I came because of the ancestry connections.’ The majority of respondents who migrated to Britain before 1990 had dual nationality, and this includes black Zimbabweans as well.

4.5 Patterns of migration

As Castles and Miller (2003) argue, despite the diversity of migratory patterns that persists in new forms, with new flows developing in response to economic change, political struggles and violent conflicts, it is possible to identify certain general tendencies of international migration. Within the framework of the five phases of migration and the narratives that accompany them, some patterns of migration can be formulated for empirical examination.

4.5.1 Documented migrants

All of the respondents in this study arrived in Britain as documented migrants. Indeed, immigration statistics, narratives of journeys from the interviews as well as my extensive knowledge about Zimbabweans in Britain, suggest that most Zimbabweans in the country were documented migrants at their point of arrival. It may be observed that Zimbabweans’ routes to the UK were not through some kind of human trafficking or smuggling of migrants but through the airports. Farai explains:

I would say really at one point or another any Zimbabwean who is here is documented, it is known that he is here. If he is not known then that is the problem of authorities. To say that Zimbabweans sneaked into Britain is inaccurate [...]. There is no way in which we could have used the tunnel to come here.

However, as tighter visa restrictions were imposed in November 2002, some Zimbabweans entered the country using false Malawian and South African passports. Despite the distance between the two countries, Britain was an attraction to Zimbabweans because of the migrant networks already established by earlier migration movements; a feeling of being 'owed' emanating from Britain's colonial past; recruitment agencies targeting nurses, carers and teachers; and knowledge of the English language.

4.5.2 From documented migrants to undocumented migrants

Ten of the respondents who had arrived in the country as documented migrants had, at the time of the interview, moved to an undocumented status (see appendix 1). For example, Phathisa, Tendai and Vimbai come into this category. From the sample, only those who had arrived in Britain after 1997 were undocumented migrants. Chapter six explores the strategies used by undocumented migrants in order to participate in the labour market.

4.5.3 Asylum seekers and refugees

A significant pattern that emerges from the migration of Zimbabweans to Britain is the way it is located within the asylum and refugee route. As discussed in the section on the asylum route, it was only the imposition of visas in 2002 that

curtailed the exodus of Zimbabweans into the country. Ranger (2005, 411) explains that ‘it was no longer good enough to turn up at the airport, as nearly all the asylum-seekers had done, with a passport and a plane ticket.’ This shift from a permissive immigration policy to a control-oriented, restrictive policy led Zimbabweans to acquire South African, Malawian and Zambian passports to travel to the UK, since citizens of these countries are exempt from the visa restriction when travelling to the UK. Ironically, Zimbabweans had always socially constructed people from Zambia and Malawi as the ‘other’,²⁰ inferior (see Pasura 2003; Rutherford 2001). For nearly two years from January 2002 to November 2004, the UK government had a moratorium on returning people to Zimbabwe because the situation was considered volatile and dangerous (Home Office 2003). Wigan, as one of my research sites, provided access to asylum seekers and refugees, dispersed as part of the UK government’s dispersal policy.

4.5.4 Politicised dispersion

The arrival of people comprising the fifth phase of migration into Britain, made up of people possessing various immigration statuses, heralded the beginning of political activism in the diaspora, reacting to conditions in the homeland and in the hostland (see chapter five). For the first time, the Zimbabweans abroad participate in collective protests against the homeland government. Kennedy, a failed asylum seeker in his late 20s, has been living in the UK since 1999. He explains, ‘I was hounded by Mugabe’s lions while I was a teacher in Matebeleland. Being young, the war vets [veterans] thought I was an MDC supporter since I was always

²⁰ In the Zimbabwean public discourse Malawian, Zambian and Mozambican people are imagined and construed as inferior, unthinking, ‘the other’. My MA dissertation, *A Gendered Analysis of Land Reforms in Zimbabwe* discusses the social construction of Malawian farm workers in Zimbabwe.

reading independent newspapers and I never participated in ZANU activities.’ In the diaspora, Kennedy uses diaspora politics to publicise the political situation in the homeland and to legalise his immigration status. The Zimbabwe Vigil in London provides a space where Zimbabweans participate in public transnational diaspora politics.

4.5.5 Brain drain

The majority of respondents in this study were skilled professionals in the country of origin and 15 of them were educated to degree level. Chapter six interrogates the usefulness of cultural capital gained in the country of origin to respondents’ participation in the labour market. Some of the respondents (for example, Tapfumanei, Steven and Rudo) in the new diaspora had to retrain in the nursing or teaching professions to make their skills relevant in the new labour market, or as a strategy for gaining settlement.

It has been argued that some of the white Zimbabweans who fled the country in the late 1970 and early 1980s, fearing political instability and military call-up, were skilled professionals (Godwin 1993). A similar trend occurred in the mid-1990s when skilled migrants mainly from the black population moved out of the country seeking greener pastures. Drawing on data from a survey of Zimbabweans in the UK and South Africa, Bloch (2006, 68) argues that ‘the loss of its skilled labour force is a matter of great concern to Zimbabwe and has left shortages in some sectors, most notably health care and education.’ Although the majority of Zimbabweans migrated to South Africa and Botswana because of the close proximity of these two countries, some migrated to western countries.

4.5.6 Feminisation of migration

The institutionalisation of migration in the colonial era and Zimbabwean patriarchal traditions restricted women's mobility, however, these constraints have been undergoing transformation in the past two decades. From the 1990s, as Zimbabwe's economic fortunes took a downward turn, there has been an increase in cross-border travel for informal trade, dominated by Zimbabwean women going to South Africa and Botswana to sell items and to purchase goods in short supply for resale in Zimbabwe (Bloch 2005; Muzvidziwa 2001). Moreover, the increasing demand for nurses in the UK has led women to lead the journey, redefining patriarchal traditions as their husbands follow as trailing spouses or remained in the country. As Table 4.2 above shows, from 1998 to 2005 some 2,315 Zimbabwean nurses were registered as nurses in the UK. In 2002, Zimbabwe was the fourth country after the Philippines, India and South Africa to supply nurses to the UK (NMC 2004). However, it is important to point out that there are many unregistered Zimbabwean nurses working in care homes because of the nature of their immigration status. Although Table 4.2 does not disaggregate in terms of gender, nursing and teaching professions are socially constructed as feminine occupations.

4.5.7 Permanent migration

From 1996—2006, it possible to discern an emerging pattern of Zimbabwean migrants applying for permanent settlement in the country (see Table 4.2). The majority of people who fall into this category are those granted refugee status; white Zimbabweans coming to the end of their four-year Leave to Remain; and skilled migrant workers who have been in the country for five years. Tonderai,

Rutendo and Kudakwashe are some of the refugees who have applied for permanent settlement. Tonderai was among the first Zimbabweans to arrive in Wigan in 2000. He is married and has two children. He came to Britain alone and his family followed him later after he was granted refugee status. Rutendo is a qualified teacher who came to Britain in 2000 and has been granted refugee status. Similarly, Prosper, Fidelis and Rudo have moved from a work-permit visa to permanent stay.

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter points to a number of factors which have caused large-scale population movement and displacement from Zimbabwe, including the war of liberation, labour recruitment to South African goldmines, the Matebeleland massacre, the 'brain-drain' and the post-independence political and economic crises. The five phases of migration have demonstrated the different factors that compelled Zimbabweans to migrate to foreign territories. The different periods of migration occurred in different historical contexts, with earlier movements occurring under colonisation when the institutionalisation of migration was at the core of the settler state. The war of liberation and post-independence conflict in Matebeleland significantly shaped the contours of the movements. Phases of migration after 1990 were a response to the political and economic crises in the homeland and global opportunities abroad.

The chapter has pursued a historical framework that allowed for exploration of dispersion, taking notice of the different routes and journeys taken and how they relate to each other. The chapter delineates how Zimbabweans use diverse entry avenues such as visitor route, student route, work-permit route and ancestral route

to migrate to Britain. Some respondents entered Britain as visitors and some as asylum seekers. In addition, some respondents migrated as students, while others came on work permits or as dependents. Dual nationality or ancestral route was another avenue taken by some respondents.

The different routes and journeys taken into the diaspora coheres with Cohen (1997) who points to the multifarious factors that give rise to diasporic movement, hence the five diaspora types as victim, labour, trade, imperial and cultural. Whereas the Greek diaspora was formed through conquest and colonisation, the Jewish diaspora, African diaspora and Armenian diaspora ‘suffered collective trauma or catastrophe in the formation of their diasporas’ (Van Hear 1998, 47). Migration has often been seen as voluntary thus differentiated from diaspora, originally defined as the forced dispersal or displacement of a people from their homeland. As discussed in chapter two, some diaspora theorists suggest that the catastrophic origins of migrant groups are one of the core features in defining diaspora. This study departs from the Jewish-centred definition of diasporas that emphasises collective trauma and accepts movements spawned by force, the ubiquitous processes of globalisation and other individual choices as well.

Earlier international migration studies made a distinction between voluntary and involuntary migration, depicting refugees as the involuntary and labour migrants as the voluntary. However, as Henry and Mohan (2003) point out, the diversity of experiences which propel people to migrate means what is ‘forced’ and what is ‘voluntary’ is often blurred. Similarly, Castles (2003, 17) argues that ‘many migrants and asylum seekers have multiple reasons for mobility and it is impossible to completely separate economic and human rights motivations—

which is a challenge to the neat categories that bureaucracies seek to impose.’ Hence, migration both by force and choice are central in the formation of diasporas (Van Hear 1998).

The chapter has also identified diverse migration patterns, which will be taken up in more detail in subsequent chapters. These are the documented status of migrants who entered Britain; the shift from documented status to undocumented status; the emergence of transnational diaspora politics; the brain drain; the feminisation of migration; and the move towards permanent settlement. The development of the Zimbabwean diaspora is not a natural progression but historically, politically and economically situated within the global hierarchies of colonialism, globalisation and transnationalism.

Chapter 5: Transnational diaspora politics

5.1 Introduction

It has been observed that there is a relative 'lack of in-depth studies and comprehensive theoretical discussion of the political discussion of the diaspora phenomenon' (Sheffer 2003, 5; Wald and Williams 2006), with emphasis placed more on the social, economic and cultural aspects of ethno-national diasporas. This chapter attempts to make a modest contribution to the notion of diaspora politics by seeking to answer the following set of questions: To what extent, and in what ways, do the Zimbabweans in Britain participate in diaspora politics? How do the different conditions and contexts shape, alter and influence respondents' attitudes and participation in diaspora politics? What is the nature of transnational diaspora politics? What is the relationship between the diaspora and the homeland government?

The essence of this chapter is to understand the scale and character of diaspora politics, and to develop a classification for comprehending the mode and degrees of participation in the politics of the diaspora. This classification is achieved by showing the manner in which the diaspora is expressed and performed in particular settings; the lived reality of the diaspora as it relates to diaspora politics. In addition, the chapter analyses the factors that influence respondents' participation or lack of it in diaspora politics. The chapter is divided into five sections. The first section addresses the conceptual ambiguity of the term diaspora politics and transnational politics. Based on empirical, analytical and theoretical insights, the second section then develops a four-fold classification of diaspora members, which

is applied in the analyses of diaspora politics. The categorisation helps to explore the characteristics of members and motivations for participation. From this classification, the aim is to identify and analyse the contributions each group make towards the development of democratic space in Zimbabwe. The third section provides detailed ethnographic data on the dynamics and characteristics of some of the multi-sited research sites and their contribution in the production and reproduction of diaspora politics. The comparative dimension of multi-sited ethnography allows for the exploration of how different conditions and contexts affect, alter and influence respondents' attitudes to diaspora politics. The fourth section explores the relationship between the diaspora and the homeland government. The last section analyses the nature of diaspora politics from the perspectives of respondents, exploring the reasons why Zimbabweans abroad engage in diaspora politics.

5.2 Transnational diaspora politics

As pointed out in the literature review chapter, diaspora and transnationalism are seen as challenging the hegemony of nation-states. However, several scholars point to 'the complicated relationship between dispersed ethnic groups, the states in which they live (host states), and the actions of governments that might make some historical or cultural claim to represent them (kin states)' (King and Melvin 1999, 108; Sheffer 2003). The triadic relationship is sometimes complex, uneasy and even contradictory. On the one hand, authors highlight the significant role migrants and refugee play in democratisation of their countries of origin or even as significant actors in global politics (Østergaard-Nielsen 2003a; Sheffer 1986). On the other hand, diasporas may also serve as political conduits for conflict in the

country of origin (Fair 2005; Shain and Barth 2003). Diaspora groups, such as the Tamils, Kurds, Sikhs and Afghans, have fermented or created political and legal conflicts when they become involved in the politics of their homeland (Sheffer 1986). Hence, what is the relationship between the Zimbabwean diaspora and the homeland government?

I have discussed the extent of conceptual slippage and lack of theoretical clarity over the terms diaspora and transnationalism (see chapter two). Similarly, the difference between diaspora politics and transnational politics is rather vague. Østergaard-Nielsen (2003b, 762) attempts to clarify the terms homeland politics and diaspora politics. Homeland politics is defined as ‘migrants and refugees’ political activities pertaining to the domestic or foreign policy of the homeland.’ Furthermore, diaspora politics is considered as a subset of homeland politics referring ‘to those groups that are barred from direct participation in the political system of their homeland—or who do not even have a homeland political regime of their own to support/oppose...’ (Østergaard-Nielsen 2003b, 763). However, Østergaard-Nielsen acknowledges that the term diaspora politics now overlaps with homeland politics.

Østergaard-Nielsen’s conception of diaspora politics is narrow and needs to be broadened to include not only political activities pertaining to the domestic or foreign policy of the homeland but also political activities that advance migrants’ rights in the country of settlement. It is perhaps for this reason that Sheffer (2003, 20) describes diaspora politics as an attempt ‘to explain why, how, and to what extent ethno-national diasporas have become significant collective forces in national, trans-state, and global politics.’ Some have even argued that diaspora

functions on four levels in politics: ‘the domestic level in a host country; the regional level; the trans-state level; and the level of the entire dispersed group in other countries’ (Bercovitch 2007, 21).

Similarly, Baubock (2003, 700) suggests that political transnationalism should be expanded from the examination of migrants’ political involvement with their countries of origin and include ‘how migration impacts on conceptions of membership and rights in the sending as well as the receiving polity.’ As the review chapter has shown, diasporas are an example of transnational communities (Tololyan 1991; Vertovec 1999), being one of ‘the oldest transnational formations’ (Drzewiecka and Halualani 2002, 346). Notwithstanding the differentiation between core and broad transnationalism, all diasporic activities can be regarded as transnationalist only if the diasporic group share a sense of belonging to a homeland they are not living in. It therefore makes sense to see why Hagel and Peretz (2005, 472) refer to ‘transnational diaspora politics.’ As this chapter will illustrate, the Zimbabwean diaspora engage in sustained diaspora politics and in that case, they may be defined as engaging in transnational politics as well.

5.3 Diaspora politics: a four-fold classification of diaspora members

The literature on transnationalism emphasises the regularity and intensity of cross-border activities initiated by migrants across nation states, yet it remains vague and unclear about the actual members involved, their motivations and characteristics. This is one gap in literature that this chapter attempts to address. The term Zimbabwean diaspora may imply the existence of a unified and formal community

with clearly discernable structures. However, an attempt to essentialise the Zimbabwean diaspora is counter-factual. The Zimbabwean diaspora is hugely diverse as race, gender, ethnicity, immigration status and political affiliation are some of the features that clearly fragment people into multiple divisions. In order to understand and make sense of the characteristics of the Zimbabwean diaspora, the thesis devises a malleable four-fold classification of diaspora members. The categorisation is mainly a heuristic tool to study diaspora politics and shed light on how widespread diaspora politics is among the population as a whole. The classification of diaspora members builds on the empirical investigation of this study and a critique of earlier formulations by other scholars (Shain and Barth 2003; Sheffer 2003).

Sheffer (2003, 100) classifies diaspora members as ‘core members’, ‘members by choice’, ‘marginal members’ and ‘dormant members’ in an attempt to bridge the ‘conceptual difficulties in identifying various categories of people in migrant ethnic groups who have experienced varying degrees of acculturation, integration and assimilation in their host countries.’ Sheffer’s formulation is premised on an assumption that members who are fully ‘assimilated’ in the host country are less likely to partake in diaspora politics. So, in contrast, core members are defined as ‘those persons born into the ethnic nation, who avidly maintain their identity, who openly identify as members of their diasporic entity, and who are ready to act on behalf of their community and homeland, and who are recognised as such by the community itself and by its host society’ (Sheffer 2003, 100). Such a description of core members is based on a static and bounded notion of ethnicity. Brubaker (2005, 11) considers Sheffer’s categorisation of diaspora members as based on ‘ancestry’, which he correctly describes as ‘a poor proxy for membership in a

diaspora.’ For example, different ethnicities within the Zimbabwean diaspora make it impossible to talk of core members as described by Sheffer without escaping the charge of racism. Hence, the fact of being born within an ethnic group cannot be used as a classifying tool about the manner in which members participate in diaspora politics.

The same criticism applies to Sheffer’s (2003, 100) description of ‘members by choice’, who ‘are descendents of mixed families, converts and so forth, who fully participate in the life of the diaspora.’ The mere fact of being born outside an ethnic group automatically excludes some individuals from being core members of the diaspora. On the face of it, it looks as though ‘members by choice’ are always on the periphery of the group because of their race, ethnic group and other primordial factors.

Shain and Barth (2003) classify diaspora members as core members, passive members and silent members providing an interesting contrast. They defined core members as

The organizing elites, intensively active in diasporic affairs and in a position to appeal for mobilization of the larger diaspora. Passive members are likely to be available for mobilization when the active leadership calls upon them. Silent members are a larger pool of people who are generally uninvolved in diasporic affairs (in the discursive and political life of its institutions), but who may mobilize in times of crisis (Shain and Barth 2003, 452).

Shain and Barth’s (2003) categorisation is largely descriptive and lacks the analytic edge to tell us why particular diaspora members are in the core, passive or silent category. Besides, the term ‘core members’ seems to suggest a group that is

indispensable for the diaspora's survival. More so, it is not clear why passive members are always available for mobilisation. Who are these people? In which social class do they belong? What inhibits them from being part of the core group? In an attempt to answer these and other questions, and on the basis of empirical, analytical and theoretical insights, the thesis has drawn up a four-fold classification of diaspora members as follows: visible members, epistemic members, dormant members and silent members.

These categories have been based particularly on diasporic Zimbabweans' degree of participation or lack of it in diaspora politics or diasporic activities. The extent to which Zimbabweans abroad engage in political and/ diasporic activities, whether in the private or public sphere, defines the group to which they belong. Members do not 'naturally' belong to a category but identifies with the group that serves their interests. Each classification, though sharing common characteristics, is organised through different and often conflicting motivations. However, due to the fragmented and mobile nature of the diaspora, the categories are subject to change as internal conflicts and external pressure make the semblance of unity a temporary feature. Moreover, as Waldinger and Fitzgerald (2004, 1177) remind us, 'migrants do not make their communities alone: states and state politics shape the options for migrant and ethnic trans-state social action.' In formulating the classification, I considered how institutions in the hostland and homelands might influence the category to which members belong.

Although the classification focuses on the role of the diaspora in political activism, it can also be applied to a range of social, cultural and religious activities. What is important is that the classification serves as a conceptual tool used to understand

the make-up of the Zimbabwean diaspora. However, it is imperative to know that these are ‘virtual boundaries’ (Sheffer 2003, 12) and should not be regarded as rigid categorisations; it is possible for diaspora members to belong simultaneously to two different groups.

Visible members of the diaspora, as the word suggests, are those that are intensively active in political and diasporic life, whether in the public or private domain. Visible members initiate and participate in diasporic activities that seek to improve their lives in the hostland and homeland. For example, within the Zimbabwean diaspora in the UK, there is the Zimbabwe Vigil, Zimbabwe Association,²¹ MDC members and Diaspora Vote Action Group.²² Other examples of active members of the diaspora are the Zimbabwe Exiles Forum, and Zvakwana/Sokwanele²³ (Enough is enough). Some of the respondents who belong to the visible category are Kennedy, Sihle, Vimbai, Richard, Grace, Tapfumanei, Farai and David. The majority of them are Vigil members.

The second category comprises the epistemic members. The term epistemic comes from the Greek word *episteme*, which means ‘to know’, knowledge. Epistemic members of the Zimbabweans diaspora are sometimes referred to as ‘cyberspace activists,’ or ‘desktop activists’. These are mainly intellectuals engaging in constant cyberspace debates about the political and economic future of Zimbabwe. What distinguish epistemic members from visible members of the diaspora is their cultural capital and the methodology they use to participate in diaspora politics.

²¹ Zimbabwe Association is one of the many Zimbabwean refugee and asylum seekers group in Britain.

²² This group appealed to the Zimbabwean Supreme Court to allow Zimbabweans abroad the right to vote in homeland elections. The appeal was rejected.

²³ The organisation’s identity is shrouded in secrecy but it keeps Zimbabweans informed about breaking news, including civic campaigns and public meetings and events. They have an activist wing that engages in non-violent civic actions.

Epistemic members have amassed cultural capital in the country of origin or in the country of destination in the form of advanced educational qualifications and social status. They tend to reduce grassroots political engagement and focus on cyberspace discussions. Epistemic members rarely take part in demonstrations and protests, but make use of online discussion groups, internet radio debates and conferences as a method of harnessing and influencing public opinion on different political, social and cultural issues relating to the hostland and homeland.

Epistemic members of the Zimbabwean diaspora have built networks of political activism across borders, with those in Britain, South Africa, the US and in the homeland engaging in robust debates on how to guide the country out of its political and economic crises. They participate in web-based discussions in a number of Zimbabwean online newspapers like the www.newzimbabwe.com, www.zimonline.co.za, www.thezimbabwean.co.uk, www.zimdaily.com, www.changezimbabwe.com and London-based Zimbabwean internet radio stations such as Afrosounds, Zimnetradio, Nehandaradio, Zonetradio and SW Radio Africa.²⁴ The frequency and intensity of these debates has led to the development of an 'epistemic community' that actively discusses the politics of the homeland.

Actions of epistemic members of the diaspora have caused great anxiety within the homeland government. For example, epistemic members launched a campaign called 'Fair Deal',²⁵ through the Zimdaily website, targeting children of ZANU-PF

²⁴ SW Radio Africa broadcasts political reporting and commentary, as well as phone-in programs featuring Zimbabwe residents in Britain. Most of its participants have been banned from returning to Zimbabwe.

²⁵The following is the campaign message behind Fair Deal: 'Millions of Zimbabweans are going without basic commodities, while Zanu-PF official's kids enjoy western lifestyle. Help us send Mugabe's crooks [sic] kids to their evil fathers.'

ministers and prominent party activists studying at western universities and claiming they should be deported from those countries back to Zimbabwe. As a result of the campaign, Australia deported eight Zimbabwean students whose parents had links with ZANU-PF and the US followed suit (Guma 2007). The jamming of SW Radio Africa by the Zimbabwean government, with the expertise of the Chinese, suggests the influence of epistemic members, and is an attempt by the homeland government to control the cyberspace (NewZimbabwe 2006). Equally, the passing of the Interception of Communications Act [Chapter 11: 20] of 2006 by the homeland government, authorising the interception of all phone, internet and mail communications, provides a further example. Some of the epistemic members are Steven, Fidelis, Prosper, Rudo and Mduduzi. Comparing visible members and epistemic members, it may be observed that both members regularly participate in diaspora politics and attempt to control the public space of diaspora politics in terms of what are authentic and legitimate narratives about influencing homeland politics. Whereas visible members dominate the physical space, in contrast, epistemic members seek to control cyberspace.

On the verge of the visible are dormant members, the third category of diasporic Zimbabweans. As the word suggests, these members are largely inactive, which is caused by several factors, such as fear of the Central Intelligence Organisation (CIO), fear of the Home Office because of their undocumented status, the need to do extra shifts to increase earnings and a general disillusionment about the prolonged political and economic crisis in the country of origin. Hence, dormant members only occasionally participate in diaspora politics. Dormant members correlate to what Shain and Barth (2003) have called the passive members of the diaspora. However, the word passive denotes an unresponsive attitude to a

common cause. As for the dormant members of the Zimbabwean diaspora, they may remain committed and wired into political and economic events in the country of origin but internal and external factors restrict them from full participation. For example, the uncertain future of undocumented migrants creates a fundamental insecurity in everyday life and it drives such migrants to political marginalisation. Some of the dormant members are Mthokhozisi, Tigere, Phumuzile, Tonderai, Hlangani, Margaret and Rutendo.

The last category is that of silent members. Shain and Barth (2003, 452) referred to silent members as ‘a larger pool of people who are generally uninvolved in diasporic affairs (in the discursive and political life of its institutions), but who may mobilise in times of crisis.’ Yet the Zimbabwean diaspora in Britain silent members are not a large pool of people, but rather a minority of people who are not involved in diaspora politics because of their desire to disown and distance themselves from their Zimbabwean background and conjure an alternative belonging, for example, Rhodesians,²⁶ Zimbabwe-South Africans and Zimbabwe-Jamaicans.²⁷ Moreover, silent members can also be those who have fully integrated into the country of settlement. It may be argued that silent members distance themselves from their national identity but not necessarily from diaspora politics. However, taking this position leaves the question open as to what kind of politics are they engaged in. Is it diaspora politics, politics in the country of settlement or global politics? Diaspora, by its very nature, presupposes a homeland whether physical or imagined. By suppressing or forging an alternative national

²⁶ Some white Zimbabweans identify themselves as Rhodesians. At Zimfest, a charity annual event organised by WeZimbabwe in London, some white Zimbabweans were selling Rhodesians flags and artefacts as if to suggest they are still attached to a non-existent entity.

²⁷ Some black Zimbabweans would prefer to be identified as South Africans or Jamaicans for a number of reasons, among them the fear of deportation and Zimbabwe’s bad reputation in the British media.

identity, silent members exist on the periphery of the diaspora. Consequently, silent members may slip into non-members through assimilation, integration and creolisation. If this happens on a large scale, then it may be possible to talk about the unmaking of a diaspora.

Some white Zimbabweans who emigrated just prior to and after the country's independence have maintained a Rhodesian identity, and phrases like 'Rhodesians never die' (Godwin 1993) aptly describes them. Rhodesians have an uneasy relationship with the majority of the Zimbabwean diaspora as they disassociate themselves from anything Zimbabwean. The following are two of their websites: <http://www.rhodesia.com>; <http://www.rhodesia.org>. What is interesting is that the group defines their bonding with a non-existent entity, that is, Rhodesia.

Equally, one of the most contentious themes in this study is the number of black Zimbabweans who disown their Zimbabwean identity and forge new ones. Some respondents who belong to the silent category are Nozipho, Tendai, Phathisa, Kudakwashe and Blessing. Silent members are unlikely to participate in diasporic activities or develop a commitment to diaspora politics, as they regard themselves as non-Zimbabweans. For the majority of black silent members, this is a strategic suppression, contingent on external factors both in the hostland and in the homeland. While visible members and epistemic members are passionate to identify themselves as Zimbabweans and maintaining strong ties to the homeland, silent members suppress their Zimbabwean identity and define themselves in some other way, creating deterritorialised identities.

Having developed this schematic representation of Zimbabwean diasporic members, the next section describes and analyses detailed ethnographic data from

the Zimbabwe Vigil, the *gochi-gochi* in Birmingham, a pub in Coventry and the Zimbabwean community in Wigan, in order to illustrate how the classification can help us understand the nature of diaspora politics.

5.4 The dynamics and characteristics of research sites and their contribution to diasporic politics

In order to understand the character of diasporas and migrant communities, it is important to study how the internal dynamics of the group is enmeshed with local contexts and structural forces which influence the formation and de-formation of diasporic groups. The following paragraphs provide ethnographic detail from the research sites. The account shows the diverse geography of Zimbabweans in Britain, and how local conditions shape their experiences and contribute to the formation of multifarious diasporic identities.

5.4.1 The Zimbabwe Vigil²⁸

The Vigil, which demonstrates outside the Zimbabwe Embassy in central London every Saturday, is the epitome of opposition politics in the diaspora. Huge banners of close to ten metres in diameter enhance the visibility of the Vigil to passersby, with Zimbabwean flags tied to the makeshift tent. On the banners and posters were these words: ‘Mbeki blood is on your hands’; ‘Wake up world before Zimbabwe becomes another Sudan’; ‘No to Mugabe no to starvation’; ‘Arrest Mugabe for torture’; ‘End murder, rape, and torture’. There was a big poster with the words: ‘Wanted’ in bold and Mugabe’s photo underneath it. In the middle of the poster was written: ‘Robert Mugabe Since 2000 for the Deaths of’ followed by a list of

²⁸ Similar protest rallies are also held in Bristol and Edinburgh.

178 people allegedly killed by Mugabe during the political violence that gripped the country after the 2000 parliamentary elections. Another eye-catching feature was a dartboard with Robert Mugabe's face on it with these words: 'Take a shot at Mugabe'. In front of the makeshift tent was a placard with Zimbabwean notes and bearer cheques²⁹ attached to it, with an explanation of what the Zimbabwean dollar is worth compared to the British pound.

All Vigil members were asked to sign in the attendance register placed on an improvised table. In addition, passers-by were solicited to sign a petition to the former UN secretary general, Kofi Annan, citing human rights abuses committed by Robert Mugabe. Again on the table were some pamphlets chronicling the political and economic state Zimbabwe is experiencing; copies of The Zimbabwean paper; and a bowl for donations from passers-by. The Vigil coordinators were also selling MDC T-shirts for £15, an open palm (MDC symbol) with the words 'Join the MDC Today' for £2 and green ribbons inscribed 'Make Mugabe history' for £1.

The singing of mainly liberation war songs that have been re-cycled to suit the collective anti-Mugabe conviction embodies the Vigil. The singing, mainly in Shona or Ndebele, was accompanied by drumming and dancing and this adds a fascinating dimension to the Vigil demonstrations. It was always eye-catching in that, for most of the time, white Zimbabweans were beating the drums. Members of the Vigil cheered *Murehwa*³⁰ to beat the drums harder. With the cold winter and

²⁹ In order to deal with hyper-inflation, which was beyond 100,000% as of February 2008, the Zimbabwean government introduced bearer cheques which are valid for a limited period of time though they can be used as money.

³⁰ *Murehwa* is the name of a place in Zimbabwe but it has also come to mean a white man who has come to identify himself with black Zimbabweans.

a cool breeze from the Thames River, beating drums was not an easy thing; it required skill and hardened palms.

Drawing on an in-depth study of Turkish Cypriots in Britain and highlighting the interrelated aspects of migrants' transnational political participation, Østergaard-Nielsen (2003a, 683) argues that 'Turkish Cypriot transnational lobbying in Britain highlights how lack of access to the host-country political establishment limits migrants' influence on processes of democratisation in their country of origin.' In contrast, Zimbabweans in Britain have the support of refugee organisations and the political establishment. The Vigil, the Refugee Council and the Zimbabwe Association have been at the forefront of those lobbying the UK government to soften its attitude towards Zimbabwean asylum seekers (Refugee Council 2005). A number of British MPs have visited the Vigil in support of the demonstrations including Kate Hoey Labour MP, Lembit Opik Liberal Democrat MP, Michael Ancram Conservative MP and Lord Triesman. The Vigil has also campaigned for the imposition of smart sanctions³¹ on Robert Mugabe and some of his close associates. However, in as much as they have managed to lobby the UK government for support they have alienated themselves from the Zimbabwean government.

The Vigil advances particular normative agendas consistent with global politics. From the banners and posters displayed, it can be seen that Vigil members invoke universalised themes of human rights abuses, starvation, rule of law and democracy to appeal to the sympathy of the British public and entice the

³¹ It is important to note that sanctions were not solely an outcome of the Vigil's activities, in fact, they predate it. The EU and the US government imposed targeted sanctions on most ruling Zanu PF government members to put pressure on them to restore the rule of law and stop human rights abuses.

international community to intervene in the homeland. Consequently, the UK government and the EU have placed Zimbabwe on their political agenda by imposing targeted sanctions on the government of Zimbabwe. In response to the accusations of human rights abuses, the Zimbabwean government counters with claims of neo-colonialism, thus framing alternative moral justifications (Phimister and Raftopoulos 2004).

There are multiple external and internal forces operating within and outside the Vigil that influence members' participation. The dominating fear among members of the Vigil is not so much the undocumented status of most of its members but the suspicion that CIO members may have infiltrated into the UK. In all of my visits, Vigil coordinators would ask members to pose for pictures. Unsurprisingly, members of the Vigil took turns to grab 'The Zimbabwean' newspaper to see if their photos make them recognizable to those in the country of origin. Apart from fear of the CIO, the Home Office remains a nagging worry for many. Within the Vigil itself, there are those who have the information, those who direct, those who are listened to and the rest who come for advice. Thus, within the visible category, it is possible to identify sub-categories. Some members are visible for pragmatic reasons. However, it happens that asylum seekers, when granted settlement, tend to become dormant members.

As Itzigsohn (2000, 1146) observes, 'transnational politics reflects the social mobility of certain groups of immigrants abroad, creating new elites.' The Vigil coordinators have an instrumental role; the power itself rests within the MDC leadership in the UK. The MDC leadership occupies a powerful role as a gatekeeper within the Vigil, in particular to asylum seekers. They supply letters to

authenticate the validity of Vigil members, seeking or intending to seek political asylum. Whether through choice or necessity, many women come to the Vigil to have their immigration problems sorted out. This explains the importance of the weekly register of members including asylum seekers who come to the Vigil 'to be seen and counted,' as Kennedy expresses it.

Similarly, the role played by white Zimbabweans needs to be problematised. White Zimbabweans, conspicuously absent from grassroots and national political activities in the homeland,³² have taken the initiative of coordinating and organizing Vigil activities. The beating of drums makes them African, perhaps to distinguish themselves from other white people in Britain. There are former white farmers, like John, who have lost their farms and hope a change of government would be in their interests. Unlike Vimbai, Kennedy and Sihle, who are undocumented migrants, John has dual nationality. Kennedy problematises the role played by white Zimbabweans at the Vigil. He explains, 'if you go to the Vigil, you will discover that the majority of every white person there has had himself a farm taken over by the government or a relative has been affected. That's why they come to the Vigil, it's personal, for them it's personal not national.' Kennedy's quotation highlights the racial tensions within the diaspora, even around white Zimbabweans, who are genuine political activists. Kennedy's observation feed into a particular way of looking at the Zimbabwean crises, and borrows heavily from Mugabe's understanding of the problem in the country as being between Britain and Zimbabwe, whites and blacks.

³² There are exceptions like MDC MPs David Coltart, Roy Bennet, Trudy Stevenson and others but they are a minority. However, some white Zimbabweans funded the MDC in the early stages of its formation and only to retreat back when Mugabe used it to categorise the MDC as propping the interests of white farmers.

The dividing line between the Vigil activists and the MDC branch was rather thin, if not difficult to disentangle. The Vigil coordinators sometimes wore MDC T-shirts and sell MDC regalia, including its open palm symbol. For Vigil members, the assumption is that freedom comes through and with the MDC. The MDC has always appealed for financial assistance from those living in the diaspora. Unlike my other research sites, such as the *gochi-gochi*, the pub and diaspora churches, where members have divergent political views and opinions, the Vigil members have a homogeneous response to crises in the homeland, and perceive the opposition party, MDC, as the only legitimate and democratic force capable of changing the political and economic fortunes of Zimbabwe. Is the Vigil representative of the attitude of Zimbabweans in the diaspora in relation to the homeland? This is contested as demonstrated in the next analytic descriptions of the *gochi-gochi* in Birmingham and the pub in Coventry.

5.4.2 *Gochi-gochi*

Gochi-gochi may be well known among Zimbabweans in Birmingham and beyond but there is an underground quality to it in that those outside of the community may not be aware of. The Jamaican pub has a dual purpose, serving to both introduce and conceal *gochi-gochi*. It introduces Zimbabweans to the black community and the wider public, as well as shielding them from the risk of possible immigration raids by the Home Office. Ndunduzo does not have to operate with a license, as his activities are construed to be part of the Jamaican pub. Furthermore, he does not pay any rental to the Jamaican owner, as his mainly Zimbabwean customers buy beer in the pub.

Many Zimbabwean people frequent *gochi-gochi*. It was here that I met Farai. He is among the few people banned from returning to Zimbabwe after setting up a radio station³³ in London that broadcast to Zimbabwe. The main reason why Zimbabweans across all ethnic and gender boundaries frequent *gochi-gochi* is a desire for food, music and social interaction reminiscent of the homeland. The place has also become a venue for birthday parties and baby showers. Patrons of *gochi-gochi* also come from diverse African backgrounds. As Ndunduzo explains, ‘everyone has that longing for the homeland. People would imagine themselves roasting meat kwaMereki, kwaMushandirapamwe, kuMabvuku.’³⁴ This place acts as a memory for those places back home.’ *Gochi-gochis* are ubiquitous in many UK cities. At the *gochi-gochi*, Ndunduzo organises the celebration of Zimbabwe’s Independence Day, but the majority of people do not see the need to participate in such an event. He explains:

Normally we hold Independence Day celebrations; however some tend to personalise it saying we are from MDC and we aren’t free. I say no to this because we were free in 1980 and that is why we are celebrating our freedom from colonialists.

What is interesting, from Ndunduzo’s quotation, is how *gochi-gochi*, unlike the Vigil, offers a platform to discuss different political viewpoints. Thus, *gochi-gochi* was also a platform for open discussion about homeland politics and I met ZANU-PF members Prosper and Tigere there. Prosper came to the UK in 1998 to work in the telecommunications industry. He explains why he supports ZANU-PF:

³³ SW Radio Africa

³⁴ These are popular male spaces for barbecuing in Zimbabwe.

I am pro ZANU-PF because I believe that if anybody wants to make change in Zimbabwe it has to be within ZANU-PF. To be honest with you, people are saying Mugabe made good thing by making the unity accord with PF-ZAPU. That's not true, the hero is Nkomo. He came and joined ZANU-PF, and made changes within. In Zimbabwe, if you want to change things you change things in ZANU-PF and not in any political party, forget it. Right now, what is the opposition doing? They are fighting within, some for Tsvangirai and others for Ncube.

Hence, *gochi-gochi* provides a platform for exchanging different views on political, social and cultural issues within the diaspora.

5.4.3 The pub

Politics is the favourite subject in the Zimbabwean pub in Coventry; you hear people arguing about MDC and ZANU-PF; the state of the economy in Zimbabwe; the current exchange rate; and immigration raids. Contributing to the discussion about which political party can solve Zimbabwe's problems, Steven explains, 'both ZANU-PF and MDC are hopeless. What we want in Zimbabwe is none of them; we want professional people who have a heart for the people.' Meanwhile, some of the patrons of the pub praised Mugabe for 'correctly articulating the problem of land issue.'

The pub is also a place of much gossip; that someone has bought a house back home; that someone has changed his phone card; internet chat rooms; the stressful life of work in the UK. In the background, the disc jockey plays African music, mainly from Zimbabwe and South Africa.

To the right side of the counter is an American pool table, a game Zimbabweans are not used to by any means and you could see it by the way they struggled to play. Mostly the people who come to this pub are young men in their early twenties to early forties. One has to wear baggy jeans, dreadlocks and earrings; American black artists seem to have inspired these black Zimbabweans. Nevertheless, you rarely find white or Asian people in the pub; despite the fact that the pub is located in an Asian-dominated location.

Gochi-gochi and the pub provide an opportunity for members to celebrate ‘the glory days in the homeland’; inescapably members engage in political questions about the cause of their predicament in the country of destination.

5.4.4 Wigan

Zimbabweans in Wigan, just like other refugees from the Congo, are the visible markers of Britain’s asylum system. They embody the wrath of the local people as they are viewed as strangers who have come to ‘dilute’ a largely white community and stretch out its resources. Disturbing stories of racist attacks and abuse that the Zimbabwean community and other refugee communities have had to endure in this part of the country has forced them to form a closely bonded community. In the homeland, ethnicity tends to divide Zimbabweans but in Wigan, it unites them. The unique characteristic of Zimbabweans in Wigan is group solidarity, despite internal differences based on ethnicity, gender and class.

Nothing in the respondents’ Wigan homes would give away that they come from Zimbabwe. There were no symbols of their place of origin hanging on the walls. Upon close inquiry, I realised that artefacts like Zimbabwean T-shirts, national

flags, or anything that points to being Zimbabwean were hidden. However, the respondents listened to music from the homeland, borrowed each other's homeland soap operas, drama and video cassettes. The ones which were popular were recording of the Mukadota family and Gringo.³⁵ Music videos of Zimbabwean gospel artists were also among some of the treasured symbols. In fact, a market for these homeland products has been created, with some Zimbabweans making extra copies and selling them for £5.

On the one hand, the dominant white community constructs Zimbabweans in Wigan as outsiders and 'aliens'. On the other hand, the local Methodist church gives them a sense of belonging and the welcome any new immigrants would need. Against this experience of rejection and being unwanted, ultimately the Zimbabwean community perceives race as a defining characteristic with regard to their lack of social and political participation in diasporic activities.

None of the respondents in Wigan expressed an interest in the subject of politics. Asked if they participate in diaspora politics Hlangani exclaimed, 'No, no!' although he had heard about the Vigil in London and MDC meetings in Manchester. Similarly, Tonderai laughs and says 'we don't even think about it.' Kudakwashe said she has 'no time for it.' Based on my research findings, the life of ethnic minorities in Wigan can best be summarised as a triangular routine, that is, home, work and the local church, because of the fear of racial violence on the streets. The majority of respondents in Wigan are refugees with documented status, yet they want to remain underground because of harsh external conditions. By contrast, undocumented migrants in Birmingham have a sense of belonging to

³⁵ Mukadota family and Gringo are some of Zimbabwe's popular television dramas of the early 1980s and late 1990s respectively.

the community. In relation to other research sites, Wigan has peculiar conditions of isolation and racism that has made participation in diasporic politics dangerous.

For all of my respondents in Wigan, ethnic differences counted for nothing but the mere fact of being a Zimbabwean. People coming from different ethnic groups in the homeland were united in the diaspora. Hence, the formulation of diasporic identity in Wigan results from the shedding of pre-migration primordial bonds while experiences of racial discrimination in the hostland pull the group together.

One of the central debates raised in the literature review is about collective identity. Brubaker (2005, 6) refers to the tension in the diaspora literature between 'boundary-maintenance and boundary-erosion.' While scholars influenced by postmodernism have criticised those who define diaspora in relation to the homeland, evidence from the Vigil, *gochi-gochi*, the pub and Wigan suggests that Zimbabweans in the diaspora maintain distinctive identities based on connections to the homeland. For example, the construction of a 'distinct political identity' at the Vigil is not just an epiphenomenon of the hostland's tight control on immigration but also largely due to social actors' orientation towards democratising their homeland. To place *gochi-gochi* and the pub in parallel with the Vigil, it can be observed that the Vigil has drawn boundaries around those who can participate in its activities; they have to be anti-ZANU-PF. All of my research participants from the Vigil supported the opposition MDC. While the Vigil is a formal protest organisation with a defined structure, the *gochi-gochi* and the pub provide an informal setting for migrants to interact without the anxiety of being noticed or recorded. In so doing, *gochi-gochi* and the pub provide a richer and more diverse environment in which to study the lived realities of the diaspora. The *gochi-*

gochi and the pub organise around cultural symbols of food, music, beer, language and memory in developing a cultural diasporic identity. The location of *gochi-gochi* within the backyard of a Jamaican pub may suggest the possibility of syncretic diasporic identities developing in the future. The next section considers the nature and purpose of diaspora politics.

5.5 The nature of transnational diaspora politics

The majority of the respondents in this study consider diaspora politics as augmenting political parties in the homeland rather than conceiving themselves as a government-in-exile. Zimbabwean political networks in the diaspora, whatever their form and content, are appendages of political parties or civic organisations in the country of origin.

5.5.1 A diaspora political party?

What are the constraints in forming a diaspora opposition party as an alternative to MDC and ZANU-PF? Forming a new political party in the diaspora would be counter productive. Blessing is an undocumented migrant who works in a nursing home. She explains, ‘back home they would say it is a British party. You will be accused of selling out the country. Just like what the present MDC is being perceived by ZANU-PF, that they are puppets of the British.’ Farai concurs that forming a political party in the diaspora would fall into the hands of Robert Mugabe who would describe it ‘as a party being sent by the British people to try and overthrow a legitimate government that has brought independence to the people.’ Most people in Zimbabwe would consider that political party as starting the process of re-colonisation. Steven is a University of Zimbabwe graduate in

Economics and a prime example of an epistemic member of the diaspora. I met Steven in the Coventry pub. He explains: ‘If you are going to launch a party in America or Britain, you have lost already before you even started. They will discredit you and say you were given money from Westminster.’

From the above quotations, it can be observed that political activism in the diaspora is premised on offering support to the opposition MDC or ZANU-PF, rather than creating a new political party. Interestingly, some respondents portray the MDC as advancing Western interests. Although the majority of respondents consider ZANU-PF as the cause of the crises in the homeland, they do not consider forming a diasporan political party would help. Given the above facts, what sort of activities do diaspora members engage with as part of their political activism?

5.5.2 Mobilising funds for MDC

Some of the respondents, especially MDC supporters, regard the mobilisation of funds for the party in the homeland as taking part in the struggle. For Blessing, the only viable diaspora political participation is ‘the MDC method in which people here are the ones who are sponsoring it back home’. Kennedy agrees that diaspora politics should be about mobilising ‘funds for the party (MDC) instead of trying to splinter political groups, that is what Mugabe wants [...] ZANU-PF wants that, it thrives on divide and rule’. Tapfumanezi acknowledges that political meetings in the diaspora are only part of the struggle but ‘the real political theatre is in Zimbabwe.’ As Hagel and Peretz (2005, 473) argue, ‘diasporas can try to directly influence homeland politics from abroad, e.g. by financing specific causes or spreading their vision of national identity and politics.’

In contrast, Prosper and Tigere complained that the entire MDC leadership in the UK are just 'opportunists' using donor funds for their personal use. According to Propser, 'Washington Ali, the MDC chairman in the UK has three nightclubs and Brian has nursing agencies and whatnot. From donor funds.' Indeed, the Political Parties Finance Act of 2001 made it a criminal offence for a political party in Zimbabwe to rely on donor funds from abroad. The Act also stipulated that parties with at least five percent of total votes from the most recent election would qualify for state funding.

5.5.3 Diaspora as an alternative democratic space

Some of the respondents argued that diaspora politics can also be understood as an alternative democratic space for the MDC to circumvent the harsh laws³⁶ in the homeland that restrict them from fully functioning. Therefore, people in diaspora would highlight the problems and issues Zimbabwe is facing within the international community. As Sihle puts it, 'the lack of a democratic space to manoeuvre as a political party' means diaspora politics is more important. According to John, diaspora politics has the potential of working well because 'there are no barriers to stop you from expressing your opinion and to make a difference on the international front which is very important.' The Vigil demonstration outside the Zimbabwe Embassy embodies the alternative democratic space in the hostland. More so, it gives the diasporans the opportunity of reaching out to a wider international audience.

³⁶ The Public Order and Security Act of 2002 require political parties to apply to the police, loyal to Mugabe, for permission to hold meetings.

5.5.4 Diaspora: Internationalising the Zimbabwean crisis

Putting Zimbabwe in the global context of preventing world conflicts, Farai explains what the diaspora has achieved so far:

The international community's most powerful blocks like the UN, IMF, and EU have come to condemn the Zimbabwean government without a gun being fired in the country. You know in Africa many problems have come to the eyes of the western world after people have died, after a genocide. Look at what happened in Rwanda, what happened in Uganda, what happened in Darfur [...] But in Zimbabwe before things have reached that point, Zimbabweans were able to articulate the troubles and suppressions that they were experiencing. I give credit to people in diaspora for doing that.

This may be tantamount to what Smith (2003, 726) termed the 'transnational or diasporic public sphere', a political system within which members of the 'diaspora operate, inside and outside the state.' The amount of space devoted to the Zimbabwean crises in the international newspapers and media demonstrates how both visible and epistemic members of the Zimbabweans diaspora use their positions outside the nation state to influence what is happening within. Some diaspora members regard internationalising the Zimbabwean crises as participation in diaspora politics. For the majority of the respondents, the international community should intervene in the Zimbabwean situation. As Steven explains,

Zimbabwe shouldered a lot of things when South Africa was under apartheid. We were bombed, attacked, sacrificed a lot of trade because we had to help. The international community must help us in replacing the present government with a well-vetted government, which makes an oath to be accountable to the people.

Similarly, Vimbai remarks that ‘if other countries can’t help Zimbabwe, then that man (Mugabe) can destroy Zimbabwe [...] if we look around no one can be there for us except Thabo Mbeki. Probably he can be there for us.’ An interesting point to note from both quotations is how South Africa, and not Britain, is regarded as the key to resolving problems in Zimbabwe. However, the only limitation with that approach is that no actions has been taken yet save for targeted sanctions by the EU and the US against Mugabe and most of his ministers. Mbeki’s policy of ‘quiet diplomacy’ (Phimister and Raftopoulos 2004) means the Zimbabwean crises remain unresolved.

5.5.5 Political activism as instrumental to settlement

From the multi-sited ethnographic observations and interview material, I would argue that the tendency to organise and develop political consciousness among Zimbabweans in Britain has to be understood at least in part as a mechanism or strategy for survival in the face of restrictive immigration policies in Britain. The lack of legal status is apparently a catalyst, albeit not the only one, for the development of political activism among the Zimbabwean diaspora. As Kennedy explains, ‘we have certain individuals who were known ZANU-PF members but when they come here they want to claim asylum but at the same time we have genuine MDC members who are genuine political activists.’ Another example comes from Tigere, who makes an estimation of the number of Zimbabwean undocumented migrants in the country: ‘three quarters of people in England don’t have papers and these people have claimed political asylum, no matter [whether] they are ZANU-PF or MDC.’ Precious occasionally participates at the Vigil because she has observed that political gatherings in the UK are being ‘used by

opportunists to generate money for themselves or to gain papers to reside here permanently.’

One gendered view of migrants’ political orientation and engagement argues that Latin American immigrant men in the United States tend to have a stronger political perspective and are more likely than women to become involved in transnational political activities. As Guarnizo et al. (2003, 1216) put it, ‘with the loss of status in the receiving country, men tend to form, participate in and lead ethnic organisations whose interests and focus is in the country.’ However, contrary to studies in the US, the majority of Zimbabwean women in Britain participate in diaspora politics on a regular basis. The Zimbabwe Vigil is a good example of a public space dominated by women engaged in visible political activism. When I asked one member of the Vigil whom I had known before why Zimbabweans were coming to the Vigil, he said to me, ‘It’s all about papers; once they get them they disappear.’

The first hurdle for recent migrants is to ‘sort out’ their immigration status to enable them to participate in the political economy of the country of destination. As Tigere explains, ‘politics it’s a way of getting life out of it [...] we want people whom we left at home to earn a living.’ Thus some people who participate in diaspora politics ‘do it with the knowledge that they have no impact back home but they do it so that they may have a living here’ (Rutendo). For the majority of black Zimbabweans, there is a close relationship between a person’s immigration status and their participation in political activism. The majority of people who participate in diaspora politics are asylum seekers and refugees.

5.5.6 The limits of diaspora politics

Many Zimbabweans abroad have to decide between using their time for political activism and using it to engage in paid work in order to send remittances to their loved ones back home. Patricia considers diaspora politics as having ‘very little’ impact on the political landscape in Zimbabwe ‘because the majority of the people are more interested in earning money and therefore politics becomes a secondary issue.’ The fact that the world knows about the multiple crises in Zimbabwe and has done nothing has convinced David that any kind of protest abroad will change nothing. Moreover, diaspora members ‘are so fragmented and focused with the struggles of life here’ (Richard). Farai has observed that ‘people have a torrid time to balance going to work and fulfilling the political and social thing.’ Tapfumanei acknowledged that ‘many Zimbabweans who are here are economic migrants. We are here to earn the pound in order to send home to our families. We have no time to sit down and organise these events.’ Given the fact that the majority of Zimbabweans in the UK have become the breadwinners of their families in the homeland, engaging in visible diaspora politics is left for a minority. In most cases, diaspora politics is a means to permanent settlement in the UK.

Farai explains the reason why the majority of Zimbabwe’s labour migrants are not participating in the visible politics of the diaspora.

Another problem that we have is that of professionals. You know if someone is a professional, which is a replica of our culture back home, they wouldn’t participate in politics. Imagine in 1980, professionals concentrated in going to school and doing their work and who was voting? The peasants who were on the ground. We only realise that the peasant has the voting power when this affected us and that’s when most professionals try to get into politics. And as soon as they

went out of Zimbabwe and came over here, what happens now, they have their work and their problems are solved and (they) don't worry about going back home

What is important from the quotation is that those who migrated to the UK for the purposes of work, that is, labour migrants, are disinterested in engaging in diaspora politics. As Portes et al. (1999, 226) note, 'labour immigrants seldom engaged in this kind of transnational politics full time, but they provided the money and moral support to keep the cause alive at home.'

When one puts diaspora politics and liberation war politics in parallel, there are significant points for comparison. As Patricia put it, 'political mobilisation abroad of yesteryear (during the Ndabaningi Sithole and Joshua Nkomo and Mugabe era) was more effective because these guys were dedicated to a cause and they were selfless.' Similarly, Prosper thinks the reason why the liberation war politics succeeded was that people had a cause to fight but for diaspora politics 'there is nothing except to say we don't want Mugabe.'

But how does the diaspora relate to the homeland government? Is it one dimensional, whereby the diaspora influences the nation state but not vice-versa?

These are some of the questions that are addressed in the next section.

5.6 Diaspora-homeland nexus

Diaspora politics serve as a platform to show the uneven relationship that exists between the diaspora and the homeland. From the year 2000, the Zimbabwean government's attitude towards its diaspora was clearly discernible. The diaspora was treated as anti-ZANU-PF and unpatriotic. Mugabe, driven by a narrow

nationalist ideology, led an onslaught, attacking the West for their neo-imperial ambition. The Citizenship of Zimbabwe Amendment Act of 2003 prohibited dual citizenship. Any person in possession of dual citizenship had to renounce his or her foreign citizenship, in order to retain their Zimbabwean citizenship. Although the Act targeted some 80,000 white Zimbabweans whom the government perceived as MDC supporters, it affected some black Zimbabweans in this study as well, such as Mthokozisi.

At the same time, in 2004, the government of Zimbabwe initiated *ad hoc* policies and practices to secure remittances from its diaspora. The Governor of the Reserve Bank, Gideon Gono travelled to the UK, the US and Australia encouraging the diaspora to send money through Homelink.³⁷ Furthermore, the government launched the Diaspora Housing Scheme, which encouraged diasporans to buy houses through the country's Reserve Bank (see chapter eight). The government's initiatives can be conceived as an effort to redefine its relationship with its diaspora. The moves led to high expectations in the diaspora that Zimbabweans abroad may be allowed to vote in the 2005 parliamentary and presidential elections. Indeed, when the government rejected any moves to allow its diaspora to vote, the Diaspora Vote Action Group petitioned the Supreme Court to force the government to allow them the right to vote (Maphosa 2005). The Supreme Court, however, ruled in favour of the government.

Two different positions can thus be discerned from the government's attitude. On the one hand, it looks to its diaspora as a source of capital in terms of remittances. On the other, the diaspora is looked upon as a group of unpatriotic citizens

³⁷ Homelink was the term coined by the government, representing an amalgamation of official money transfer agencies.

contaminated by western democracies. My respondents were all well aware of this. For example, Grace, who operated a Safari Guide in Zimbabwe which was taken over by the government during the Fast Track land reform and who came to the UK together with her husband in the year 2000, regards participation in diaspora politics as problematic because ‘the government at large presents those of us who do speak out as traitors sympathetic to the West and enemies of the state.’ Equally, Mduduzi explains his fear of participating in diaspora politics ‘because there are a lot more government agents here in [the] UK.’ The above quotations highlight the need to rethink what has become a truism in diaspora and transnational studies that diaspora communities transcend nation states.

Certainly, there is pessimism about the prospects of effecting political change in the homeland. As Bernard puts it, ‘to tell you the truth, I don’t think it will make a difference. We may groom each other but we just have to wait until the old man dies.’³⁸ Judging from the people he interacts with daily, Ndunduzo felt ‘they don’t even have the mentality’ to actively involve themselves in politics let alone form a political party. When asked about his role in diaspora politics, Phathisa said he is ‘disillusioned about political parties in Zimbabwe.’ The MDC has not put forward any tangible policies that would help the country out of its bad situation. Furthermore, the infighting in the opposition party compounds the confusion. Steven agrees that ‘opposition parties are fighting each other instead of fighting ZANU-PF.’ Tendai, who is not against ZANU-PF per se ‘because the ideology³⁹ behind Robert Mugabe is very right but the timing is wrong,’ regards the MDC as a ‘puppet of western governments’, as do Phathisa and Prosper. Tigere described

³⁸ ‘Old man’ was an indirect reference to Zimbabwean president Robert Mugabe.

³⁹ Tendai was talking about the acquisition of land from white farmers for resettlement.

Mugabe as ‘a good leader’ and Tsvangirai as ‘a puppet of white people who will sell our country back to the white man.’

On the 12th October 2005, the MDC National Executive disagreed on whether or not to participate in senate elections and this resulted in the formation of two antagonistic groups. On the one hand, there was an anti-senate and Shona-dominated MDC led by Morgan Tsvangirai. On the other hand, there was a pro-senate and Ndebele-dominated MDC led by Professor Welshman Ncube. Later, Arthur Mutambara became its leader. In the diaspora, the two formations of the MDC emerged with the anti-senate MDC led by Morgan Tsvangirai commanding strong grassroots support.

Political activism in the diaspora groups lacks coordination on a wide scale, with the exception of the Vigil, and worse still, racial and tribal politics dominate the discussions. Richard is a white Zimbabwean and has been in the UK for five years, having emigrated from Zimbabwe to the UK with his partner on an ancestral visa. He was a public relations consultant in Zimbabwe, and now works in academic administration at a local university. He thinks diaspora politics would work if it were better co-ordinated and targeted and ‘if the racial and tribal politics were actively seen to be purged.’

Itzigsohn (2000, 1127) describes immigrant-based transnationalism as occurring when ‘immigrants create social and political linkages with their country of origin, establishing institutions that transcend the political boundaries of the sending and receiving countries...’. As this study illustrates, the fear of government intelligence operatives infiltrating diaspora organisations and determining the behaviour of diaspora members, a constant theme among all of the research

participants' narratives, shows how the nation state remains a significant actor in diaspora politics. For the Zimbabwean diaspora, the homeland government remains an invisible actor in diaspora politics. During my empirical research at the Vigil, some participants initially expressed fears that I might be a government agent.⁴⁰

5.7 Conclusion

The chapter developed the four-fold classification of the Zimbabwean diaspora as visible members, epistemic members, dormant members and silent members. The categorisation has been used as a heuristic device to enable us to understand the characteristics of social actors in diaspora politics and their mode of participation. The majority of Zimbabweans in the diaspora participate differently in diaspora politics. It is, therefore, useful to conceive of the Zimbabwean diaspora as a social construction is built on multiple points of identification, encompassing the different members of the diaspora.

Guarnizo et al. (2003, 1239) have researched political transnationalism among Salvadoran, Dominican and Colombian migrants in the United States and note that 'it is not the least educated, more marginal, or more recent arrivals who are most prone to retain ties with their home country politics' but the educated and those who have acquired US citizenship. My findings suggest a more complex picture about the degree of involvement in diaspora politics. The majority of visible members were asylum seekers, marginal in relation to their immigration status, who participated regularly in diaspora politics. However, the presence of those

⁴⁰ They feared I worked as a government agent for the Zimbabwean government or for the UK Home Office.

with dual nationality (white Zimbabweans) and those granted refugee status means that immigration status on its own was not a sufficient condition for respondents to engage in diaspora politics. Epistemic members, using human and social capital acquired both in the homeland and hostland, add an interesting dimension to diaspora politics. Totally against conventional ways of participating in politics, 'cyber diaspora politics' (Ong 2003, 82) provides a new innovative way of engaging in diaspora politics, perhaps least appreciated in earlier studies of migrants' political transnationalism. The advances in modern technology and communication facilities such as the internet, email, faxes, discussion groups and online forums provide an opportunity for diasporas to confront oppressive homeland governments which rely on physical violence and oppressive laws to limit democratic spaces in their countries.

This chapter has suggested that the majority of respondents developed an interest in diaspora politics for pragmatic reasons, not for politics in itself. For instance, on gaining settlement, visible members displayed the tendency to become dormant. In addition, the chapter has illustrated how most Zimbabweans in the diaspora are more worried about sending remittances and 'sorting out' their immigration status than engaging in visible political mobilisation abroad. Equally, the fear of the CIO and the Home Office are some of the external pressures that dissuade Zimbabweans from participating in visible diaspora politics. I have argued that the construction of a 'distinct political identity' at the Vigil is not just an epiphenomenon of the hostland's tight control on immigration but also largely to social actors' orientation towards democratising their homeland. Unlike the Vigil, *gochi-gochi* and the pub are organised around cultural symbols of food, music, beer, language and memory, fostering an open platform for political discussion.

Wigan's peculiar conditions of isolation and racism have made participation in diasporic politics dangerous for respondents.

Transnational diaspora politics is defined variously as giving financial support to the MDC; as an alternative democratic space from the shrinking and repressive conditions in the homeland; as internationalising the Zimbabwean crisis and as an avenue for permanent settlement. In essence, diaspora politics is not about being a government-in-exile.

The chapter has revealed the homeland government's contradictory attitude to its diaspora; it simultaneously condemns and co-opts them. On the one hand, the government condemns its diaspora as unpatriotic citizens who are corrupted by western democracies. On the other hand, the homeland government co-opts its diaspora to send remittances for it to survive difficult economic conditions. For the majority of the respondents, fear of being perceived as 'puppets of the West' and siding with neo-colonialists, means they do not consider forming a political party in the diaspora. Moreover, the relationship between the diaspora and the homeland is not unidirectional, with the diaspora exerting its influence on the homeland and vice versa.

Chapter 6: Living on the margins of the labour market

6.1 Introduction

Referring to the diaspora, Mugabe said, ‘they are letting the country down by going to England where they are looked down on and given dirty menial jobs, they scratch the backs of old people in homes in England’ (Anonymous 2006). This chapter aims to examine the social mobility of migrants in the hostland by investigating their participation in the labour market and addressing Mugabe’s claim about low status work. The previous chapter explored the diaspora-homeland relationship in terms of transnational diaspora politics. However, Wahlbeck (2002) cautions against the danger of studying diaspora as a social organisation with a preoccupation with ‘migrant communities’ and their relationship to their ‘homelands’, disregarding how social structures in the hostland shape majority-minority relations. This chapter avoids the criticism of privileging the homeland in defining diaspora, while ignoring the manifestations and expressions of diaspora in places of settlement by exploring the participation of migrants in the labour market.

This chapter explores the role played by human capital, social capital, immigration status, ethnicity, gender and other structural factors in migrants’ participation in paid work. It offers a nuanced analysis of both documented and undocumented migrants’ experiences. More substantially, this chapter seeks to provide answers to the following questions: In what ways do human capital, social capital, immigration status, ethnicity and gender configure the participation of Zimbabwean migrants in paid work? Are undocumented migrants passive victims

in a labour market that constructs them as 'other'? How can the concentration of Zimbabwean migrants in certain sectors of the labour market be explained?

The chapter begins by examining theoretical discussions about the integration of migrants in western labour markets, and then explores the participation of ethnic minorities in the UK labour market. The second section provides the pre- and post-migration characteristics of respondents in relation to the labour market. The third section discusses competing explanations as to why skilled migrants are living on the margins of the labour market, by investigating their experiences of care work, institutional discrimination and everyday racism in the workplace. The section analyses the social mobility of migrants in the hostland, and the impact of working in 'feminised' occupations for migrants' diasporic identity.

6.2 Theorising migrants in western labour markets

In this transnational and diasporic age, the question of how migrants integrate into the labour market in destination countries has intensified. Many economic and sociological theories have been put forward to explain the position of migrants in western labour markets. As Heath (2001) explains, the economics literature uses the concept of individual human capital, with its basis on education and length of experience in the labour markets, to explain earning differentials. A further distinction is made between human capital which is specific to the hostland, human capital which is specific to the homeland, and human capital which is equally productive in both countries. The dominant argument has been that 'human capital acquired at home may not be fully transferable to the host county...[however] with increasing time of residence in the host country, migrants invest in country-specific human capital of the receiving country and adapt their

stock of human capital acquired in the home country' (Zimmermann 2005, 429). However, the main critique of the human capital theory is that 'there is no room in this micro level approach for informal training or for the role of institutional factors, discrimination and other factors that lead to imperfections in the labour market' (Iredale 2001, 8).

Hence, the sociological literature has also pointed to less quantifiable variables such as social capital and discrimination as contributing to the position of migrants in the labour market. Social capital theorists Coleman (1988), Putnam (2000) and Bourdieu (1997) consider social capital as a resource, although with different functions. 'For Coleman, social capital refers to resources available to individuals and families to achieve social mobility, for Putnam it is seen as an endowment for civil society and important for economic growth and establishing democratic institutions and for Bourdieu it is about how power and inequalities are reproduced in social networks' (Dwyer et al. 2006, 4). In explaining social capital, Putnam (2000) differentiates between 'bridging' and 'bonding' social capital. Whereas bridging social capital consists of networks that connect the members of a given social group with the hostland society, bonding social capital links members of the social group with each other. As Portes argues, '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. To possess social capital, a person must be related to others, and it is those others, not himself, who are the actual source of his or her advantage' (1998, 7).

Some suggests that the mix of capital migrants arrive with, and subsequently accumulate, shapes the degree of integration and participation in the hostland's

labour market. Based on a field study of Asian immigrants in the greater Los Angeles area, Nee and Sanders (2001, 386) argue that ‘the social, financial, and human-cultural capital of immigrant families predict the sorting of immigrants into various labour market trajectories.’ These theories and concepts provide a starting point to analyse Zimbabwean migrants’ labour market experiences in Britain. However, they privilege the supply of labour, rather than the demand. Most of the respondents in this study came into the country within the context of the growing demand for a flexible labour force in the country, particularly in sectors such as social care. Thus, it is important to look at the global care chain literature.

6.2.1 Global care chain

The decline of the manufacturing sector in Britain from the 1970s and ‘the consequent growth of employment in the service industries has affected both the nature and distribution of waged labour’ (McDowell 2004, 48). As a consequence of ‘deindustrialisation’, Brush (1999, 162) argues that it is possible to discern two occupational categories, namely, ‘high-tech’ and ‘high-touch’ work. On the one hand, ‘high-tech’ occupations are those based on exchanges of knowledge and information, and tend to give the worker a higher status. On the other hand, the ‘high-touch’ occupations or ‘people’s services’ are generally performed by the unskilled and semi-skilled and socially constructed as feminised work. McDowell argues that in both high-tech and high-touch occupations ‘the emotions and bodies of both the providers and consumers of goods and services are also a key part of the exchange between employees and customers’ (2004, 47). It has been suggested that the nature of the new economy increases the demand for migrant workers, who are flexible, part-time, agency-based and usually paid low wages.

Hochschild (2000, 131) defines the global care chain as the 'series of personal links between people across the globe based on the paid or unpaid work of caring.' In most cases, migrant women's time, energy and love is extracted from their countries in the south and consumed in countries in the north by other women and their children. Examining the relationship between globalisation, care and migration with reference to the 'global care chain' analysis, Yeates (2004, 79) argues that the concept of the global care chain in 'its present application to migrant domestic care workers must be broadened in order that its potential may be fully realized.' As Yeates (2004) suggests, the concept should be expanded from its narrow focus on cleaners and nannies to include nurses, care assistants and sex workers. Informed by the global care chain literature, McGregor examines the narratives of Zimbabwean women and men working as carers in the UK and points to 'the stress and deskilling [of] most Zimbabwean care workers [...] the strain of working in strongly feminised and racialised workplaces, and the insecurities and abuse produced by informality, including 'tied' and other forms of labour exploitation' (2007, 801). This chapter goes beyond analysing the 'extraction of emotional resources' (Hochschild 2003, 27) from migrant women by considering the prevalence of migrant men in care work. Moreover, the chapter explores the social mobility of migrants in the hostland. However, first, it is important to understand how other ethnic minorities have fared in Britain's labour market, to provide a comparative perspective.

6.2.2 Ethnic minorities and the labour market in Britain

The ethnic minority population of the UK has grown from 74,000 people in 1951 to 4.6 million in 2001 (Owen 2006). Citing various scholars, Virdee (2006)

observes that in the 1960s and 1970s, racialised minority groups found themselves located overwhelmingly at the bottom of the British occupational structure, thus being conceived in sociological studies as an underclass or a racialised class fraction. As Carmichael and Woods (2000, 71; Owen 2006) argue, since the 1950s and 1960s, ethnic minorities 'experience higher rates of unemployment and tend to be under-represented in higher paid, non-manual occupations [as compared to whites, thus they can] be said to pay an ethnic penalty in the competition for jobs.' Moreover, more than three decades since Britain passed legislation to combat racial discrimination, studies have noted that 'Britain's non-white ethnic minorities still appear to face substantial amounts of discrimination in the labour market' (Blackaby et al. 1999, 1).

Modood et al. (1997, 342) delineate three categories of ethnic minorities: the most advantaged, that is East African Asian and Chinese; the less disadvantaged namely Caribbean and Indian; and the most disadvantaged these being Bangladeshi and Pakistani. The absence of black Africans from the three ethnic minorities categories, as developed by Modood et al. (1997), is conspicuous. Meanwhile, Virdee (2006) criticises Modood et al. (1997) for de-emphasising the significance of 'race' and reifying the acquisition of human capital when trying to understand the changing employment profile of the different racialised minority groups. The possession of human capital specific to the hostland is considered as the primary drive to the social mobility of migrants. As Virdee (2006, 605) argues, 'the increase in Asian self-employment represents working-class accommodation to the inferior conditions of employment available under neo-liberal modernity rather than evidence of upward social mobility as current orthodoxy claims.' Similarly, Clark and Drinkwater (1998) argue that the over-representation of ethnic

minorities in self-employment can be seen as a rational response to discrimination in the labour market and also as a way to take advantage of specific group characteristics which enhance the rewards available from entrepreneurship.

Berthoud uses eleven years of Labour Force Survey data to try to understand the labour market participation of ethnic minorities in Britain, confirming earlier conclusions that 'ethnic minorities as a whole have been reported to be twice as likely to be unemployed as white people' (2000, 389). However, the study points to gaps between the experiences of different minority groups. Berthoud points out that while the experience of Indian and Chinese minorities provides some grounds for optimism, the labour market experiences for Africans was 'most disappointing [...] in very much the same net position as Caribbeans' (2000, 412). Moreover, while in terms of educational qualifications Africans as a group were a little more advantaged than Indians, their labour market position was considerably worse. Berthoud concludes by saying 'Africans are the least-studied major ethnic group in Britain [...] and until Africans' experiences have been investigated in more depth, the wider implications of their employment disadvantage remain unclear' (2000, 412). This research offers a modest contribution to such an investigation.

6.3 Educational and migration characteristics of respondents

As Table 6.1 below illustrates, all the respondents of this study have obtained secondary education and 15 of them were educated to degree level in the homeland. Since secondary education in Zimbabwe is conducted in English, respondents possess the 'language capital' and human capital in the sense of educational qualifications and experience in the country of origin. Similarly, several scholars (Bloch 2006; Mbiba 2005; McGregor 2007) categorise

Zimbabweans in Britain as highly educated and belonging to middle and upper class families in the homeland. Within the US context, Borjas (1987, 551) has long considered migrants to be ‘a “select” group, and that the selection mechanism somehow sends the most able and the most ambitious persons in any country of origin to the United States.’

Table 6. 1 Educational characteristics of respondents

Highest Educational Qualifications (Zimbabwe)	Respondents
None	0
Secondary education	6
Tertiary Education	12
University degree	10
Post-grad qualification	5

Research conducted by the Immigration Research and Statistics Service of the Home Office between November 2002 and February 2003, exploring the skills and qualifications of refugees in the United Kingdom, establishes that

Respondents originating from Zimbabwe indicated that they were highly skilled. The majority had received a high level of education, with over 90 per cent having gained at least one qualification. The majority were working before they left for the UK, of whom a third were in professional occupations. Almost all could read and write in their own language and had good English language skills (Kirk 2004, 21).

Following the human capital migration literature, one might expect the Zimbabwean diaspora to transfer their skills over time, if not immediately, and enjoy a strong position in the labour market in Britain. However, as the paragraphs

below will show, migration has resulted in the depreciation of their cultural capital and the majority of them experience deskilling.

As Table 6.2 below illustrates, the majority of respondents are clustered in service sector occupations, working as nurses, social workers and carers, while some men work in warehouses. The same pattern emerges for the second jobs held by the majority of respondents.

Table 6. 2 Occupational classifications⁴¹ of respondents

Number of respondents	Sectors of primary employment ⁴²
10	Personal service occupations, e.g. carers
5	Elementary occupations, e.g. order pickers
6	Professional occupations, e.g. nursing
3	Process, plant and machine operatives
1	Managers and senior officials
1	Administrative and secretarial occupations
1	Skilled trade occupations
3	Self-employed, e.g. Ndunduzo
3	Unemployed, e.g. Vimbai
	Sectors of 'second job' employment
8	Personal service occupations
4	Elementary occupations
4	Professional occupations
5	Sales and customer service occupations
2	Process, plant and machine operatives
1	Administrative and secretarial occupations
9	Not having a second job

⁴¹ The categorization of employment follows the UK government's Standard Occupational Classification (Office for National Statistics, 2000).

⁴² As the majority of respondents had more than one job, labour market characteristics are divided between the main and alternative sectors of employment.

Heath (2001) suggests that the degree of ‘cultural distance’ between migrants and the hostland is one of the possible explanations for the disadvantage of migrants in the labour market. Yet Zimbabwe’s position as a former British colony means the cultural difference thesis is not solid enough. So why are Zimbabweans employed in narrow range, semi-routine and ‘high-touch’ occupations, when one takes into account their human and social capitals?

6.4 Explaining the social mobility of migrants

What explanation can be given for the concentration of the majority of Zimbabwean migrants in certain sectors of the labour market? The following section compares and contrasts the social mobility of migrants in the hostland by paying attention to immigration status, human capital, social capital, gender and ethnicity.

6.4.1 Invisible workers: Undocumented migrants

It has been argued that refugees, when compared with labour migrants, are less likely to possess the human capital that suits the hostland, because the motivations for migration are different. Thus, refugees are more likely to experience a lower occupational status in the hostland until they have invested in knowledge and skills specific to the hostland (Rooth and Ekberg 2006). Ten of the respondents (see appendix 1) in this study are undocumented migrants, and so they face individual and structural constraints in the labour market, as well as a manifestation of territorial, organisational and conceptual borders that define the migrant as ‘other.’ Geddes defines territorial borders as

those sites at which the sovereign capacity to include or exclude from the state territory are exercised. Organisational borders are those of institutions such as the labour market, welfare state and citizenship. Conceptual borders comprise more nebulous but no less important ideas about who “belongs” and the basis for belonging to some given political community (2005, 324).

This study has principally identified three ways to become an undocumented migrant, which apply to Zimbabweans in Britain: overstaying, forged documents and/or having one’s asylum case rejected and then ‘disappearing’. As this chapter will argue, even if Britain’s immigration policies make it hard for undocumented migrants to find work and earn a living, the majority of them circumvent the laws and enter paid employment, in part through powerful migrant networks.

All undocumented respondents in this study narrated the reality of living on the margins of the law, making themselves invisible. Although it is possible to distinguish conceptually between documented and undocumented migrant workers, in reality, migrants may shuttle between different migration statuses, as the example of Phathisa demonstrates. She explains: ‘I have gone through a lot of phases to just try and do anything that works. I moved from being legal to underground and now I am trying to legalise my status. You have to try lots of things and now it is costing me.’ What is salient in the story is that it is shared by many Zimbabweans. Many, like Phathisa, have come on a visitor’s visa and when the visa expires, they claim political asylum. It is by no means accidental that claiming political asylum is conceived as an immigration strategy developed by migrants in order to participate in the social, economic and political life in Britain. At the time of the interview, Phathisa had paid £500 to a solicitor to represent her

asylum case. She has been doing all kinds of jobs using the identity of her friend, who is a legal resident.

Living 'underground' or being a *chinyawo*⁴³ is how Zimbabweans in Britain describe undocumented migrants like Phathisa. Consider Tendai as another example: 'I use the identity of someone with papers. It means sometimes you end up using three names at a time. Otherwise, it would be hard to find work. Many employers are asking for passports and work permits.' All undocumented migrants in this study were in employment, with the exception of Vimbai. As Vimbai explains:

This is my fifth year in this country and nothing has happened. It is very tough. I can't work because at work they need your NI number, proof of address and they say they need utility bill, gas bill or telephone bill. You can't have these when you don't work and don't have money. So it's really tough.

It may be that the fear of using forged documents dissuades Vimbai from obtaining one.

Mthokhozisi explains the plight of undocumented migrants thus: 'You can't find a job without papers so people are looking for papers in a sense we may count them as having papers. When you don't have papers you have no work and you are scared.' As an undocumented migrant, Margaret knows how to cope without a work permit or visa that allows her to work. As she puts it,

⁴³ *Chinyawo* is a person who performs a *nyao* dance, a dance carried out by secretive men dressed head to toe in the sisal sacking, covered in mud, holding knives. The real identity of a *chinyawo* always remains a mystery. The *nyao* dance originated in Malawi and is regularly performed on commercial farms in Zimbabwe.

There is a Zimbabweans church in the Midlands and it is the place where Zimbabweans make false NI cards. Those whom I know come all the way from Birmingham to collect the cards. But they don't want to reveal how it is done by insisting they are just middlemen. Some Zimbabweans are making false South African passports as well.

Describing another strategy used by undocumented migrants, Matthew said:

If I don't have a visa, which does not allow me to work, then I have to change my identity. That's what people are doing; they are using false names in order to be allowed to work. One goes to an employment agent to look for work and if the agent asks for the passport then one disappears and look[s] for another agent until one finds an employment agent which doesn't ask for a passport.

When I attended one of the diaspora church services, the pastor asked 'all those without papers and being troubled by the Home Office to come forward' so that he could pray for them. The pastor told the assembly that he was the 'Home Office' and all the problems would be solved today. When more than 15 women stood up, marched to the front, and knelt down, the pastor asked the congregation, 'Are these the only ones?' as if to suggest many more were still seated. He prayed over them and then asked them to take back their seats. I felt the 15 women were bold to reveal to the assembly their immigration status.

The above quotations show the complex ways in which people excluded from territorial, organisational and conceptual borders attempt to participate in the economic as well as social and religious life in Britain. It shows the importance of social capital and social networks. Although diaspora congregations play a significant religious role, they are also places where many Zimbabweans gather

and seek information and advice on how to function effectively in British society. Documented and undocumented migrants have different status in relation to law, but they interact collectively in order to tame a hostile environment. As the evidence of this study illustrates, today's migrants in western countries are qualitatively different from post World War II migrants, who have been categorised as poor and uneducated with little human capital. The fact that migrants buy forged documents inevitably alludes to the existence of a forgery industry only accessible by those in closed networks.

Despite the structural barriers to work in terms of not having legal access to employment, undocumented migrants participate in the labour market as much as documented migrants. The employability of Zimbabweans can be attributed to cultural capital generated in their country of origin and fluency in the English language, social capital as well as considerable ingenuity in the case of undocumented migrants. However, the enlargement of the EU and the relaxation of regulations allowing nationals of enlarged EU countries to come and work in the UK have caused anxiety among respondents, who fear most employers, will prefer nationals from the EU rather than themselves.

Moreover, the majority of undocumented migrants in Britain live in constant fear of arrest and deportation. During the course of my fieldwork in Coventry, immigration officers and the police arrested more than 50 suspected undocumented migrants in a dawn raid at a Walkers Crisps factory (Griffin 2005). Participation in social and religious activities, such as *gochi-gochi*, the pub and diaspora congregations, is an important strategy to pass information rapidly about raids and employment sectors receiving government scrutiny. Furthermore, the use

of text messages within the Zimbabwean diaspora as a means of communication is very high. It is through text messages that Zimbabweans in Britain know the current parallel exchange rate, and how to send money to their loved ones. It is the medium through which they make political and social jokes about the homeland's fast collapsing economy. They also use text messages to convey messages about immigration raids (Pasura 2006).

6.4.2 *The Dot.com*⁴⁴ identity

The majority of the Zimbabweans in Britain who were part of the fifth phase of migration are employed in the health sectors of the economy. Hence, there is a sense in which the diaspora can be loosely identified by a clustering in the *dot.com* industry, *kumahomes* (care homes), *kumachembere*.⁴⁵ By exploring the *dot.com* identity, this section provides a comparative overview of the social mobility of migrants arriving in the hostland at different times, and with varying bases of human capital. Although the majority of the respondents generally perceive care work as dirty and demeaning, the occupation has acquired new positive names that suggest higher-status work. To an outsider, *dot.com* implies working in the computer industry and possessing technological knowledge. The other related name 'BBC' (British Bottom Cleaners) might mean working for the British Broadcasting Corporation (see McGregor 2007). Such positive recasting of the work via names for the sector that suggest higher status and more highly paid work are an example of challenging stereotypes of dead-end jobs in a racist environment

⁴⁴ Zimbabweans in Britain uses the word *Dot.com* to refer to the dirty and demeaning nature of care work.

⁴⁵ *Chembere* (*machembere* plural) is the Shona word for granny. *Ku-* is a demonstrative prefix that points in the direction of the noun. *Kumachembere* implies a place where grannies are cared for. Care work is socially constructed as a feminine profession, as is the word used to describe the profession.

and the re-ascribing of value. McGregor (2007) investigates the reason why social care has become an important focus of employment for Zimbabweans in Britain despite their skills and middle-class, often professional backgrounds. The study concludes that while working in the care industry expose Zimbabweans to exploitation, it provides them with opportunities 'to meet their transnational obligations and ambitions' (McGregor 2007, 820).

The relatively privileged position of those working in the health profession has attracted skilled Zimbabweans from other professions to retrain and join the nursing profession. Steven was a loss-adjustor and in the diaspora, he re-trained as a nurse. Other respondents who retrained to become nurses in the UK are Ndunduzo (who failed to finish the course), Tapfumanei, Florence and Kudakwashe. Describing his first experience working as a nurse in a care home, Steven remarked:

It takes greatness to stoop from being a loss adjustor and work in a nursing home but when you are faced with the reality of life what point in being a loss adjustor if you can't feed yourself? [...] My brother-in-law was a military attaché in Ethiopia but we were working in the same nursing home. So I had a lot of consolation' (laugh).

The interesting point from the above quotation is the common practice among Zimbabweans in Britain of retraining in professions, which are described as shortage areas, such as nursing, teaching and social work, thus giving them an avenue to stay permanently in the UK. However, in August 2006, nursing was delisted from the shortage area list, and this caused considerable anxiety in the Zimbabwean diaspora.

The creation of gendered spaces in Zimbabwe, a result of male-migrant labour system and patriarchal traditions, has meant that production and formal employment are largely gendered as male, while reproduction is gendered female. As a result, women are concentrated in low status clerical and service occupations in Zimbabwe (for example, medical assistants, nurses, midwives, teachers, social workers, typists and telephonists), while men are concentrated in higher status masculine occupations (for example lawyers, engineers, electricians, plumbers and marketing). The diaspora provides a platform for re-evaluating the occupational hierarchy; while occupations like nursing and teaching were close to the bottom of the hierarchy in the country of origin, in the diaspora they regain a higher status. Thus, women professional migrants such as nurses have achieved an upward mobility in occupational status in the hostland.

Some of the labour migrants in this study work in private care homes, in order to increase their earning potential by having a second job, something that is restricted to the NHS. Patricia is working as a nurse, and describes the association of Zimbabwean migrants with care-work in statistical ways: 'If you would meet 50 Zimbabweans you wouldn't be surprised to discover that all of them have done care work at one point or another. I don't know, there is this thing about nursing with Zimbabweans, everybody thinks the only job they can do in the UK is nursing or care work.' As a nurse and working in this country for more than 40 years, Mthokhozisi makes the following observation, 'we have many nurses at first but we have been overtaken by carers. That's how I see it.'

Although there are highly qualified Zimbabwean lawyers, engineers, electricians and plumbers, most of them face structural discrimination in the labour market and

end up settling for low status jobs. As Kennedy explains:

When you come here you apply for jobs and you don't get anything. All the jobs the locals here can do you don't get them. The only job you can get is what the locals shun to do and that is care work. You can't choose if you are a beggar. You know you have to pay rent, you have to eat, you have no choice. People think Zimbabweans like care, nobody wants [to] clean bums but it's out of desperation.

Similarly, Ndunduzo explains the experience of working in '*kumachembere*' when he was a mechanical engineer back home, as 'disheartening.' Rutendo, a qualified teacher, shares a similar experience: 'if you want professional jobs they are hard to find here but if you want the ordinary industrial jobs [they] are there but to find jobs like managerial and things like that even teaching in schools, I once did that, it's so hard.' Rutendo, like the majority of the respondents in this study, is resigned to the reality that he cannot utilise his skills in this country.

Sihle worked as a lawyer in Zimbabwe but now she is an undocumented migrant. She worked as a carer and at one time began to train as a nurse but discontinued her studies. Pressure from friends and herself as to why she had to move from being a lawyer to nursing led her to abandon the studies. Now Sihle works as a customer relations officer for a big supermarket. She expresses her frustration:

You don't need any qualifications to work in a care home except that you need to be a caring person. Apart from writing a few reports I never used anything that I got from the University of Zimbabwe. Everything that I have done in my career there was not even one I could apply to my job. Very frustrating!

The majority of respondents encounter structural constraints in their effort to apply their skills in the UK labour market. Lawyers, doctors, pharmacists, nurses and

diploma teachers have to register for adaptation courses to make their skills relevant and compatible with those working in this country. These adaptation courses tend to stifle migrants' hopes of pursuing their careers. Bernard, who now runs an African hair shop, narrates his story:

Let me start from the beginning, my wife first came to the UK, and Birmingham in particular, and I was at home practising as a legal practitioner so I had to follow my spouse. I came in here and studied for my conversion QLTT,⁴⁶ which has three subjects. I wrote them all and failed one. I wrote for the second time but I allegedly failed. I say allegedly because I don't think I failed but I think there is something in the system in which they make fail, a quota system or something like that. So I decided to start my own business in the meantime and I will pursue my QLTT in the future.

Bernard regards his exclusion from practicing in England as a solicitor as part of institutionalised racism in the body that registers solicitors with foreign qualifications. Sihle and Fidelis share a similar predicament; although they were legal practitioners in Zimbabwe, they failed to regularise their profession in Britain. One would expect highly skilled and documented migrants such as Bernard, Sihle and Fidelis to make use of their cultural capital in the labour market. As respondents reveal, however, such capital was unlikely to be realised, as they face institutional racism.

Prosper, a qualified telecommunications engineer, provides an exception as he has managed to apply his skills in the UK labour market through formal conversion. However, he refers to his skin colour and nationality as hindrances to promotion.

⁴⁶ Qualified Lawyers Transfer Test (QLTT) is the conversion test that enables certain lawyers to qualify as solicitors in England and Wales.

He explains, 'when I was at BT, being black was working against me. Being black and British you might have better prospects in this country but if you are black and you are Zimbabwean then the odds are against you.' Similarly, the majority of respondents would refer to the supranational identity of being 'black' (as Ndunduzo did) or 'black African' (as Tapfumanezi did) as a hindrance to their career aspirations. On the one hand, it may be that respondents have internalised the social categories 'black', 'black African' used in job applications in Britain and talk of them as fixed categories. On the other hand, reference to supranational identity may be a way to express that respondents' experiences are shared by a wider social grouping.

Migrants such as lawyers and engineers, who had higher status occupations in the homeland, experience 'a U-shaped occupational mobility' (Rooth and Ekberg, 2006, 57) in that their first occupation in Britain had a lower status. It can be speculated that these migrants will experience upward mobility if they successfully adapt their qualifications to match those in the hostland. In some way, this explains why people from different professional background find themselves working in care homes. As Sihle told me, 'go to any home [care home], especially in London, you see black people and you [are] most likely to find two or three Zimbabweans. This is what I have realised. It is within our community. I have noticed the Zimbabweans they like social care work whilst the Nigerians are busy cleaning the underground. They just love the trains' (laughter).

6.4.3 Care work as potential space for undocumented migrants

In focussing on undocumented migrants working in care homes, there are some interesting points to consider. Care work helps to shield undocumented migrants

from the immigration officials and the police, insofar as those in care homes (workers or clients or both) are in ‘institutions’, far removed from the general public. Blessing, like most undocumented migrants, works in a nursing home, and sees care work in private households or care homes as an activity where she is not exposed to the strict vetting of her immigration status as would happen in other sectors of employment. In spite of this, undocumented migrants are mobile, not just in terms of geographic mobility in moving from one place to another avoiding the Home Office, but also in terms of their survival options.

However, the clustering of Zimbabweans in the care work industry might also relate to statistical discrimination. As Rydgren (2004, 708) argues ‘statistical discrimination occurs when decisions are based on the employer’s beliefs about typical characteristics of the group the individual belongs to or is believed to belong to.’ In as much as the Philippines are known for ‘caring’, Zimbabweans might be known for the *dot.com* identity.

6.4.4 Manifestations of racism at work

The majority of respondents construct the workplace as a site of racial discrimination and abuse. ‘Racism “works” by attributing meanings to certain phenotypical and/or genetic characteristics of humans beings in such a way as to create a system of categorisation, and by attributing additional (negatively evaluated) characteristics to the people sorted into those categories’ (Miles 1989, 3). This section of the thesis explores the dynamics of racism, specifically its generation and reproduction in migrants’ experiences insofar as they relate to the workplace.

Most of the stories, apart from incidents in Wigan, depict Essed's (1991, 3) concept of 'everyday racism.'

The crucial criterion distinguishing racism from everyday racism is that the latter involves only systematic, recurrent, familiar practices. The fact that it concerns repetitive practices indicates that everyday racism consists of practices that can be generalised. Because everyday racism is infused into familiar practices, it involves socialised attitudes and behaviour.

Bernard has no doubt that he experienced racism:

Racism yes! For myself there are situations where you feel racism has been done. Like I was telling you or for example, you are working in a warehouse, you find out that white people sit on their own and they are allocated easy to do jobs. All those things point to racism. Because of the legislation people are clever enough not to do it openly but indirectly and you might not think it's normal but it is. The white people have easier jobs and socialise as a group.

Sihle explains, 'I personally believe there is racism in the workplace. As I said at one time, I was working in a care job [that] where you find it's apparent there. The type of tasks you are given on a daily basis, everybody shun that particular task and you really know that you are sent to do that. But outright racism I don't know.' Sihle also experiences racism in terms of being allocated the least desirable tasks. But she is not sure if there is outright racism, presumably using Essed's conceptualisation its everyday racism not racism per se that she articulates. Similarly, Tapfumanei explains, 'racism is a way of life here. It happens almost everyday. I am in a supervisory position at work but the local people do not want to be led by a foreigner.'

Prosper gives another example, 'I have a cousin who qualified as a nurse and on his first job he worked in rural Essex. Then they say to him: "we can't call you by whatever your name is. We will call you Michael." Do we say to them "I can't call you John because your name is hard to pronounce I will call you Farai?" A lot of Zimbabweans accept that.' It is a kind of 'othering' that considers 'strange names' as distinctively inferior. The act of giving someone a new name illustrates the unequal power relations in some workplaces.⁴⁷

Rudo describes her experiences of racism at her workplace thus:

As foreign black people we always have to work 110 percent harder to make the slightest achievement. At work places, the white British people at times go on about talking people coming into their country and so on and that their elder folk are not being looked after whilst money is going to poor Africa where the leaders are as corrupt as anything. During my first days, I was asked if my wages were enough to feed my whole tribe back home.

Rudo sees her skin colour as the main category that differentiates her from other white colleagues. She expresses a sense of resentment that she has to work more than her white colleagues do, either to keep the job or to 'better' herself to have a chance for promotion. Rudo suffers multiple marginalisations because of her skin colour, nationality and gender. Her colleagues perceive her, as an economic migrant who comes from a poor and impoverished country by asking her if her wages would feed her whole tribe. Everyday racism reinforces institutional racism.

⁴⁷ While in certain African cultural settings, being given a new name acts as a gesture of being accepted into the host community, in the case just described, it indicates an unbalanced power relation between an employer and the migrant.

Most of the respondents face institutional discrimination in trying to find employment that matches their professional skills. The reality is even worse for asylum seekers and refugees. The dispersal of asylum seekers and refugees to areas with no migrant networks has created another barrier in entering the labour market. Although the majority of respondents from Wigan possessed the legal status to remain in the country, they faced job discrimination in the labour market and racism on the streets. Kudakwashe describes her predicament, shared by many in Wigan, thus:

One thing that is going to trouble us and which may force us to move as Zimbabweans is not the issue of crime but is of jobs. Getting jobs here is difficult, there are plenty of jobs but getting them is hard. We might end up moving because of that. Here it's a small place relatively quiet but jobs are a problem.

Kudakwashe was referring to jobs in the financial sector. Likewise, Nozipho, another respondent from Wigan explains:

If you look many people have careers but they end up working in care or in industry. Some of them have experience, I would give you an example of myself. Myself I am a partly qualified chartered accountant and I have done my ACC⁴⁸ and even here I am continuing. I have worked in accounting firms for more than five years but to find even a junior position in accountancy is hard. The thing they would ask you when you walk into a commercial agency is that 'we don't have any industrial work or care work.' That thing, you know! To assume that I am looking for industrial job without asking me 'Can we help you?' or 'What are you looking for?'

⁴⁸ ACC refers to Bachelor of Accountancy degree

The quotations point to discrimination by agencies based on national stereotypes. Mythical beliefs about refugees and black people, which depict them as economic migrants and assume their skills, are used by gatekeepers to keep migrants within sectors of employment shunned by local people.

6.4.5 Emerging entrepreneurs

Studies of ethnic minorities in Britain point to the over-representation of migrant groups in self-employment as entrepreneurs, as a response to discrimination in the labour market, and also taking advantage of the importance of social capital within the group (Clark and Drinkwater 1998). The same pattern emerges within the Zimbabwean diaspora, as entrepreneurs open up employment agencies, shops and money transfer agencies for a nostalgic population. I have already mentioned Bernard, who owns an African hair shop. Equally, Fidelis worked as a lawyer in Zimbabwe, but now works as an entrepreneur. He expressed his frustration in seeing Zimbabweans working as carers: 'It hurts me inside to see well-educated Zimbabweans doing menial jobs. I am still trying to understand it [...] I have seen so many Zimbabwean teachers and other professionals who are doing care work.' Fidelis once opened up an international college in the Midlands, mainly targeting Zimbabweans, training people to get the National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) necessary for care work. Detailing the courses offered at his college, Fidelis explains:

We also had an NVQ level 2 for care work because most black people are working as carers. It was a short-term course but what was important is that I would personally facilitate employment for them in different care homes here. I

had a network of care homes that would look for staff from my college. Even Coventry City council has employed some of them.

Fidelis's example illustrates how documented migrants with economic capital can generate a livelihood from meeting the needs, and sometimes exploiting, vulnerable groups such as undocumented migrants. Fidelis told me that some of his students regularised their status by joining his college,⁴⁹ and some by joining the British Army⁵⁰ (Kirkup and Prince 2008). Fidelis explains that the International Business College was closed by the Immigration Department, because some of his students were not attending lessons. He explains:

Firstly, they knew I charged low fees and wasn't going to raise it. Secondly, if one was to apply for a visa and then declined they knew I wasn't going to tell anyone I would just shake their hands and say goodbye. The positive side is that a good number of Zimbabweans who came through this college went to the army and right now some are fighting in Iraq, a good number of them went into nursing and teaching.

The news of Zimbabwean nationals joining the British army and the Royal Air Force triggered fears within the Zimbabwean government that its national security might be compromised. Consequently, the government delayed for more than three weeks before granting a death certificate for the burial of a Zimbabwean-born British soldier who died in the war in Iraq (Kwintner 2004).

⁴⁹ According to new Home Office regulations introduced in 2002, it is no longer possible to switch from a visitor's visa to student visa.

⁵⁰ A significant number, approximately 600 Zimbabweans, joined the Britain's Armed Forces when their visitors' visa expired. As citizens of a commonwealth country, Zimbabweans were entitled to apply irrespective of their immigration status. Perhaps this may need to be put into the context of Britain and its allies' 'war on terror' in Iraq and Afghanistan and the need to recruit more soldiers (Kirkup and Prince, 2008).

Ethnic entrepreneurship opens the door to upward social mobility for migrants, and provides spaces for consuming and celebrating cultural identities in the diaspora. Ndunduzo's *gochi-gochi* is another useful illustration (see chapter three).

6.4.6 The role of ethnicity

There are clear parallels or distinctions between the experiences of black and white Zimbabweans in the UK. The majority of black respondents, whether they are documented or undocumented, worked for long hours and had more than one job at the same time, mainly in the health sector. This is particularly so for men, whose wages may not be sufficient to justify their breadwinner role in the family. Tonderai is a refugee, and worked in the financial sector in Zimbabwe. In the diaspora, he works as a warehouse person and a carer. As he describes it, 'the problem with Zimbabweans is that they are concentrating on work and family and Zimbabwe itself is on number three. If one is not working and sending money to Zimbabwe then they feel useless. People are working so hard.' Likewise, Kennedy adds, 'you see how many hours Zimbabweans are working, you would be shocked [...] you find people working seventy hours per week and some more than that.' Sharing a similar experience, Rudo explains, 'if you came from Africa in Zimbabwe you will realise that life here is faster and people don't have time to sit and socialise. Everyone is busy, they try to make money, they work different hours and I think that's a bad thing.' The quotations highlight how paid work is a core theme among black Zimbabweans. Most migrants are burdened in maintaining two homes, one in the hostland and the other in the homeland, as they support their families by sending remittances (see chapter eight).

Whereas gaining legal immigration status remains a high priority for many black Zimbabweans living underground, in contrast, the majority of white Zimbabweans have dual citizenship, Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR) or permanent residence status. All these three categories are documented, and allow easier labour market entry. As Payne (2005) explains, 'current rules allow for citizens of Commonwealth countries who have a grandparent who was British to enter the country on an ancestral visa. This is valid for four years during which time they must support themselves financially. They may then apply for ILR.'

Richard is a white Zimbabwean who was unable to find employment in the same sector as the one he had in Zimbabwe, and does not feel comfortable with his new role working in administration. As Richard puts it, 'there is an assumption that white Africans are stereotypical racists. I have been overlooked in the work place because of that assumption.' Richard constructs himself as distinct from British identity by using his African (Zimbabwean) nationality to mark out his identity. Richard is constrained from fulfilling his achievement at work because of the perception that white Africans are racist. This kind of otherness complicates a narrow definition of racism, which sees racism as limited to discrimination against black people by white people.

David was part of the earlier phase of migration to Britain, and is now settled and integrated into hostland society. As a pharmacist who received his education in this country, David did not experience the structural barriers experienced by recent migrants. However, David's experience is in sharp contrast to the majority of white Zimbabweans who arrived during the fifth phase of migration. John was a farmer in Zimbabwe and came to the UK when his farm was seized by the government.

He explains, 'we were not allowed to take along more than £500 so everything that I worked for was looted by the government.' As a holder of dual nationality, he relies on benefits from the Job Centre, and finds the experience difficult and degrading given his previous high status. 'I used to employ people yet now I depend on friends and the state benefits for me to survive' (John).

Grace provides a similar example, living as she does on state benefits. She lost her farm in Zimbabwe and being unemployed, she has devoted most of her time to political activism in the diaspora. Like John, she abandoned all her properties and wealth in Zimbabwe. 'I can't help the fact that in Zimbabwe we were running our own businesses and suddenly we have nothing (pause). It is difficult to think of rebuilding life here. This is not home.' Thus, some white Zimbabweans who are part of the recent migration found it particularly difficult to participate actively in the labour market. Their pre-migration characteristic as farmers, and some as businesses owners, is a hindrance in participating in the labour market in Britain. The loss of assets and previously high statuses contrasts sharply with their dependence on the state for benefits.

6.4.7 Work and gender

Due to the high demand for migrant workers in 'high-touch' occupations, structural discrimination in the labour market and immigration status, the majority of men in the diaspora are employed in 'feminised' occupations, and it makes them a very vulnerable group. On the one hand, these labour market experiences can potentially alter men's perceptions of gender roles and relations. On the other, the experiences might cause a crisis of masculinity. As McDowell (2003, 833) argues,

What defines being a man in modern societies is participating in waged work. It is work, albeit work that is 'suitable' for a man, that confers and confirms the central attributes of masculinity, whether the work concerned is the embodied labour of the 'working man' (that is working-class men) whose manual employment depends on strength and forms of masculine social solidarity or the cerebral, rational labour of non-manual employment.

For most men, migration has meant work that is not seen as 'suitable' for a man; that is incompatible with hegemonic masculinity. Negative feelings about being under-valued and the loss of power within the home influence men's long-term preferences: they would like to return to Zimbabwe rather than remain in the UK (see chapter eight). The social and economic position of men and women within the diaspora is partially influenced by labour market conditions and the egalitarian nature of the destination country, which may result in the re-negotiation of gendered identities. The following chapter builds on the theme of the social mobility of migrants, and explores the configuration of gender relations and roles in both the public and private spheres of the diaspora.

6.5 Conclusion

As this chapter has shown, the majority of Zimbabweans in Britain are living on the margins of the labour market. This echoes diaspora theorists who had argued that diasporic groups face hostile conditions in the hostland, such as discrimination, prejudice and racism, thus heightening their attachment to the original or imagined homeland. While the possession of language capital and human capital might explain why the majority of undocumented migrants are in employment, it fails to explain why the majority of documented migrants are

concentrated in certain sectors of the labour market. Received 'wisdom' among the Zimbabwean diaspora that you can only get jobs in the service sectors preclude some from realising their skills potential.

Social capital is a resource by which migrants can participate in the labour market; however, it can also be seen in negative terms if it results in the concentration of ethnic minorities in particular sectors of the labour market. However, the social mobility of migrants depends on a mix of pre-migration characteristics, their immigration status and the social context in the destination country. Documented and undocumented respondents have different experiences of downward and upward occupational mobility.

Although undocumented migrants are classified as 'Europe's other market' and the 'dark side of globalisation' (Geddes 2005), this chapter has shown that it would be improper to conceptualise undocumented migrants as helpless victims of immigration policies; on the contrary, they have established a set of survival strategies which enable them to participate in the labour market. Defined as existing outside territorial, organisational and conceptual definitions of the state, the majority of undocumented migrants work in low-paid service-sector jobs where the security of their jobs is precarious. The fear of arrest and deportation restricts undocumented migrants to working in the 'private' spaces of care homes. More so, the rise in demand for migrant workers in 'high-touch' occupations suggests the drive for cheap labour and that the clients are relatively immobile. It also provides housing for live-in migrants. Despite the isolation of working in private care homes, migrants work long hours giving them the opportunity to earn more.

Furthermore, this study questions the typical assumption in the migration literature that undocumented migrants are largely unskilled economic migrants. Such an assumption is inaccurate within the Zimbabwean context, as many of the undocumented migrants are skilled professionals, who find it hard to formalise their skills or whose immigration status prohibits them from seeking formalisation. The diaspora also provides a platform for re-evaluating the occupational hierarchy; while occupations like nursing and teaching were close to the bottom of the hierarchy in the country of origin, in the diaspora they have a higher status. Diasporic conditions have forced most of the respondents to re-think their racial, social and gendered positions within society. The 'natural' assumptions of racial, gendered and social hierarchies are being challenged and contested. In the diaspora, men, as compared to women, withstand the worst of having to realign their careers. For the majority of men, migration has not only resulted in deskilling, but also working in 'feminised' occupations, which has redrawn gender relations and roles within diaspora households. Deskilling did affect some female respondents, though to a more limited extent. Clearly, migration has had an adverse impact on Zimbabwean men's employment patterns. Some white Zimbabweans, who are part of the fifth phase of migration, have fewer problems in relation to their immigration status, yet their participation in the labour market is low. The loss of assets and their previously high statuses in the homeland contrasts sharply with their dependence on the state for benefits in the hostland. In the country of origin, it seemed 'natural' that white Zimbabweans occupied a higher status in relation to black Zimbabweans, as with men in relation to women. In addition, it appeared 'natural' for women to work as carers and nurses. Those

assumptions are being questioned in the diaspora. The diaspora is increasing becoming a space for reordering social categories and social status.

Chapter 7: Gendering the diaspora

7.1 Introduction

The chapter 'brings gender in' to diaspora studies by making a gendered analysis of Zimbabweans in Britain, conceptualising men and women both as individuals and as part of families/households. As Zimbabwean patriarchal traditions compete with the stated egalitarian values in Britain, the diaspora becomes a site of cultural conflict. The conflicts are manifest at many levels, but they are most visible within diaspora households and at religious and social gatherings. The chapter seeks to provide answers to the following set of questions. To what extent, and in what ways, does migration shape gender relations and gender roles in both private and public spheres of the diaspora? How do men and women respond to new gendered identities in the diaspora? To what extent do public spaces influence the negotiation of gender relations and gender roles within and outside diaspora households?

The chapter begins by briefly examining gender relations and gender roles in contemporary Zimbabwe, based on academic literature and narrative accounts from research respondents. Drawing on the stories of respondents, the chapter explores factors that contribute to the reconstruction of gender relations and gender roles within diaspora households. The next section explores the conflicts and contestations as men and women respond to life in Britain. The last section analyses how public spaces are used by men to resist changes that are happening within diaspora households.

7.2 Gender relations in Zimbabwe

The development of gender relations in Zimbabwe is complex. The status of men and women in Zimbabwe today reflects the cumulative experiences of men and women, based on a history of the pre-colonisation, colonisation and post independence period (Hindin 2002). It is generally argued that prior to the impact of colonial capitalism, Shona women had access to a socially defined minimum amount of land from their husbands' holdings and some kind of autonomy (Pankhurst and Jacobs 1988). In colonial times, this autonomy was taken away as white settlers, complicit with some Zimbabwean men, tried to restrict women's mobility and keep them in the domestic sphere (Schmidt 1990). The 'gendered application of pass laws' (Barnes 1997, 76) regulated African women's mobility. Hence, a gendered pattern of male mobility contrasts sharply with the female immobility which characterises the colonial period (Cheater and Gaidzanwa 1996). However, Schmidt (1990) documents incidents in which women resisted customary law and efforts to control their movements.

In post-independent Zimbabwe, the government made 'some efforts to change the gender norms for the public sphere through legislative actions to empower women, [but] the changes do not seem to have taken effect in the private or household sphere' (Hindin 2002, 170). The Government passed the Legal Age of Majority Act of 1982, which gave women of all races full contractual rights by the age of 18. The Act was intended partially intended to acknowledge women's role in the liberation struggle and as a way to prove ZANU-PF's socialist credentials. The Matrimonial Causes Act of 1985 granted women rights to part of the marital property, notwithstanding bride wealth payments, in the event of a divorce. The Customary Law and Primary Courts Act of 1990 allowed primary courts to take

over decisions that were previously determined by chiefs and others under customary or traditional law (Moyo and Kawewe 2002; Nkiwane 2000). In spite of these changes, Made and Mpofu (2005, 3) recently described the position of men and women in Zimbabwe in terms of 'unequal power relations that are still underpinned by a deeply rooted system of patriarchal beliefs, norms and structures.'

Some argue that customary law is a colonial construct, rather than a reflection of the dynamics of Zimbabwean culture. In both the colonial and post-colonial period, the state had a role in developing and reproducing gender relations which served patriarchal interests. Thus, while it may be less questionable that most Zimbabwean women are still living under patriarchal norms, the origin of those traditional beliefs has been debated extensively by historians. Exploring the colonial invention of tradition in Africa, Ranger concludes that

The most far-reaching invention of traditions in colonial Africa took place when the Europeans believed themselves to be respecting age-old African customs. What were called customary law, customary land-rights, customary political structure and so on, were in fact all invented by colonial codification (1983, 250).

Ranger's observation problematises the concept of tradition and other customary practices. The term tradition seems to suggest a timeless, enduring and authoritative set of beliefs and practices that are passed on from one generation to another. However, as Hobsbawm (1983, 1) puts it, some "traditions" which appear or claim to be old are often quite recent in origin and sometimes invented.' The 'invention of tradition' scholars made a useful contribution by alerting us to the role of human agency and contestations of interest in the creation of traditions.

However, as Spear (2003, 3) argues ‘the “invention of tradition” has often overstated colonial power and ability to manipulate African institutions to establish hegemony.’ Thus, the argument is premised on an implicit superiority of ‘inventors of tradition’ and the inferiority of indigenous people. Cultural products and practices are created by past generations, and subsequent generations not only preserve, but can abandon the tradition or refine the inherited tradition, even adding novel features to inherited tradition for it to be most effective in meeting contemporary changes (Gyekye 1997). The refinement or abandonment of tradition may result from internal criticism or adoption of worthwhile or appropriate non-indigenous ideas, values and practices (Gyekye 1997). This is what the ‘invention of tradition’ authors fail to acknowledge.

In its reference to Zimbabwean patriarchal traditions or a set of gender relations, this thesis in no way implies that traditions or gender relations are static notions, but rather, that they result from the interplay of pre-colonisation, colonisation and post-independence periods (Hindin 2002). The history of Zimbabwean women points to the legacy of male dominance and power as an important aspect of gender relations in households. The husband exercises control over property, money and decision making processes within the household (Hindin 2002; Kesby 1999; Pankhurst and Jacobs 1988).

Does migration dissolve existing patriarchal traditions? The following paragraphs explore the construction and reconstruction of gender relations between men and women in different social, cultural and religious contexts within the diaspora. Walby’s (1990) distinction between private and public patriarchy is useful in weaving out the different sites and arenas in which gender relations are made and

re-made in the diaspora. Walby (1990, 24) defines private patriarchy as 'based upon household production as the main site of women's oppression. Public patriarchy is based principally in public sites such as employment and the state.' In this study, private patriarchy is used to analyse diaspora households, while public patriarchy is employed to analyse political, social and religious spaces in the diaspora.

7.3 Redefining gender relations in the diaspora

To obtain a deeper understanding of the transformation of gender relations and gender roles in the hostland, this section explores the power relations and conflicts within diaspora households. All of the respondents in this study grew up and lived in Zimbabwe. Thus, they come from a country with a different set of gender relations, when compared with that of the country of settlement.

The following description by Sihle vividly illustrates the point that in Zimbabwe gender defines roles for men and women. Sihle is a divorced mother of two children:

The Zimbabwean man is an African man, he is used to be the one who brings more money in the house and the woman does all the cooking. The husband is a husband, there aren't equal partners. Once they were brought here, this equality whereby the woman comes from the job where she has been working 12 hours, probably she has been working from 8am to 8pm. By the time she arrives home, she is tired and wants to relax. In Zimbabwe, we don't do that. In Zimbabwe we both go to work, we come back and the husband picks the newspaper and read it and the woman might go and cook the meal. There are no problems whatsoever

but here it suddenly becomes a big, big problem [...] so the sharing of duties has caused some problems and has caused marriages to break here in the UK.

From Sihle's quotation, it can be noted that in the homeland, although some women are in productive work, they are still expected to carry out all household duties. The quotation highlights how women in the homeland experience a double burden of doing productive work and reproductive work and this has remained unchallenged. More importantly, Sihle underlines how the re-negotiation of gender relations and roles in the diaspora has become a contested area. Tendai, an undocumented migrant who got married in the UK and has no children, explains the parallel roles of men and women thus: 'Most women in Zimbabwe are housewives and if they work they may be running a shop [...] their role is to look after the husbands. A man is a provider; he is a breadwinner in the home.' Likewise, Farai explains that 'back home there are defined roles that women and men should do, and there is marked difference of what is expected of men and for women in Britain.' Almost without exception, the respondents described the position of women in the family and society as inferior, as compared to the superior position of men. However, these traditional customs are being contested in the diaspora, and some have undergone transformation. What factors influence these variations and how have they contributed to the reconstruction of gender relations?

7.3.1 Women as main breadwinners

One of the findings of this study relates to the economic and social upward mobility of women in contrast with men (see chapter six). The majority of

respondents in this study acknowledge that some women are now main the breadwinners for their families. Steven explains:

We have situations where women are breadwinners because probably the wife has got the visa that allows her to work. If you come here and you are a teacher and a nurse, then automatically you are the breadwinner because you have the work permit. But if you come here and you were the Chief Immigration Officer no one can give you that job here, regardless of how powerful you were and how you used to boss your wife, here you have to baby-sit because nobody is going to give you a job.

The 'feminisation of migration', accelerated due to the growing global demand of female workers in 'high touch' occupations, is redefining the gender status of men and women in the diaspora. Fidelis, who is married with two children, provides another example: 'You see women being the breadwinners; they are supporting their husbands and telling them they earn the money. They have changed from being housekeepers to being economic players. We have seen women owning houses now.' Thus, some women are the main and only breadwinner and this has brought tensions within some households, prompting the re-evaluation of both marriage and migration by men. Traditionally the male partner is expected to be the breadwinner. Within the diaspora context, most men are playing the supporting role because they work for jobs that pay less or because employers shun their skills. In comparison to female respondents, most of the male respondents had more than one job at a time so that they may earn a salary that warrants their position as provider for the family. The majority of Zimbabwean women in the diaspora are in productive work. In most cases, these women are working as

nurses, carers, social workers and teachers. They make significant financial contributions to their families.

7.3.2 Financial autonomy

Somewhat related to the above point of women, as main breadwinners for their families, is the evidence that most of the women in the study claim to have control over how they use their salaries. Florence points out that between herself and her husband, ‘each person decides how to use his or her own money.’ This is something that was inconceivable in the country of origin, where her husband would not have allowed her to own a bank account. Similarly, Bernard explains, ‘here women have their own bank accounts and decide what to do with their money.’ Bernard was a lawyer in Zimbabwe and he followed his wife to the UK, who is in the nursing profession. As I have pointed out in chapter six, Bernard blamed institutional discrimination for his inability to practice law in the UK. Thus, men’s hegemonic masculinity is threatened as more and more women assume financial control of their money. The majority of male respondents think this has destroyed marriage. Ndunduzo, owner of the *gochi-gochi*, explains:

When your wife is getting paid a higher salary than you, which is normally that case as most of these women work in care homes and their husbands work in the industry. The wife is working 12 hours a day and the husband is working eight hours a day. The pay rate is different; the wife gets £7 per hour while the husband gets £4.75 [...] this can destroy the marriage.

Because of financial autonomy, some women are investing in the destination country by way of taking out mortgages. By contrast, the majority of men prefer to buy a house in Zimbabwe (see chapter eight). Sihle explains,

In some cases, it is husbands that followed and when the husband followed here, they were staying in the house bought by the woman because she owns the mortgage, and this husband also in terms of immigration he is a dependent on the woman. That caused a lot of marriages to break.

What is significant is that in instances where women have been the primary migrants and initiated family reunion, this has increased their decision-making within households, to the extent of buying a house on their own.

7.3.3 Men and the bureaucratic category 'dependent'

Within the Zimbabwean context, the ability to get a visa or work permit contributes significantly to the distribution of power within households. Whereas in the past men dominated migration patterns to urban centres, South African goldmines, mining towns etc, women are at the centre of the recent migration to Britain (Mbiba 2005). As Mthokhozisi explains, 'women were the first to come and it was only late that men followed. If a man was a manager in Zim Sun⁵¹ when he arrives, he has to work in the care. During the early days, the husband will be left at home with kids while the woman goes for work, clubs and disco.' The trailing husband's dependent label creates an indelible inferiority within men. Bernard provides an example as he followed his wife who was working as a nurse. Hence, the changing gender relations cannot be wholly attributed to the fact that more women are working outside the home; other factors such as who was the primary migrant are also important. In cases where women were the primary migrant, it empowers them to take decisions that they would not have made in the country of origin.

⁵¹ Zim Sun is an abbreviation for Zimbabwe Sun Hotel.

Mahler examines how transnational practices and discourses affect existing social identities and power relationships in a north-eastern section of El Salvador. The study 'identifies various practices, discourses, processes influencing gender relations and argues that transnational factors are a significant but not singular agent for change' (1999, 690). Migrants' gendered identities are not just the merging of gender practices and relations from the country of origin and the country of destination but there are other non-material factors that come into play which are absent from the literature (Mahler 1999).

Just like the Colombian study⁵² of Meertens and Segura-Escobar (1996) and the Turkish study of Erman (1997), this research demonstrate the different ways in which dispersal from one's locality may in turn create new identities and opportunities for women, while simultaneously threatening men's self-esteem and power relations within households. So how do men respond to the loss of social status and how do women respond to their enhanced status (see also chapter eight, the idea of return)?

7.4 Consequences of changing gender relations

The changing of gender relations and roles have resulted in marriage breakdowns, men losing their role as head of the family, men returning to the homeland, double-shifts for low earning husbands and for some the re-adjustment of gender relations and roles.

⁵² Refer to chapter two for an elaborate discussion.

7.4.1 Marriage breakdown

Although no divorce statistics are available in the diaspora, most respondents generally concurred that marriages were facing severe strain and some were collapsing. Hence, a constant theme during the fieldwork was how many diasporic marriages are failing to adjust in the hostland, and are thus breaking up. Rudo, who is divorced, describes why Zimbabwean marriages are failing: ‘men have had to knuckle down and help out. Where this has not been the case in marriages then divorces have resulted. Marriages are under so much pressure in this country.’ The diaspora lacks close family networks, and this puts pressure on women if left to do all household work and childcare in addition paid work. Yet the restructuring of gender relations and gender roles in diaspora households is by no means automatic and is often the source of significant conflict.

I have chosen the interview with Fidelis to illustrate this tension, which is acknowledged by the majority of male respondents. He explains:

The divorce rate of Zimbabweans in the UK has increased, you bring in your wife today and she starts working and earning and there is problem in the house. The balance of power is shifting [...] many people came with strong marriages but when they are in the UK it’s hard to sustain them [...] Migration has destroyed the institution of marriage.

What Fidelis meant by ‘strong marriages’ reflects the traditional marriage of male power and female subordination. Although Fidelis talks of bringing in his wife, the reverse is equally common wherein the wife brings in the husband as a ‘trailing spouse’. Evidently, most of the male respondents refer to the shift in the balance of power in households when women enter into paid work. Women’s access to an

independent income, which in most cases is more than that of their husband, threatens men's hegemonic masculinity centred on being the main provider and decision maker of the family.

The waning of male authority in some diaspora households raises major doubts about the future of a static traditional Zimbabwean marriage. According to Tonderai,

There is no future for a Zimbabwean marriage in the UK. Not at all. You can't stand a marriage in the UK when you are under your wife. If you shout at her she dials 999 and the police will come and tell you that 'you are committing an assault' you can be arrested for it. So you have no chance, you aren't the head of the house. You are only the head of the house when it comes to paying the bills, because the bills come in your name and that is the end of the story. In that case no marriage can withstand that.

Equally, Bernard regards the conflict in marriages and the high divorce rate as due to the fact that 'women are asserting their rights, having separate budgets, or the women saying you are the men of the house so meet all the bills and the woman enjoying [on] her money.' As Kandiyoti (1988, 274) argues, 'different forms of patriarchy present women with distinct "rules of the game" and call for different strategies to maximise security and optimise life options with varying potential for active or passive resistance in the face of oppression.' Some women in the diaspora may be playing the 'rules of the game' by insisting on men paying all bills since they are the 'head of the household.'

Although not all the marriages of the respondents in Wigan have been immune to changes, some think the hostile environment has made their marriages stronger.

Rutendo explains:

In terms of those who came here, some of their marriages are even stronger than they used to be back home mainly because you are in the midst of a community which doesn't like you, the only social life I have is that with my wife, thus we tend to bond. Just like if go into prison when you are two you end up having a stronger bond.

The lack of familial space and network ties with other Zimbabweans creates a deep feeling of uprootedness and isolation. The experience of racism and exclusion by Zimbabweans in Wigan contributes to the maintenance of homeland cultural tradition. Thus, it can be argued that communities that do not feel accepted in places of settlement are more likely to experience a more gradual transformation of gender relations and gender roles in households.

7.4.2 Men lose their role as head of the family

As the evidence of this research suggests, a 'dependent' husband lacks the authority to make major decisions within the family. Migration to Britain has catapulted some women from the confines of the domestic sphere into the public sphere of work. The point here is that while women have moved significantly into the public sphere, men have moved to a much lesser degree in the private sphere and this has shaken up men's authority in the household. The following experience by Tonderai illustrates the conflict that happens in households: 'now she is going to work and she is getting £5 an hour and I am getting £5 an hour and now there is nothing I can tell her.' In this case, Tonderai's breadwinner role is becoming less

relevant and he is no longer an acknowledged authority, hence his position within the marriage is becoming increasingly insecure. Moreover, Tonderai thinks the hostland government has usurped his powers to maintain and control his children and family by giving them state benefits, which are directly paid to his wife. 'So the government is the hero of my family. What would I say, that's the end of the story.' Hence, men's authority and power as head of the family, previously derived from having access to economic resources and because of kinship relations, has been contested and to some extent weakened.

7.4.3 Men returning to the homeland

In situations that left migrant men feeling threatened, particularly when they were unable to fulfil their expected roles as breadwinners, some have returned to the homeland. Farai explains some men's predicament: 'we have a number of men who have left because their wives were nurses and they were managers of progressive companies back home [...] He would rather remain as a manager there than having woman managing the house as a breadwinner.' Sihle shares a similar story.

I heard a funny case from Luton where the wife sent the husband home when they were having some problems. When he was there she told the Home Office she doesn't need him anymore and the Home Office took advantage and said, 'we are just interested in you the nurse and not your husband' so they blocked him from coming back. He is still struggling to come back because he can't cope in Zimbabwe.

Although there are few cases of this nature, in some ways they demonstrate the struggle within the traditional male-breadwinner household. Perhaps they provide

an answer to the question of what happens when patriarchal traditions are preserved. Chapter eight of this study explores how the different positions of women and men in the diaspora affects attitudes of return to the homeland.

7.4.4 Double-shifts for low-earning husbands

Most Zimbabwean men view female employment as a temporary adjustment to low male incomes, rather than a permanent realignment of family roles after migration. Hence, the majority of Zimbabwean men work double shifts in order to compensate for the low wages they get from unskilled jobs. Tapfumanei explains:

Imagine a lawyer back in Zimbabwe who was married to a nurse. The nurse today earns more than the husband and sometimes he is not yet working as a lawyer. He is going for the industrial shifts in the manufacturing industry, he is not getting as much as he would have wanted to warrant him as the head of the family. This is destructive if the wife does not consider it properly.

‘Proper consideration’ consists of the wife accepting her subordinate role in spite of being the main breadwinner. The quotation highlights how reversing the breadwinner roles re-configures power relations within the households and might result in marriage breakdown. However, working double shifts can also be seen as a financial strategy to accumulate money as quickly as possible for those with precarious immigration status.

7.4.5 Re-adjustment of gender roles

There is certainly evidence that migration has provided greater support for women in involving men in household chores. Patricia is a married woman, and this is what she thinks in terms of the gender difference in the UK:

The main difference is that my husband helps me to cook and does most of the shopping. I do not think if we were in Zimbabwe he would do the same for two reasons. Firstly, it is most likely that we would have a housemaid. Secondly, peer pressure would dissuade him from doing housework. This has not affected our family negatively because we both work and there is no way I can be expected to do everything without his assistance, therefore it is [...] positive for our family.

Patricia's quotation illustrates that Zimbabwean traditional narratives construct housework as a female sphere whereby she describes the husband's household chores as 'help'. Moreover, her admission that the changing gender roles have not affected her family negatively implies that this is a contested terrain in many migrants' households. Tendai provides further interesting remarks:

Men here have to adapt to a certain way of life in which they have to learn to do some things they wouldn't have done in Zimbabwe like learning how to cook, wash their own clothes, clean up the house. Whereas in Zimbabwe it's very rare to find a man doing these household chores. Here it's part of our lives, it's something that you have to do.

Tendai, like some male respondents, accepts that the economic demands of life in the UK are sufficient conditions for some sharing of gender roles. What is interesting is to see how men describe adjusting to this challenging situation of sharing household chores. Steven explains, 'the economic situation in this country has allowed for the switch of roles where sometimes there is no work for men, the woman will be working and the man will be looking after the children.' According to Rutendo, 'if both of you are working shifts and your wife works early shift and you work late shift, you have to cook and do household duties if she is not around.'

Another example is Rudo: 'we used to share the load in our home, as it is difficult in this country to expect the woman to do everything like back home [...] Depending on who is at home then he or she does the household chores.' Florence describes the experience of sharing housework with her husband as 'liberating [...]' to be honest, life in the UK is better for me because my husband sometimes help[s] me with house work when there is too much work for me. He normally cleans the house with a Hoover machine and also does the ironing more than in Zimbabwe. He wouldn't do this in Zimbabwe.' Hence, the reconstruction of gender relations and roles within the family in Britain has been welcomed by women. This has seen a marked shift in domestic responsibilities in the house and movement towards a more egalitarian situation where the 'one at home' does the housework. Analysing the impact of immigrant women on gender relations, Pessar argues that 'women's access to regular wages and their greater contribution [to] households sustenance frequently lead to more control over budgeting and other realms of domestic decision-making. It also provides them with greater leverage in appeals for male assistance in daily household chores' (1999, 585). So marriages may breakdown or be reconfigured.

For trailing spouses, migration has constituted a significant rupture in their lives. As Bernard puts it, 'in Zimbabwe you knew that there is a woman who changes nappies and diapers, who cooks and when you come here it changes and this may affect [...]. It's almost normal that when my wife is seating I just take my son upstairs and change his nappies and diapers.' I asked Bernard how he has managed to adjust to shifting gender roles, such that he regards it as 'normal' to do roles that were socially constructed as women's roles pre-migration. Bernard remarked: 'What we just did in Zimbabwe was the marriage thing. So from its infancy, apart

from the courtship, the marriage after wedding was only in UK. So it really didn't affect me in anything'. Bernard's explanation makes a distinction between marriages undertaken in Zimbabwe from those fulfilled in Britain. What is implicit in his argument is that marriages tied in Zimbabwe are likely to experience a far greater rupture than those carried out in this country. There is a qualitative difference between the two marriages, but what remains important is that the marriage institution is going through radical transformation in terms of gender roles and relations.

So far, I have been exploring what happens within the private sphere; the next section analyses how public spaces are used by men to resist changes that are happening within diaspora households.

7.5 Public spaces as a form of men's resistance

While there are many factors affecting the formation of Zimbabwean gender roles and relations in the diaspora, one such fundamental dimension is the role played by public spaces such as the diaspora congregations, the pub and *gochi-gochi*. To apply Walby's (1990) concept of public patriarchy, public spaces in the diaspora are a conduit for re-affirming traditional Zimbabwean narratives.

Diaspora congregations are an example of public spaces that resist changes to gender relations. Close to the Coventry pub is the Zimbabwean Pentecostal church, FIFMI. The women-dominated congregation numbered between 60 and 70 people. Most of the women were married and in their early thirties. Although women dominate in terms of numbers, they have a supporting role only in the running of the church service. They support their husbands when they go to the front, stand

beside them when they preach and occasionally they are asked to complement what their husband has already said. During the sermon on one of my visits, the pastor quoted from Ephesians 5:22-24:

Wives, be subject to your husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of his wife, as Christ is the head of the church, His Body, and is himself its saviour. As the church is subject to Christ, so let wives also be subject in everything to their husbands.

This became a major theme during my subsequent visits. What becomes significant from the point of view of ethnography is the role played by diaspora congregations in the production and reproduction of gender roles and relations within the diaspora.

Another diaspora congregation is the Catholic Shona mass in Birmingham. People come from as far as Walsall and Wolverhampton for the church service. Again the women dominated the congregation of between 70 and 90 people attending the mass. Fewer than 25 men were present at each of my visits. Some women, in their late thirties and early forties, wore *Mbuya Anna* and *Mai Maria* uniforms.⁵³ They were also selling Shona Bibles and Shona hymnbooks. On one of my visits, a woman in her 50s, dressed in *Mai Maria* uniform, stood up and started reminding the congregations that they should follow the rules and sanctions of the church, as they know them from Zimbabwe. Women were not allowed to receive Holy Communion without wearing a scarf on their heads. They were discouraged from wearing skin-tight clothes or mini skirts when coming to church. 'We should do

⁵³ *Mbuya Anna* and *Mai Maria* uniforms are Catholic dresses for Zimbabwean married women. *Mbuya* is a Shona word for grandmother and *Mai* means mother. These uniforms symbolise membership of women associations that support the church teachings.

things the way we were doing in Zimbabwe, as genuine Catholics,' the woman said.

Church congregations are homogeneous and somehow sealed off from the wider social reality. The use of Zimbabwean languages creates a group boundary in that only those who can converse in Shona or Ndebele are able to participate fully. But crucially, men are at the centre of the churches' hierarchy and organisation. These congregations act as cultural reservoirs, not only in terms of religious beliefs and language, but also in terms of gender roles and relations. It can be inferred that men, consciously or unconsciously, use diaspora churches as a means of social control on women as the churches emphasise the importance of 'doing things the way they are done back home.' After realizing the empowering status women now have through paid work, financial autonomy and the fragmentation of marriages, diaspora churches extol Christian values and Zimbabwean traditional customs that put the husband as the head of the family and the wife as a subordinate.

Given the predominance of women at the church services, some of them are at the forefront of constructing this 'return to the traditional gender roles and relations.' As the example of the Catholic woman shows, women may reinforce these gender roles themselves not just men. Nevertheless, it can be argued that the age of the Catholic woman cited, in her 50s, explains her commitment to preserving traditional norms. Some argue that women keep previous gender relations because they have a vested interest, they stand to benefit somehow. Women may remain attached to the old male-dominant family if it gives them economic protection and allows them to sanction authority over the younger generation (Kibria 1990).

However, the majority of women who attend diaspora congregations are in their 30s and early 40s, arguably with no such vested interest in the patriarchal family.

What is it in the hostland or among Zimbabweans that brings them together in religious worship? As I have argued in chapter six, the conditions of racial discrimination in the labour market, everyday racism, being defined as 'other' in the hostland's media are some of the factors that push the migrant group together. It's a desire to create some form of identity in a multi-cultural society. The speaking of the Shona language, reading of the Scripture in the Shona Bible, the preaching in Shona, the singing in Shona accompanied by the *hosho*⁵⁴ and the African drums gives diaspora congregations space for the creation of community cohesion that privileges pre-migration gender relations and roles. As Clifford (1994, 314) argues 'life for women in diasporic situations can be doubly painful-struggling with the material and spiritual insecurities of exile, with the demands of family and work, and with the claims of old and new patriarchies.' Thus, diaspora congregations provide Zimbabwean women with spiritual and emotional support and a sense of belonging necessary in a multicultural society.

The pub is a public gendered space, a distinctly male space. The owner of the pub said she has invested a lot of money in trying to make the pub family-friendly and attract Zimbabwean women but has failed. Some of the products in the pub, such as cigarettes and packets of nuts, had the label, 'proudly Zimbabwean.' Here we see a nation dislocated, simultaneously and unconsciously embarking on a project of re-inventing home. If women and men were the same with respect to interests and preferences, in terms of longing for homeland products such as music and

⁵⁴ *Hosho* is a kind of a rattle.

Zimbabwean beer, then why are they underrepresented in the pub? Most of the male respondents invoked their culture to explain why the pub had remained a distinctly male space. Tendai explains, 'I don't like to bring my wife to the pub or club for that matter. What happens when I am not around? What will prevent her from coming to the pub and have fun? I am not saying she mustn't have fun but it is just against our culture.' By referring to cultural or historically produced norms that define some public spaces as male or female, Tendai used his 'culture' to regain some form of authority which is being challenged in the household. Only occasionally, some women visit the pub in the company of male friends or husbands. Women are therefore considered as the bearers and preservers of culture because they conform to the 'cultural norm' of not going to pubs. However, men reinforce the 'cultural norm' by preventing their wives from coming to the pub. So it can be argued that both men and women are responsible for maintaining 'culture', men by dictating and women by conforming.

The *gochi-gochi* owner, Ndunduzo, occasionally asks women rather than men to cook *sadza* for him. This is significant because it is an extension of the domestic role of women in the public space. Ndunduzo's actions are predicated on beliefs that women are appropriate for certain kinds of work, such as cooking *sadza*. From this it follows that what used to be women's work in the home is now women's work at the *gochi-gochi*. However, unlike the pub, many women make frequent visits to the *gochi-gochi*. The main reason why Zimbabweans across all ethnic and gender boundaries frequent the *gochi-gochi* and the pub (mainly men) is a desire for food, music and social interaction reminiscent of the homeland. These sites are not static and their uniqueness lies not in some essential identity but in the particular intersection of wider social relations. For men, *gochi-gochi* and the pub

are places where their lost manhood is regained and re-imagined. These spaces give them an opportunity to position themselves and reconstruct their identity in the diaspora by discussing life beyond the diaspora.

Kibria's (1990) ethnographic study of women's social groups and networks in a Vietnamese community in the United States explored the effects of migration on gender roles and power. Kibria argues that women's community networks provided an important source of informal power for women, enabling them to cope effectively with male authority in the family. In contrast, this study has shown how diaspora congregations and social gatherings provide spaces that connect migrants with their homeland identities. It provides men with spaces to resist changing gender relations and gender roles happening within the household.

7.6 New forms of marriage in the diaspora

A significant phenomenon emerging in the diaspora is the 'move in'⁵⁵ household, a kind of cohabitation. In this case, a man and a woman live together without going through traditional Shona or Ndebele marriage customs. For the move-in households, marriage is a contract between two individuals. Although the institution of marriage in contemporary Zimbabwe has a variety of forms in Shona and Ndebele society, one can discern some commonalities. For the Ndebele and Shona people, the concept of marriage, whether civil or Christian, is very much influenced by traditional concepts and being primarily a contract between two families rather than individuals (Bourdillon 1976; May 1987; Stoneman and Cliffe 1989).

⁵⁵ 'Move in' is an expression that has been adopted by Zimbabweans to describe a situation where partners move in and stay together without following any traditional or civil marriage procedures.

Contrary to traditional marriage, in which the main purpose is the continuation and growth of the family tree, move-in households are formed for a number of intrinsic and extrinsic reasons that have nothing to do with the extended family. Margaret explains, 'what I know is men who are here don't marry they just do move-in. They stay together for four or five years and perhaps have a kid without marrying each other.' According to Gelfand (1973, 175), 'among the Shona a childless marriage is almost always a bitter disappointment.' Yet within move-in households, the main purpose is not to have children but rather the economic and social well-being of the individuals concerned.

One of the reasons why people 'move in' is to regularise their status if the other person has a legal status to stay in the country. Sihle attributes this new phenomenon to people's 'immigration status⁵⁶ and loneliness'. Bernard, who himself followed his wife, refers to the practice as 'very rare in Zimbabwe but common in this country' but thinks some 'move-in to share expenses.'

The introduction of visas by the UK government in November 2002 hindered the reunification of some families. Forced to live apart, some people in the diaspora have resorted to move-in marriages. Fidelis explains, 'I have also seen another phenomenon in which Zimbabweans are living double lives. Some women have the economic means; one has a family here and another husband in Zimbabwe, though both husbands are not aware of this.' In this sense, the marriage in the UK becomes the move-in one, emphasising its ephemeral character. Ndunduzo describes another scenario that results in move-in households, 'others have married

⁵⁶ The majority of Zimbabweans in the diaspora are undocumented migrants and living with someone who has the legal status to remain in the country makes their life a bit more bearable. The documented migrant would have his or her name on official documents like council tax, gas and water bills.

here even though they have wives back home. Yet other women came to work and failed to bring in their husbands, they have also got married in here.'

Gender roles and relations among 'move in' couples are more egalitarian as compared to those married according to traditional customs. Godfrey, an example of a move-in household, explains:

Both of us go to work and the differences are on what you get and what she gets and how you share your earnings. In Zimbabwe, we would put our resources together but here each does what is good to him or her. No one controls or is head of family anymore as we are all equal.

From this quote, it is clear that patriarchal norms no longer shape men and women's understandings of their own position within the move-in households.

However, flexible forms of marriages are not novel phenomena in Africa. As Meekers (1993, 35) explains, 'the gradual erosion of traditional marriage customs in favor of more informal types of unions has been observed in many African societies, especially among the better educated and urban segments of the population.' What is distinctive of the move-in marriage is that it provides an example of the reconstruction of gendered identities in transnational spaces through migrants' simultaneous embeddedness in two social worlds. This suggests what Vertovec (1999, 451) called transnationalism as a mode of cultural reproduction, that is, the fluidity of social institutions and everyday practices 'often described in terms of syncretism, creolization, bricolage, cultural translation and hybridity.' By contrast, earlier forms of flexible marriages in Africa occurred within specific cultural context.

The diaspora has also seen a rise in the number of lone parent households, and these can result from two situations. Lone parent households are an epiphenomenon of the increasing divorce rate in the diaspora due to conflicts and tensions within households. For example, Sihle, Phumuzile and Rudo are some of the divorced respondents. As Farai puts it, 'what I have also seen changing is the strong development of the single parent phenomenon, it is so rampant now.' There are many couples living in 'separate worlds' when the primary migrant was denied a visa or the couple voluntarily decided to live apart. Mthokozisi is a perfect example of a lone parent household. He came to the UK in the 1960s and ever since his wife has been living in Zimbabwe.

7.7 Conclusion

The chapter has shown how both public and private spaces of the diaspora are important arenas in the construction and reconstruction of gendered identities. The public/private divide traditionally occupied by men and women in Zimbabwe has collapsed as both men and women are in productive work. More importantly, most of the women have financial autonomy in terms of how they want to use their money. Women's possession and control of their income becomes an agent for the transformation of gender relations. Some of the women are taking out mortgages in the country of destination while most of the male respondents envisage this as a passing phase as they will eventually return home and rediscover hegemonic masculinity.

The theme that has run throughout this chapter is how migration has caused radical changes to the gender relations and roles between men and women in the diaspora. Men are forced by circumstances to do household work and care for children, a

thing they would not have imagined doing in Zimbabwe. It can be seen that migration to the UK has been empowering and disempowering to men and women differently. For women, it has narrowed their housework responsibilities and opened opportunities in the public spheres of work, but they work long hours for low pay.

This chapter has endeavoured to show that it is not only the two sets of gender relations, those from the country of origin and those of the country of destination, upon which migrants reconstruct gender relations in the diaspora, but also other factors. Some of the factors that influence the changing of gender roles and relations are egalitarian values, norms and laws in the destination country, women's participation in the labour market, immigration status, that is, in cases where women were the primary migrants and men had a 'dependent label', as well as women's financial autonomy over their wages. All these factors challenge patriarchal traditions regarding gender roles and relations.

This research has shown that women have gained much more in the private domain than in the public sphere, where they experience public patriarchy generally in Zimbabwean spaces. It can be argued that public spaces created in the diaspora are a form of resistance by men to regain male authority in households. Diaspora congregations, the pub and gochi-gochi are some of the public spaces where men and women as well resist changes that are happening within diaspora households. The diaspora has seen new forms of marriage in terms of the egalitarian move-in household and the lone parent household; suggesting the redrawing of the traditional marriage contract.

Chapter 8: Meanings of diaspora: Ideas of return and settlement

8.1 Introduction

The thesis has explored the historical construction of different phases of displacement and movement from Zimbabwe into the diaspora. Chapter five, in particular, has illustrated how the Zimbabwean diaspora in Britain maintains strong attachments to the country of origin, by engaging in transnational diaspora politics. Contrary to assimilation and incorporation theories, migration is not a unidirectional process. Rather, migrants maintain bi-focal or multiple ties to the country of origin and country of destination. The thesis has also examined how respondents experience differential downward and upward occupational mobility in the hostland. The previous chapter has demonstrated how the re-arranging of gender relations and gender roles in both private and public spheres of the diaspora is a site of cultural conflict between men and women. It is therefore significant to probe from the narratives of respondents the meanings of diaspora. It is worth asking, what meanings do Zimbabweans give to their condition and experience in the diaspora? How do such meanings influence and shape attitudes of return to the homeland or feelings of belonging to the hostland?

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a framework for understanding the meanings of diaspora among Zimbabweans in Britain. The chapter is divided into two sections. Drawing on respondents' accounts, the first section generates some explanations for understanding migrants' diasporic conditions and experiences. The second section analyses the respondents' attitudes toward return to the country of origin or settlement in the country of destination. Rather than addressing the actual act of returning home, the focus here lies on migrants' orientation towards

return or settlement. This section also takes a gendered approach in trying to understand women and men's orientation towards returning to the homeland or settlement.

8.2 Competing meanings of the diaspora

Although the concept of diaspora emphasises cohesion and collective belonging, for the Zimbabweans in Britain, the term signifies broad meanings of multiple and shifting identities. Thus, we need to be cautious of the limitation of diaspora as a theoretical concept. As Patterson and Kelley remind us,

Diaspora has always been employed (invoked) in such a way as to hide the differences and discontinuities. The very concept of diaspora has been extracted from peoples' lived experiences and then molded into metaphors for alienation, outsidersness, home, and various binary relationships such as alien/native. The metaphor has come to represent those experiences and, in so doing, erases the complexities and contradictions as it seeks to fit all within the metaphor (2000, 20).

This quotation points to the importance of avoiding grand narratives of diasporic experiences, which tend to make other voices invisible. With this caveat in mind, the thesis investigates respondents' diverse meanings of the diaspora. Some depict the diaspora as reverse colonisation; others see the diaspora in terms of Babylon and Egypt metaphors; and others talk of the diaspora as *Wenela*.

8.2.1 Diaspora as reverse colonisation

The shrinking of space through airline travel and the rise of information

technology makes it possible for migrants to travel and communicate with families in their country of origin. These are some of the founding premises for transnationalism as a field of study. One of the major findings of this study is that our understanding of the Zimbabwean pattern of migration to Britain can be enhanced through the concept of reverse colonisation. The majority of black respondents explicitly refer to their 'right' of being here. As Prosper puts it:

When white people came to Zimbabwe they didn't come to learn from us, they didn't learn anything from us. We are here, and I can tell you 90 percent of the people, in fact I would say 99 percent whom you meet, most of them are economic migrants, they are here to get what they can get, it's reverse colonisation [...] The only thing that I think is different is that when white people came to Zimbabwe they weren't doing menial jobs but with a lot of Zimbabweans who are doing menial jobs, a very few people are doing good jobs like myself.

Farai, to some extent, agrees with Prosper that Zimbabweans should exploit every opportunity in this country, just as British colonisers did in their country. As he explains, 'what is happening is that Zimbabweans have to be educated, educated in the sense of getting away with things in this country. For Indians any loophole there is, they try to exploit it.' Similarly, Mthokhozisi narrates a story that sums up the essence of reverse colonisation:

One day I went to central London. On my way back I saw a white person lying on the floor in an alley close to some shops. I kicked him slightly and asked, 'why are you sleeping on the floor?' The white person shouted at me saying, 'why are you here in England? Why don't you go back to your country?' I replied him, 'to my country, where?' And the white person said, 'where you come from'. But I said to him, 'I have come to England to take back the money you stole from my

country. You know what, in my country where I come from we used to herd cattle in open trenches [mines] and when I asked my father who dug those trenches I was told it was a white man. The white man dug the trenches looking for money. And I have come here in search of that money. (*Handiti makambodyavo kumba kwedu nhasi todyavo kwenyu*), as you once ate in our house now it is our turn to eat in your house (laughs).

The narratives of Prosper, Mthokhozisi and Farai are shaped by the historical conditions of colonisation, and describe (black) Zimbabweans in Britain as opportunity-seekers or pound-seekers. The quotations highlight the agency of respondents' moral claim to be 'here', although they are categorised as the 'other' and 'economic migrants' by mainstream newspapers and dominant society.

From most of the respondents, there is a sense that the British owe them something and they have a right to work here, if not to settle. Mthokhozisi explains, 'we are saying to the white person, don't hate us because you once stole things from us. Let us take what we can since you stole things from our country. If we can let us take, that's it. We can't suffer both back home and in this country.' Although Mthokhozisi has dual nationality, and thus is equally a British citizen, he considers himself an outsider perhaps because of experiences of racism in his adopted country. Another example is Tapfumanei, who captures not only the colonial link, but explains how his presence in Britain has generated issues of exclusion and migration. As he put it,

I grew up in Zimbabwe and most of my family members are in Zimbabwe and secondly, the people here don't want us here and I don't want to be here as well. They are our former colonisers and they plundered our resources. But for the meantime I have to be here because I want to earn a living.

Likewise, Steven agrees that the majority of Zimbabweans in the UK are not genuine political refugees but 'economic migrants'. He expresses his frustration with the use of the term 'economic migrants'. As he puts it, 'I dislike the term economic refugee because the British were the first economic refugees in Zimbabwe.' Hence, there is an awareness among respondents that Britain, as a former colonial power, has a moral duty to them, at the very least to treat them fairly in their efforts to participate in the labour market without being stereotyped. As this chapter will now demonstrate, the majority of respondents (particularly men), remit to their country of origin. Remittances suggest the attachment of migrants to their homeland, but similarly, a reversal of the exportation of resources from Britain's former colony.

What is significant about the idea of reverse colonisation is that it legitimises respondents' sense of being 'here'; it validates their status and activities, even if they are undocumented migrants. Prosper explains what he terms 'positive colonisation', that is, the positives of being colonised. He explains, 'I personally believe colonisation was a bad thing but we can't reverse the situation so we have to make the best out of it. What do *maZimba* [Zimbabweans] do if they don't have papers? You use somebody's name or get fake identification and you go and work.' We may consider also the remarks of Blessing, an undocumented migrant: 'you know how easy it is to get a job in this country? It's extremely easy if you've got the skills. If you go for an interview and when they hear your accent they will ask you: "Do you need a work permit or not?" You just have to say, "I don't".' The quotations focus on the importance of social capital and human capital as a strategy used by undocumented migrants to survive in the labour market. More so,

the assertiveness of undocumented migrants stems from the realisation that they are morally justified to be here.

The significant increase in the population of Zimbabweans in some of Britain's multicultural cities, for example in Luton, Slough, Leicester, Sheffield, Coventry and Birmingham, provides them with a feeling of collective belonging and an awareness of their influence on British society. We may consider the thoughts expressed by Phumuzile:

We are coming here because we want to explore opportunities here, be they of economy or good life or whatever. While we are looking for these opportunities we will in some way dominate some communities. There are some places where we live and no one stares at you with an eye that tells you, you are a foreigner.

Similarly, Tigere explains what happened to him when he visited an English pub in Birmingham, a place where Zimbabweans gather normally on Fridays and Saturdays:

I went there once to meet Tapiwa. In the pub so many Zimbabweans had come and when you meet a Zimbabwean you really speak as Zimbabweans [in Shona or Ndebele]. We were speaking in Shona, *ya-ya ya-ya* [continuous dialogue] you know. A white guy came to me and says: don't you think you guys are being ignorant when you don't speak in English? You are just speaking in whatever language that you are speaking and we can't even hear what you are saying and you are in an English pub. I said to him: do you understand the term ignorant. You are the ignorant one. One, you don't even understand what the word ignorant means, and two, you don't understand my language but I understand your language, then who is ignorant between you and me?

While the quotation provides an example of positive colonisation in being educated in English, it further shows the importance of collective belonging in the integration process of migrants. By conversing in Shona or Ndebele in an English pub, the respondent reinforces the idea of colonising 'in reverse'. Migrants' ability to use the colonisers' knowledge base against them informs most of their narratives. Hence, by dominating some communities, the quotations demonstrate the migrants' sense of achieving reverse colonisation.

Indeed, the Christianisation and colonisation of Africa happened simultaneously, and now, the reverse is happening as African missionaries evangelise Christian churches in Europe. There are more than three Zimbabwean churches in each of the following places: London, Coventry and Birmingham. Evidence from multi-sited research shows that there are few cities in Britain where you would fail to find Zimbabwean diaspora congregations. This pattern can potentially lead to the establishment of a strong Zimbabwean community in Britain but also result in the re-evangelisation of Europe by African migrants.

The majority of the respondents' sense of reverse colonisation mirrors Caribbean folk poet Louise Bennett's poem 'Colonisation in reverse.' The following is an extract from the poem:

What a joyful news Miss Mattie
Ah feel like me heart gwine burs -
Jamaica people colonizin
Englan in reverse
By de hundred, by de tousan
From country and from town,
By de ship-load, by de plane-load

Jamaica is Englan boun.

For wen dem ketch a Englan,
An start play dem different role,
Some will settle down to work
An some will settle fe de dole.

Jane say de dole is not too bad
Because dey payin she
Two pounds a week fe seek a job
Dat suit her dignity.

Wat a devilment a Englan!
Dem face war an brave de worse,
But me wonderin how dem gwine stan
Colonizin in reverse.

The above poem captures the post-World War II migration of Caribbean people to the UK. The reverse colonisation framework provides an analytical lead to rethink patterns of migration to Britain from commonwealth countries. Yet the Zimbabwean experience is distinct from the post-World War II migrants depicted as poor and uneducated (Miles 1989; Owen 2006). Zimbabweans are among the few refugee communities in Britain to have used their cultural and social capital to engage in a legal battle⁵⁷ with the Home Office to avoid deportation.

During colonisation, it was predominantly men who carried out colonial conquests, and in cases where women followed, they were confined to the domestic sphere. The harsh conditions of Africa, with high temperatures, malaria

⁵⁷ On 16th November 2004, the UK government lifted a moratorium preventing the deportation of failed asylum seekers from Zimbabwe. The decision was challenged in the High Court and the judge ordered the AA case (unnamed individuals) to be brought to the Asylum and Immigration Tribunal (AIT) to determine whether 'refused' asylum seekers from Zimbabwe automatically face persecution if returned to the country. As of now, the case is yet to be finalised.

and other diseases, made European habitation difficult. In the early stages of reverse colonisation, it was primarily women in nursing and teaching profession who began to migrate to the UK and their husbands who followed as trailing spouses (see chapter seven). While colonisers complained of high temperatures, reverse colonisers complain about the extreme cold and unpredictable weather of Britain.

To take the analogy further, the majority of respondents coming to Britain resemble the gold rush of the white settlers, who envisaged the area north of the Limpopo (Zimbabwe) to be a place full of mineral deposits; the majority of Zimbabweans are in search of the 'pound' (Ndunduzo). When white settlers failed to find large quantities of gold, they took up farms. Recent Zimbabwean migrants to Britain express their frustration in realizing there is no gold on the streets of 'London' and settle for demeaning work in order to survive.

Of course, there are other glaring differences; the white settlers' hegemonic power to define their destiny cannot be compared to the powerlessness experienced by undocumented migrants in terms of their immigration status and participation in the labour market. The reverse colonisers have no land to apportion to themselves, and the list goes on. Equally, the terminology has changed: colonisers referred to themselves as 'explorers', 'settlers' and 'farmers' yet migrants are referred to as 'refugees', 'migrants' and 'foreigners'. However, reverse colonisation shows the agency of the once colonised to influence developments among their former colonisers, even if the experience is far from being equivalent. Once, Africa was the land to explore and plunder; now the African descendants turn to 'imperial'

Britain to explore, work, settle and earn remittances to send to their country of origin.

Cohen (1996, 508) alludes to the 'diaspora of active colonization' when referring to the European (especially British, Portuguese and Spanish) imperial and colonial settlements. He labels them imperial diasporas. Citing various scholars, Portes et al. (1999, 225) argue that 'immigrant colonisers harboured dreams of riches and eventual return, but their daily activities confronted them with the realities of a new country and, in the process, many became permanently settled in the colonies.' A similar pattern is emerging among the reverse colonisers, Zimbabweans in Britain.

As Donkor argues 'if we relate discourse on colonization to contemporary discourse on globalization, we become aware of continuities in ideologies and processes that drove both phenomena' (2005, 28). Colonisation was premised on the accumulation of wealth through the exploitation of foreign resources, both human and natural. Thus, the migration of Zimbabweans to the UK can broadly be conceptualised as a reaction to the homogenizing forces of globalisation, but it may also be seen as colonisation in reverse. The reverse colonisation migration framework offers new theoretical insights, because it forces us to think beyond the present political and economic problems besetting Zimbabwe as the only reasons for migrating to Britain. Yet understanding the Zimbabwean diaspora as reverse colonisation may be contested, as white Zimbabweans do not fit into the schema. The reverse colonisation concept can be a useful construct with which to analyse the reverse-migration prompted by historical ties such as colonial and imperial domination and other forces of globalisation and capitalism.

8.2.2 *Diaspora as Babylon and Egypt*

Some respondents regard the diaspora as a place of suffering, akin to Babylon and Egypt.⁵⁸ Diaspora pastors preach an exilic message namely that the congregations are experiencing the equivalent of the biblical Babylon or slavery in Egypt. Mathew, like most of the religious respondents, perceives Zimbabweans in the UK as experiencing Babylon and Egypt. He explains:

You might want to say the Zimbabweans are in Babylon. The way the Israelites were being treated in Babylon is similar to the way Zimbabweans are being treated here. This is again similar to the treatment Israelites received in Egypt, as asylum seekers and slaves. From a Christian perspective, we are experiencing our Egypt; my leader has behaved badly so I had to seek political sanctuary abroad. The racism we face everyday resembles the troubles the Israelites face in Babylon and Egypt.

The quotation highlights one of the common features of a diaspora, a sense of being marginalised in the country of settlement, being an eternal outsider. The feeling of rejection by the 'host society' makes integration impossible. Fidelis explains his experiences in Britain and his attitude towards return: 'my attitude is that eventually I want to return home and make a contribution to my country [...] I have never been made to feel at home here. Read newspapers and they make you feel you are a stranger; you are not part of this community.' Likewise, as Rutendo remarked, 'everyday they talk on TV immigrants, immigrants, and it would appear as if you don't have a place you call home [*kumusha*].' Most of the respondents

⁵⁸ All of the respondents have a Christian background, thus Babylon and Egypt must be understood in a biblical sense.

felt excluded from the dominant white society. Kennedy shares a similar experience:

No matter how long you stay here, you always feel I don't belong here. And people here always ask you, 'where are you from?' In a way it's a coded way [...] They are trying to tell you that you aren't British. It's different from the American way of doing things, when you become an American you are an American. Live here for 60 years, they wouldn't accept you.

Almost all respondents, without exception, narrate stories of racism and discrimination in their daily lives. The Zimbabwean diaspora is dispersed around the UK, with no visible markers, yet they remain visible in the media either as refugees or through depictions of the political and economic situation in their country. In chapter five, the thesis demonstrated how some members of the diaspora feel excluded from society because of their Zimbabweans identity; thus, they conjure an alternative identity, such as Zimbabwe-South African or Zimbabwe-Jamaican.

The majority of refugee respondents who had a minority and outsider status in Wigan, reinforced by the constant racial abuse they suffer in the streets, strongly desired to return to the country of origin when the political and economic situations improves. Rutendo provides an example: 'When you are passing close to a pub you hear people shouting "asylum seeker", "asylum seeker" everywhere. One day in the bus, I still remember one old white man asking me a question, "why are your teeth white when you are black?"' Clearly, Rutendo's experience reflects a colonial and racist view of black people as inferior and backward. The remark is laden with racial overtones. Viewed against the background of a largely

white community, these comments are manifestations of racial violence. Rutendo expresses the desire to return to the homeland 'irrespective of economic problems, poverty and the like.' Taking Tonderai as another respondent from Wigan, he explains: 'settling in this country, no way. You can't settle in a place where they call you "nigger" every day. Just go outside the house at night and walk. All will be calling "nigger, nigger, nigger!"' Similarly, Nozipho describes her experience of being called names for no reason other than being black. She explains:

In my three year experience I have been called a nigger in more than 50 times or so and in one incident my neighbour ended up intervening. It was on a Friday and I was walking and the guys I know them as I always see them and they started shouting, 'hey you nigger, hey you nigger and so forth.' My neighbours I would say they are good people, they are aged, intervened.

The related labels such as 'nigger', 'foreigner', 'asylum seeker', 'refugee' and 'immigrant' are politically powerful signifiers in a contemporary Europe that defines migrants as 'other'. From the evidence of my multi-sited research, it makes sense to argue that Zimbabweans, who have had to make areas in the northern part of Britain their place of residence, are more likely to have a stronger sense of returning to the homeland than those in multicultural cities such as London or Birmingham. The Zimbabwean Wigan community creates an enclave, as they are far from other Zimbabwean communities and other black British people. This lack of spatial proximity to fellow compatriots and the racial discrimination they face makes living conditions hard and influence their attitudes towards returning to the homeland.

Moreover, for the majority of political exiles, those who left the country hurriedly because of political violence, the country of origin remains an idealised symbol of a place to live and be. The concept of diaspora as exile seems relevant and appropriate in understanding the narratives of political exiles. Their life activities or the exercises of their profession were deemed unpatriotic, and hence, political exiles were forced out of the country. Political exiles have maintained sustained transnational diaspora politics to improve conditions in the hostland and work towards political transformation in the homeland. The Vigil (see chapter five) displayed Zimbabwean bearer cheques⁵⁹ and what they were worth in the year of independence, 1980. The money, which is the equivalent of a loaf of bread now, would have bought a four-bedroomed house in the year of independence. The imagination of political exiles plays a crucial role in creating a 'golden age', a glorious past when everyone was happy.

Farai describes how he was deemed unpatriotic, and hence forced out of the country: 'I am a banned individual. I have been banned from coming to Zimbabwe. We were the first people to be banned from Zimbabwe by Jonathan Moyo etc [...] Jonathan Moyo held a press conference and said [...] we shouldn't come back to Zimbabwe.' Equally, Grace lost her farm during the land reform programmes and the idea of quick return is close to her mind. She likens it to the South African experience. Grace explains, 'a large chunk of Zimbabweans would go home. I would like to give you an example of people who used to be here. South Africans used to be like Zimbabweans in this country. Do you know what happened to South Africans on the eve of Independence? Most of them returned home.' Hence, most of the political activists who have fled their country and

⁵⁹ A Zimbabwean currency that can only be used within a specific period.

sought sanctuary in the UK perceive their diaspora as exile, reflecting the Israelites' experience in Babylon. It can be argued that diaspora as exile confers legitimacy and a justification for political exiles to seek temporary shelter in Britain.

For the Jewish diaspora, the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 BC and the subsequent exilic experiences in Babylon 'created the central folk memory of the negative, victim diaspora tradition, emphasizing in particular the experience of enslavement, exile and displacement' (Cohen 1996, 508). Babylon has been a coded word for the Jewish diaspora and the African diaspora, denoting the exilic condition and suffering. Thus, some respondents appropriate similar terminology in understanding the experiences of racism, discrimination and refugee status.

8.2.3 *Diaspora as Wenela*⁶⁰

Some respondents liken the experience of the diaspora to the migrant labour system in the colonial period. Prosper describes the conditions within which many Zimbabwean find themselves thus:

Most of the people who are here don't realise they will never ever return to Zimbabwe. People come here and they say they will return but this will never happen. I will give you a classic example, think of Zimbabweans in the 60s and the 70s, those who went to *wenela*. How many people have grandfathers who never returned, and this isn't because they were killed in the mines but they stayed in South Africa forever. Those who returned to Zimbabwe were a minority.

⁶⁰ As I have mentioned earlier, Witwatersrand Native Labour Association (WENELA) was a recruiting agency in South Africa that was given exclusive rights to recruit labour for working the mines in the Southern African region during the colonial period.

Similarly, Tapfumanei explains: 'working in England for the money is like those *wenela* days. Our fathers used to go and work in South Africans mines but they would come back with their property and many things.' Tigere expresses the same idea of being an 'economic migrant.' He explains, 'a British in Zimbabwe is a British and he comes here he is a British. He opens a company in Zimbabwe he remains a British. We are just here to work for our parents and go back home.' However, it is insufficient to argue that because *wenela* history has shown that some of their ancestors failed to return from South Africa so it might be the case that fewer Zimbabwean migrants in the UK would return to the country.

Although both events occurred in different historical contexts, one under colonisation perpetuating an unfair migrant labour system and the other in an ostensibly globalised world, there are points of comparison. The regulation of migration in the whole of Southern Africa was an essential part of settler state strategies in constructing a 'docile' and humble workforce, consequently maximising profits for white entrepreneurs and suppressing nationalistic consciousness within the black population. Likewise, the migration of Zimbabweans to the UK can be understood in the context of the rise in demand for workers in 'high-touch' sectors of employment in Britain (see chapter six). During the migrant labour system, primary migrants were prevented from taking their families along, and once their contract ended, they were not allowed to remain at the mines. The thesis has pointed out (see chapter seven) how the introduction of visas for Zimbabweans intending to travel to the UK resulted in the creation of lone-parent households. Hence, some respondents see their experience in the diaspora as *wenela*.

The thesis has not exhausted all the possible meanings of the diaspora expressed by respondents, or indeed the entire Zimbabwean diaspora in Britain. However, by narrowing down into the three meanings discussed in the preceding section, the objective was to demonstrate that although diaspora emphasises cohesion within the collective group, it also accommodates internal differences. The next section investigates how the various meanings of diaspora affect Zimbabweans' attitudes towards return and settlement.

8.3 The idea of return and settlement

The attitudes of diasporans towards return or settlement are contingent, and constantly shifting; they are not natural, but a result of social construction. Just as Anderson (1991) reminds us how the ideology of nationhood is a product of the dominant members of a society, the idea of return to the homeland and the idea of settlement in the hostland depends on an array of individual factors, as well as external and internal contestation within the collective group. Insofar as this study analyses migrants' desire to return and not the actual return, the term 'settlement' is broadly used to include migrants' desire to remain permanently in the country of destination even though they may not possess full citizenship. Thus, legalistic definitions ascribed to the individual migrant by the state, which includes as well as excludes others, cannot be used as a basis to measure the settlement outcomes of migrants (Sheffer 2003). Rather, it is migrants' social and cultural disposition to the hostland which is of significance.

8.3.1 Remittances and the idea of return

The following paragraphs seek to demonstrate that the idea of return is not natural, but the result of competing motivations and influences. Sihle explains one of the most intriguing and remarkable stories I encountered during fieldwork among Zimbabweans in Britain, and it relates to the manner in which Zimbabweans maintain dynamic connections with their homeland. In order to evade charges levied by banks and registered money transfer agencies and the cumbersome formalities, Sihle use 'community transfer agencies'⁶¹ when sending remittances to her family and relatives back home. Sihle engages in remittances transactions with an individual she has no adequate knowledge of in terms of who they are, where they live, or carry out carry out their business. The scant details supplied by community transfer agencies, through text messages, are their bank details, telephone and fax details. One of the text messages reads:

Exchange rate: £1 to Z\$10 million, minimum payment £50 per beneficiary. Petrol 55 pence/litre, minimum 40 litres. Services available for groceries and doctor for your loved ones. Same day service! Account Details [...] fax/telephone [...]

When Sihle completes the banking transaction, she sends details about her family's bank account and mobile number to the community money transfer agency. On the same day, or after two to three days, Sihle's beneficiaries in the homeland receive a text message instructing them to collect petrol coupons, which they use at designated garages, or they would have money credited to their bank accounts or groceries delivered to their homes. Explaining social capital, Portes (1998, 9) argues that trust exists in such situations 'precisely because obligations

⁶¹ By 'community transfer agencies', this thesis refers to unregistered remittance agencies predominantly owned by Zimbabweans in Britain for sending money, fuel, groceries, clothes, HIV medication, cars and articulated lorries from Britain to Zimbabwe.

are enforceable, not through recourse to law or violence but through the power of the community.’ However, during the fieldwork for this study the author heard numerous accounts of duplicitous community transfer agencies. Sihle’s story highlights the extent of the hyper inflation in Zimbabwe and provides evidence of a disintegrating economy. Indeed, some have suggested that remittances are preventing the total collapse of the economy. More importantly, the story demonstrates how Zimbabweans maintain strong transnational ties with family and relatives in the homeland. The concealed nature of these transnational transactions means that the amount remitted by the diaspora to the homeland can only be speculated on. However, the ‘intensity and regularity’ of transnational activities among Zimbabweans in Britain is phenomenal.

When asked about their motives to return, the majority of male respondents described an imaginary Zimbabwe, where they would return and live in well-built houses, running their own companies and businesses. As Steven explains:

A Zimbabwean is looking for a house back home, that’s why the governor of the Reserve Bank came up with Diaspora Housing Scheme⁶² and is being snapped up quickly. Every Zimbabwean is asking oneself: When I go back home what will they say I was doing?

Concern with property in Zimbabwe is a common trend among the majority of male black Zimbabweans. Mthokhozisi regards as ‘infectious’ the extent to which

⁶² In 2004, the Zimbabwean government through the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe launched the Homelink Private Limited, a subsidiary of the central bank. The company offers the following products, Homelink Housing Development Scheme and Money Transfer Agencies. For the Homelink Housing Development Scheme, non-resident Zimbabweans in the diaspora are offered loans to buy properties in Zimbabwe but make repayments in foreign currency over a period of five years. Money Transfer Agencies are official channels of remitting money to Zimbabwe.

diasporans are 'buying houses, housing stands, *kombis*,⁶³ lorries and buses in the UK and Japan' and shipping them to Zimbabwe. When I carried out my interview with Tapfumanei, he was in the process of buying a house in his 'hometown', Masvingo. Similarly, Ndunduzo expressed his surprise that 'some still don't have a house back home and if you are deported what are you going to say to them?' Yet Prosper explains some of the difficulties involved: 'people were buying three or four stands in Zimbabwe and the hope is of going back home. Building these stands is difficult, you have to be there and see it for yourself. Who is going to manage your houses in Zimbabwe?' Thus, the immediate concern for diasporans who came into Britain in the post 1990 period is the ownership of a house(s) and movable properties in the homeland as symbols of social status and investments in an imagined future back 'home'.

Tonderai provides another example: 'when Zimbabweans first came to the UK, they started buying *magonyeti* (articulated Lorries), but the first thing was a house and then a business. Some of them have achieved this goal yet some are still struggling to this present day.' For male respondents the present and future is rendered meaningful and coherent through buying houses and sending trucks to Zimbabwe and this reinforces their desire to return to the homeland. Hlangani has been buying stands and houses in Zimbabwe because, as he says, he 'can't work in industry for the rest of my life because the pound won't be enough [...] but in Africa you can sit down and say now I can retire and enjoy my money. I have got cattle, I have got my house and that's it.'

⁶³ *Kombi* is a word used to refer to a commuter minibus in Zimbabwe.

However, the sending of remittances by diasporans to the homeland can also be seen in the context of the government's desperate effort to tap foreign currency from its citizens abroad. For the sake of the Zimbabwean government's economic survival through remittances sent by its citizens abroad, the 'homeland' government developed Homelink programmes, which comprise lucrative housing schemes and money transfer agencies, that is, official channels of sending money to the country of origin. Significantly, the government actively constructs the meaning of diaspora as temporary; living abroad is a temporary condition, and migrants must secure their future through investing in their country of origin. Some respondents are aware of the government's motive to generate foreign currency, as Mthokozisi explains:

The government mooted this idea because they are in need of foreign currency. Otherwise I wouldn't want to buy a house already designed rather than design my own house. Now there isn't any material to build our own houses, if you buy from abroad the government would force you to pay duty when bringing the products in the country. Why should people pay duty for building materials and food products? That is really bad!

Unattractive rates offered by the government and the lack of confidence in the homeland government led to the collapse of the Homelink initiative. Indeed, Bernard, like some diasporans, regards investing in Zimbabwe now as 'madness [because] the currency isn't recognised in the international market or where the currency is falling by \$10 000 in 2 days.'

Most of the male respondents in this study express a strong desire to return to the homeland at some stage in their lives. The idea of return, or the 'myth' of return to

the country of origin, is one of the common features of diaspora. Diasporans 'regard their ancestral homeland as their true, ideal home and as the place to which they or their descendents would (or should) eventually return when conditions are appropriate...' (Safran 1991, 83-84). The sending of remittances by diasporans provides them with a strong connection with their homeland.

As the economic Zimbabwean crisis deepened, the form of remittances has undergone a dramatic shift from buying *kombis*, cars and houses to buying everyday commodities such as food, fuel, groceries and medicines including HIV medication for relatives and friends in the homeland. The emergence of a number of UK-based Zimbabwean online grocery shops provides significant evidence for this. Some examples of the websites are <http://www.zimbuyer.com/>; <http://www.yes-zim.com/>; <http://www.mukuru.com/>; <http://www.zimland.com/>; <http://www.groceries2zim.com/>; <http://www.zimbabwegroceries.com/>; <http://www.smallbridge.org/>. The volume and intensity of these transnational transactions demonstrates how family and kinship ties and obligations are the building blocks of transnational communities (Vertovec and Cohen 1999). As noted already, the majority of Zimbabweans work in low-paying jobs in order for them 'to meet their transnational obligations and ambitions' (McGregor 2007, 820).

8.3.2 Reluctant settlers

Although diasporic communities long for the homeland, it is equally true that most of them feel 'at home' or 'settled' in destination countries. Scholars in migration studies have coined different concepts, from assimilation, adaptation, integration, incorporation, transnationalism and diasporic citizenship, to describe migrants'

processes of settlement in destination countries (Pedraza 1999). Assimilation and incorporation assume migration to be a one-way process, whereby migrants are subsumed into the new society. Yet by emphasising the incorporation of migrants, the theories ignores the potential of migrants in transforming the destination society as well (Pedraza 1999).

The following remarks by Rudo are interesting: 'at the moment the UK is my home and I will make it as such because I only live once. I do not want to plan a life for when if ever I go back to Zimbabwe to settle because it may never happen.' Similarly, Mduduzi explains: 'I am 100 percent happy in UK, in Zimbabwe I am only thinking of my relatives only I wish they could leave that country of fools.' Rudo and Mduduzi thus express weak attachment to the homeland. Similarly, some of the respondents who moved to Britain in the earlier periods of migration consider the hostland as their legal home, although their social and cultural home is in the homeland.

Farai explains that lack of houses in the country of origin hinders attachment and thinking of return. As he puts it:

Those who will return are those who have made some properties back home. Even if the situation gets better in Zimbabwe but if you don't own a house you would want to stay here for some time in order to build your own house. Those who have houses here think they will sell their houses but houses here take a long time before they are sold. It must be a good house for it to be re-sold. The problem now is that they are buying cheaper houses which meet their incomes but re-selling those houses would be a difficult thing for them.

As evident from the quotation, there is a gradual shift for documented migrants from investing in the homeland to investing in this country by way of owning mortgages. Six of the respondents had mortgages (Phumuzile, Rudo, Patricia, Steven, Bernard and Prosper). This is a growing pattern among Zimbabweans in Britain and may be an indication that some are thinking of long-term settlement. Thus, one of the emerging entrepreneurship businesses in the diaspora among Zimbabweans relates to mortgages. In an interview with Destiny Financial Services, a mortgage company owned by Zimbabweans, I was told that more than 60 percent of their clients are diasporic Zimbabweans. Kingdom Mortgages UK limited is another company that targets Zimbabweans.

Whereas labour migrants, refugees and those with dual nationality can invest in mortgages both in the homeland and in the hostland, undocumented migrants can only invest in the homeland because of legal restrictions. Hence, attitudes towards return or settlement are also shaped by the way the migrant relates to the state in the destination country. The majority of Zimbabweans who resettled in Britain in earlier phases of migration, predominantly white Zimbabweans, possessed dual citizenship until recent changes to Zimbabwe's citizenships laws. However, they regard the government's action as a retributive measure against its perceived enemies. In spite of possessing dual nationality, David expresses his nostalgia for the homeland: 'I truly belong in Zim but am happy to call UK home too as it has served me well and I can live here in relative peace.' Some of the other respondents granted permanent settlement in Britain (for example, Rutendo, Tonderai, Kudakwashe, Mthokhozisi, Richard and John) consider the UK as their legal home and Zimbabwe as their social and cultural home.

Indeed Home Office statistics have shown a gradual increase in the number of Zimbabweans applying for permanent settlement and it is those with cultural and financial capital who are likely to make Britain their 'second' or permanent home. From 1996—2006, 21,575 Zimbabweans applied for permanent settlement in Britain (Home Office 2002; Home Office 2003; Home Office 2004; Home Office 2005; Home Office 2006). As Rutendo puts it, 'now everyone talks of returning especially those over the age of 20 but to see if this will be successful in returning I don't think so as most will just go back and visit. But maybe with the problem of dual nationality, which is forbidden in Zimbabwe, this may be complex.' Rutendo has been granted refugee status in Britain, and thinks this would cause a problem when he wants to return to Zimbabwe. When one takes into account the seemingly unending political and economic crisis in Zimbabwe and the fact that many people are physically excluded from travelling to the homeland because of their immigration status, it might be plausible to conclude that some Zimbabweans will remain permanently scattered around the world. However, although some of the respondents appear settled, they may be called reluctant settlers as far as they regard the homeland as their social and cultural home.

8.3.3 Gender and the idea of return and settlement

The majority of men in this study characterise their diaspora as a temporary condition, while the majority of women regard their diaspora as a permanent condition. It can be understood why the majority of men in the diaspora want to return to the homeland. It is the place where they would hope to regain their power and authority within the private and public sphere (see chapter seven). Although the current economic and political crises might have eroded the male breadwinner

role as families seek to survive in harsh economic conditions, patriarchal traditions give men status within the family. One can plausibly argue that for married couples the decision to return or not to return to Zimbabwe is a site of conflict and contestation. There are inherently conflicts of power and interest. Consider Tonderai as an example, he believes life in Britain favours women and he cannot settle here permanently: 'life in England, no I don't want to be ruled by my wife.' Similarly, Matthew hinted at the conflict in Zimbabwean households when he said: 'women don't want to work together with their men. If I say I have got parents at home and I have to do this, sometimes one other year I have to go back home and I have to buy my own house but she won't help you.' The quotations point to antagonistic views between men and women towards the idea of return, with men strongly attached to the homeland, in contrast with women.

Richard is a white Zimbabwean and when asked if he experienced the changing gender roles in the UK, he commented:

I am in the process of getting married to my Zimbabwean girlfriend. In Zimbabwe, I would have been the main breadwinner as a private sector professional and she would have been less well off as an academic. However, without the social background and networks to use I am not the dominant income earner and I am retraining. She sees this as problematic. I however have a more realistic view - if we return the roles will change again and in no way does my manhood feel diminished by the present situation no matter how long it lasts.

Richard's story underlines how the shifting gender roles among Zimbabwean migrants in the UK cut across the racial divide. Meanwhile, David now appreciates his 'wife more as a friend, partner and economic provider.' While black

Zimbabwean men feel unsettled in terms of their power and authority, which is being undermined in the private domain the same cannot be said of white Zimbabwean men. Evidence from this research suggests that white Zimbabwean men have not experienced a reversal of power and authority in households in comparison to black Zimbabwean men. The general view is that black Zimbabwean men often view female employment as a temporary adjustment to low male incomes, rather than a permanent realignment of family values after migration. In this context, men construe their migrant experience as exilic while women view it as diasporic.

While many men spearhead the drive to return to the homeland when the political and economic circumstances have changed, women are putting a foothold in their occupations, positioning themselves for permanent settlement. As Hlangani puts it, 'most of the women say we won't go back to Zimbabwe, we want to stay here. Men, we do want to go back home. You can stay here for ever but your country is your country.' Vimbai wants to settle permanently in this country because of the unending economic crisis in Zimbabwe. She explains:

I want to stay here permanently. Back home things aren't the same as we left. Right now people are talking of millions, when we left million was like oh-gosh! Right now they are saying people should rent houses in US or pounds, where do they think US and pounds should come from? It's really tough.

Similarly, Nozipho 'want[s] to return to Zimbabwe but not to stay there for ever.' Phumuzile, Rudo and Patricia are some of the female respondents who have mortgages in the UK and this may suggest the establishment of some kind of permanence in Britain. Phumuzile explains, 'my home is where my children are,

which is England. I could be a hypocrite and I could be lucky I have two homes, Zimbabwe is my other home [...] I have spent the last 20 years in England, and so this is my home.' Phumuzile highlights the 'here and there' duality in terms of belonging; however, she prefers to stay permanently in Britain because of her children's bond with the country.

Florence's story below illustrates conflicting attitudes towards return or settlement in terms of gender. Florence described how city council officials came to their home and offered them the chance to buy the house. She explains that 'during the meeting my husband accepted the offer but when the council employees left, he tore up all the documents. My husband said we need a house in Zimbabwe but not in Wigan.' This was despite the fact that Florence would have wanted to buy the house. On the other hand, Florence's husband told me he has been building two houses in Zimbabwe and his wife had contributed nothing from what she earns. Thus, deciding where to stay is a site of conflicting power relations and patriarchal ideologies at work within diaspora households.

8.3.4 Torn between homeland and settlement

The unchanging political and economic conditions in Zimbabwe and the radical changes that have happened to people's lives in the UK mean that the majority of Zimbabweans are caught between returning to the country of origin or settlement. The majority of Zimbabweans can be described as being caught in-between exile and diaspora, between home and settlement. Many intend to make a quick return to the homeland when the economic and political conditions have improved, yet prolonged stay in foreign lands may drive away those hopes and instil the need to settle permanently.

Bernard summaries the myth of return thus:

Originally when people came they say I will go to UK for six months and work very hard day and night, buy my *kombi*, cars, and house and have money in my bank and return home. But to tell you what, three quarters of those people are still here in the UK six and seven years down the line. They still want to gather what they can and go home.

Ndunduzo concurs with Bernard that Zimbabweans migrated to the UK with the perception of being temporary migrants but they are still nowhere near returning to the homeland. Sharing his own story he says, 'I came here for a month's holiday. I wanted to make money in that short period and return home. Nine years have passed but I am still grounded in the UK.' Similarly, Steven explains this in-betweenness: 'I am building a home in Zimbabwe, but when I went to Zimbabwe in 2003 for a month, I couldn't wait there any longer I wanted to come back [to Britain].' The severe economic hardships experienced by Zimbabweans over the past six years compel Zimbabweans to migrate to other countries. Just for a month in the country, Steven failed to adjust to the daily struggles for basic food items, fuel and money experienced by ordinary Zimbabweans.

Just as economic hardship pushes people out of their homeland, some respondents explain that they may be forced to remain in the diaspora for the sake of their children. As Bernard puts it, 'I now have two children born in this country, so I have to consider if they will integrate into the Zimbabwean community back home or they are now British people...'. Equally, Rutendo sees the future of his children influencing his attitude of return. He explains, 'for myself I think it will be difficult for me to go back with the children. The children are unlikely to have a

stronger bond home but for me personally I just want to go back home.’ Hence, the attachment of the second and third generation towards their homeland might be qualitatively different with those of the first generation.

For most Zimbabweans the idea of return remains futuristic and eschatological, one whose actuality may never be realised. Expressing the longing and attachment to the homeland, Sihle remarked:

When we talk and say we are missing home we definitely don’t miss a house in London, we mean Zimbabwe. For now when I am working out my career and I would want my kids here but when I am around 70 and I am no longer working I definitely don’t like to be a pensioner. I don’t see myself in a nursing home in London.

Meanwhile, Kennedy said ‘I will return home one day but right now to just say when I will return home, it’s hard. I will definitely return home, why stay where you aren’t wanted?’ Sihle and Kennedy prefer to defer their return to sometime in the future and this is indicative of the contradictory tension in people lives. On the one hand, their experiences of social exclusion in the ‘host country’ push them to think about returning home, yet on the other hand, instability in the country of origin together with their children’s interests is enough to push the thoughts of returning to the future. With the passage of time, it may prove hard for them and other similar migrants to realistically achieve return. The individual migrant experiences dual belonging to the homeland and to the hostland. Thus, scholars argue that many contemporary migrant communities straddle two nations (Pedraza 1999), giving rise to dual or hyphenated identity (Safran 2005). Evidence from the

study certainly suggests ambivalence about return, preferring to put it in a distant future, alongside a gender differentiation.

8.4 Conclusion

The chapter has demonstrated how respondents give several meanings to their conditions and experiences in the diaspora. Some depict the diaspora as reverse colonisation; others see the diaspora in terms of metaphors of Babylon and Egypt; others meanwhile talk of the diaspora as *Wenela*. This variety of meanings of the diaspora demonstrates the difficulty of providing a universal diasporic experience upon which deductive reasoning could be applied; each migration phenomenon needs to be located within its own specificity.

The chapter argues for the relevance of reverse colonisation as an alternative framework in understanding the migration experiences of Zimbabwe's new diaspora. Evidence of this chapter suggests that reverse colonisation, in as much as globalisation and other kindred terms such as transnationalism gave the greatest stimulus to the dispersal of Zimbabweans to Britain (see also chapter four). Although the process of reverse colonisation does not offer a comprehensive analysis of the migratory phenomenon, it constitutes a kind of response by Zimbabweans to British colonialism.

Reverse colonisation confers diasporans with a sense of entitlement and moral right to come to their former imperial power to study, work and settle. Hence, what is significant with reverse colonisation is that it legitimises respondents' sense of being 'here'. It validates their status, even if they are undocumented migrants. Reverse colonisation also gives them the basis to consider settlement. For

example, in 2005 more than 400 Zimbabweans protested against forced deportation back home outside the Home Office in London. Arthur Mofe, chairperson of the campaign said, 'we suffered under colonialism, and we have the right to be here. We are not going back until we do so voluntarily. We are not dogs, we are not criminals. We want to go back to a free Zimbabwe' (Kimber 2005).

This sense of reverse colonisation is felt and expressed by the growing Zimbabwean population in Britain in cities such as Luton, Slough, Leicester, Sheffield, Coventry and Birmingham. The feeling of collective belonging etched out in diaspora congregations, the pub and *gochi-gochis* shows the agency of the once colonised Zimbabwean diaspora in having an influence in British society. Mbiba (2005) refers to Britain being termed Harare North and Slough has now been renamed Chirau.⁶⁴ The Christianisation and colonisation of Africa happened simultaneously and now the reverse is happening as African missionaries evangelise Christian churches in Europe.

Nonetheless, everyday racism, marginalisation and the refugee label construct a feeling of rejection among diasporans by the 'host society' and reinforce the desire for eventual return. This has led some respondents to construct their diaspora experience as akin to biblical exile in Babylon and Egypt. More so, as the majority of Zimbabweans in Britain are working in service-oriented occupations embedded in a new era of globalisation searching for cheap and flexible labour. Thus some consider the experience in the diaspora as replicating Wenela times, not just in

⁶⁴ Chirau is one of the communal areas in Zimbabwe.

terms of the demeaning nature of the work but also restrictions on the mobility of migrants and their dependents in coming into Britain.

The chapter has also explored the many factors that shape and influence respondents' attitudes of return to the country of origin or settlement. Attitudes towards return or settlement are not fixed but contingent and subject to transformation by external and internal conditions and competing narratives. Although the government of Zimbabwe is hostile to its diaspora (see chapter five), because of foreign currency shortages in the country it courts its citizens abroad to send remittances by reinventing the notion of return. While being aware that migrants' intentions and their behaviour may diverge, when one takes into account the remittances sent by migrants and property investments in the country of origin one can argue that the majority of male respondents have shown a commitment to returning to the homeland. Most of the men invest in properties in the homeland and engage in the shipping of *magonyeti* (trucks), and *kombis*, which are the diasporic equivalent of cattle. This helps in re-shaping their gender status in the destination country. The majority of the men are reluctant settlers and hope to return to the homeland to regain their gender status within the private and public sphere.

In contrast, the majority of women have experienced upward social mobility in the hostland and would want to settle permanently in this country. Some respondents are caught in-between return and settlement and maintain an eschatological notion of return when political and economic circumstances in the homeland have improved. However, the never-ending political and economic crisis in Zimbabwe

has seen a gradual shift by documented migrants from investing in the homeland to investing in this country by way of owning mortgages.

Chapter 9: Conclusion

This thesis has been concerned with a number of fundamental themes relating to the formation and articulation of the Zimbabwean diaspora in Britain. Drawing on diaspora and transnational theoretical perspectives, and making use of multi-sited ethnography, the thesis has explored the triadic relationship of the diaspora to the homeland, to the hostland and to the group itself. The thesis provided an exploration of core themes and sub themes that relate to the experiential, performative and lived reality of the diaspora: phases and patterns of migration from Zimbabwe; transnational diaspora politics; the participation of the diaspora in paid work; the configuration of gender relations and roles; and the meanings of diaspora and attitudes towards return or settlement. This study is among the few emerging scholarly attempts to explore the narratives of Zimbabweans in the UK, hence enriching both specific knowledge about this diaspora and our general understanding of the growth of contemporary diasporas, international movements and their impact on homelands and destination countries.

9.1 Multi-sited ethnography

The empirical sufficiency of this study lies in its use of a multi-sited ethnographic approach to generate data and examine the diverse ways in which diasporic identities are performed, constructed and contested in Britain. The thesis provides contribution at the methodological level by exploring the making of a diaspora in different settings, rather than an intensive participant observation in a single bounded site. This represents one of the few efforts to study diasporic communities through multi-sited ethnographic methodology. This research made use of the pub,

gochi-gochi, the Vigil, Wigan and diaspora congregations as social, cultural, religious and political spaces where Zimbabweans reclaim and forge new identities. These sites embodied both the public and private spheres hence privileging different gender/race profiles, geographical spaces, immigration status and identities. The novel methodology adopted has offered comparative opportunities for delineating the different ways of capturing the mobile, shifting and interconnected expression of the diaspora across the country. As evidence from the research sites has revealed, it not possible to identify a unified Zimbabwean subjectivity. Rather, diasporic identities are contested, complex and rooted not in one, but many points of identification.

9.2 The scattering

Millions of Zimbabweans living abroad have been put under the category of an emerging diaspora (Bloch 2005; Mbiba 2005). Yet there has been little attempt to question their labelling as a diaspora, or indeed, to engage with and borrow from the more theoretically informed and conceptually rich literature on diaspora. The assumption in this categorisation relies heavily upon popular usage of the term diaspora among Zimbabweans themselves both abroad and in the homeland. However, instead of forestalling discussion by simply labelling them ‘a diaspora’, it is important to examine whether or not they constitute a diaspora.

Based on the findings of this research, the thesis contributes to the conceptual theorisation of the Zimbabwe diaspora. There is sufficient evidence to suggest that Zimbabweans abroad display some of the features commonly ascribed to a diaspora such as involuntary and voluntary dispersion of the population from the homeland; settlement in foreign territories and uneasy relationship with the

hostland; strong attachment and connection to the original homeland; and the maintenance of distinct diasporic identities. The paragraphs below draw from earlier chapters and elaborate these key features of diaspora.

One of the contributions of this research is the delineation of the five different phases of migration at the core of phenomenal population movement, and displacement from Zimbabwe from the 1960s to the present. The movements were largely prompted by the war of liberation, labour recruitment to the South African goldmines, the Matebeleland massacre, the post independence brain drain and economic and political crises. The scattering of the population saw a multiplicity of routes taken, various destination countries reached and variation in terms of degrees of political belonging and the different ethnicities and genders involved. Hence, as this thesis argues, diaspora formation is a result of multiple factors.

However, as Patterson and Kelley (2000, 11) argue, diaspora is not merely a logical manifestation of dispersion, but it embodies a number of significant elements such as how the diaspora was created; how it has been in existence; and how the constituent parts of that diaspora relate to the homeland, whether actual or imaginary. Similarly, as Van Hear (1998) argues, the presence of diaspora abroad must be enduring, but not necessarily permanent, as it may include movement between homeland and the hostland. Furthermore, Sheffer (2003) points out that ethnic diasporas constitute the most enduring outcomes of both voluntary and involuntary migrations, and permanent settlement in hostlands differentiate them from transient migrants. However, at what point in time do migrants become incipient diasporas? Does it depend on legalistic definitions such as dates of arrival, or rather, application for permanent settlement in the hostland? Sheffer

(2003) suggests that migrants coalesce into incipient diasporas in a staged process. After initial periods of adjustments to the new life in the hostland, the majority of migrants decide to stay permanently in the host country, although they remain connected to their original homeland. Hence, social actors' desires to settle permanently in the hostland differentiate diasporas from migrants, despite the immigration status they might possess or the acquisition of citizenship in the hostland.

Similarly, it may be asked at what point transient Zimbabwean migrants became a diaspora. At what point, within the five phases of migration, did Zimbabweans abroad become a diaspora? Is it during the first phase of migration, that is, the migration of political exiles to neighbouring countries and abroad and the labour recruitment of Zimbabweans to work in South African goldmines? It could be argued that the Zimbabwean diaspora is not limited to any historical phase of migration and/or is it a linear process, but rather, a result of cumulative periods of movements. For example, the labour migrants to South African gold mines may have produced ephemeral communities as they moved back and forth into Zimbabwe. On the other hand, Van Hear (1998, 48) refers to the 'return' of migrants to their homeland as 'the unmaking of diasporas' or 'de-diasporization'. Certainly, the majority of refugees and political exiles living in neighbouring Zambia, Mozambique, Malawi and Botswana during the liberation war may have experienced this de-diasporisation. It is, in fact, more recently that the term 'diaspora' has emerged among Zimbabweans abroad and in the homeland as a category of practice.

The diasporic imagination and consciousness exhibited by migrants during and after the fourth and fifth periods of migration is a key feature in the emergence of diaspora. It is the imagination of individual diaspora members, derived from ambivalent connections with the homeland, common origin, ethnicity and hostile conditions in places of settlement, which creates and reinforces belongingness to a collective group. Hence, it is useful to think of the diaspora as an imagined community (see Anderson 1991). As Sokefeld (2006, 267) explains, 'migrants do not necessarily form a diaspora but they may *become* a diaspora by developing a new imagination of community, even many years after the migration took place.' Although migrants belonging to earlier phases of migration may not have conceived themselves in diasporic terms, they may be called diasporic in retrospect. However, the notion of diasporic consciousness must not be understood as monolithic as the diverse population experienced the diaspora differently, although sharing connections with the homeland and often experiences of hard life in the hostland.

One of the findings of this study is that our understanding of the Zimbabwean pattern of migration to Britain can be enhanced through the concept of reverse colonisation. This argument goes beyond merely stating that the force exerted by colonisation and imperialism necessitated people to move; reverse colonisation gives migrants the agency and legitimacy to participate in the social, political and economic life in the hostland. Such a framework situates the development of the diaspora, not solely because of globalisation and post-colonial political and economic mismanagement in the country of origin, but also because of the undesired consequences of colonisation and imperialism. Hence, the thesis has shown the interconnectedness of the diaspora and colonialism and how migrants

use this as a basis to find work, study and settle. The reserve colonisation framework provides an analytical lead to rethink patterns of migration to Britain from former colonies, for example post World War II migrations from Pakistan, India, Bangladesh and the Caribbean. However, the concept requires further theoretical and conceptual development, in order for its potential as a generative force for research to be realised.

If the study were to apply the diaspora characteristics, as espoused by Cohen (1997) to Zimbabweans, then they can loosely be said to be a 'victim diaspora', having fled severally the war of liberation, Matebeleland massacre and the post-independence economic and political turmoil. Classical diasporas are thought to result from forced uprooting from the country of origin and exist in foreign lands, longing for the day of return when conditions have improved. As Cohen (1996, 507) puts it, 'until a few years ago most characterizations of diasporas emphasised their catastrophic origins and uncomfortable outcomes.' The victim-origin has been part of the central tenet of diaspora theory. However, contemporary diasporas need not result from political conflict alone, but from a host of opportunities across the globe. As the thesis has demonstrated, among Zimbabweans in Britain are labour migrants, those with dual nationality and students who might be classified as voluntary migrants. Reis (2004) and Sheffer's (2003) decision to historicise the phenomenon of diaspora under three broad periods, that is, the classical period, the modern period and the contemporary period, enables diaspora to be recast to encompass much wider criteria, within which the Zimbabwean dispersion can easily mesh as an instance of the contemporary diaspora.

However, others may argue that ‘it is inappropriate to apply the term diaspora to settlers and labour migrants because they have not undergone traumatic experiences, nor can it be said that most of the members of these groups yearn to return to their lost homeland’ (Faist 2000, 197). Faist’s argument is premised on a classical definition of diaspora, which uses the Jewish diaspora as the ‘ideal type’, against which dispersed populations can be classified as diaspora or non-diaspora because of catastrophic origins. Tololyan, one of the proponents of the classical definition of diaspora, made the following admission:

In my own work as a scholar and as editor of *Diaspora*, I have come to accept, with many misgivings, the increasing collapse of the distinction between diaspora and dispersion. When ethnics, exiles, expatriates, refugees, asylum seekers, labor migrants, queer communities, domestic service workers, executives of transnational corporations, and transnational sex workers are all labeled diasporas, the struggle to maintain distinctions is lost...’ (2007, 648).

While it is laudable to maintain the distinction between dispersion caused by catastrophic origins and dispersion motivated by economic reasons, contemporary movements spurred by globalisation and transnationalism mean that distinctions are often blurred. Although the majority of diasporas are formed from traumatic experiences, the present thesis has consistently argued that diasporas can be formed even if their origins are not catastrophic. As the thesis has shown, Zimbabweans migrated to Britain using different strategies such as the ancestral route, student route, asylum route and work-permit route. Social scientists need to deconstruct and problematise these bureaucratic categories formulated by nation-states, rather than using them as a basis for defining diaspora.

Moreover, the Zimbabwean diaspora fits into Koser's departure (2003) from the dominant model of the African diaspora, which considers the dispersal of Africans as a result of the slave trade, and suggests the emergence of new African diasporas. As Koser (2003, 3) argues, 'a preoccupation with slavery and its descendents has diverted our attention from striking new patterns and processes associated with recent migrations.' For instance, the Somali diaspora, the Eritrean diaspora and the Ghanaian diaspora, are some of the examples of the new emerging African diasporas.

9.3 Diaspora and homeland

This research has shown that the majority of respondents emphasise the centrality of the homeland in their everyday lives. Diasporans maintain connection with the homeland by engaging in transnational diaspora politics, keeping kinship ties, sending remittances and in their attitudes towards return or settlement. Transnational diaspora politics is defined as giving financial support to the MDC; as an alternative democratic space from the shrinking and repressive conditions in the homeland; as internationalising the Zimbabwean crisis; and as an avenue for settlement in the hostland. Hence, Zimbabweans engaged in diaspora politics in Britain do not consider themselves as a government-in-exile. For the majority of the respondents, fear of being perceived as 'puppets of the West' and siding with neo-colonialists, means they do not consider forming a political party in the diaspora. The four-fold classification of the Zimbabwean diaspora as visible members, epistemic members, dormant members and silent members has demonstrated that the majority of Zimbabweans participate differently in transnational diaspora politics.

Moreover, the classification of Zimbabweans engaged in transnational diaspora politics has shown the characteristics of social actors, and their mode of participation in political activism. Scholars have shown that migrants maintained strong attachments with their homeland by participating in transnational activities across two or more nation states (Basch et al. 1994; Faist 2000; Vertovec 1999). However, it has remained unclear who the actual members are, and the characteristics of those engaged in transnational activities. The thesis has demonstrated that visible members and epistemic members of the diaspora are the main actors of transnational diaspora politics. They correspond to what has been referred to broadly as 'core transnationalism', intensely active in political activities in Britain.

As the thesis has argued, participating in political activism in the diaspora should be expanded from those visible in the public space, to include those engaged in cyberspace political activism (epistemic members). Dormant members of the diaspora may also suggest 'expanded transnationalism', that is, occasional participation in political activism (see Guarnizo cited by Levitt 2001a). Similarly, Itzigsohn et al. (1999) refer to narrow and broad transnationalism. Whereas narrow transnationalism is defined as those people engaged in regular economic, political, social or cultural practices within transnational social field, broad transnationalism describes people involved in intermittent activities across borders. Silent members may slip into non-members because either they have fully assimilated and integrated into the host country or they have conjured up alternative identifications, which do not emphasise connection to the original homeland. Although silent members' activities may be described as diasporic, they are not transnational, insofar as they lack any connection to the original homeland. One

interpretation is that as silent members integrate and assimilate in the hostland, this can result in the disappearance of the diaspora. Thus, the thesis makes modest contributions to the notion of transnational diaspora politics and its sparse literature in Europe when compared to research on the other side of the Atlantic.

Although, critics of the classical diaspora definition have de-emphasised the homeland as an essential criterion of diaspora (Anthias 1998; Clifford 1994), evidence from this study re-emphasises the importance of homeland in Zimbabweans' experience of the diaspora. In addition to transnational diaspora politics (see chapter five), strong connections linking diasporans with their homeland are articulated primarily through remittances, transnational ties and real or symbolic attachments, expressed through music, language, and food at social and religious gatherings in the hostland (*gochi-gochi*, the pub and diaspora congregations).

The Zimbabwean diaspora in Britain can be classified as having a 'solid' idea of homeland, in that there is empirical and historical support for it. However, to apply the solid idea of homeland to the entire diasporic group is not only too essentialist, but fails to capture the diverse meanings of homeland as expressed by different members of the collective group. In terms of transnational diaspora politics, visible and epistemic members may be consistent with the solid idea of homeland; dormant members correspond to a 'ductile' idea of homeland (see Cohen 2007). Silent members, by denying an association to an original homeland and preferring their connection to a non-existent entity (Rhodesia) or to another diaspora, for example South Africa, do not correspond to the 'liquid' idea of homeland. Indeed, diasporic groups may move through different generations from having 'solid',

‘ductile’, ‘liquid’ ideas of homeland, perhaps to a stage of denying the existence of one. Whereas first generation migrants might possess the ‘solid’ idea of homeland, subsequent generations might struggle to maintain strong attachment to the homeland, thereby slipping into having ‘ductile’ or ‘liquid’ ideas of homeland.

9.4 Remittances and attitudes of return

The majority of diasporans send remittances to the homeland in various forms. As the thesis has demonstrated, Zimbabweans have been sending money to their relatives and friends, antiretroviral drugs, fuel, groceries, *magonyeti* [articulated Lorries] and commuter omnibuses. It can be suggested that what is keeping Zimbabwe going right now is the foreign currency inflows from its diaspora. The remittances are significant in the context of high unemployment and hyperinflation and critical shortages of basic commodities such as fuel, food and medicines.

This research adds to Bloch’s (2006; 2008) findings that Zimbabweans in Britain are active in keeping transnational exchanges with family and relatives in the homeland. As Bloch (2008, 302) puts it, ‘eighty per cent of respondents remitted money to Zimbabwe and economic exchanges between Zimbabweans in the UK and in Zimbabwe were regular and had been sustained over many years.’ Analytic estimates suggest that there are more than 200,000 Zimbabweans in Britain. Community money transfer agencies require Zimbabweans to send more than £50 per transaction. If we assume that each individual send eight transactions of £50 pounds per year, then two thirds of Zimbabweans in Britain would remit £40 million pounds per year, £10 million more than the £30 million British aid to Zimbabwe in 2007/2008 (DFID 2007). Hence, the presence of the Zimbabwean diaspora in Britain constitutes a potentially exploitable resource that represents a

significant developmental challenge for the country. The challenge is to investigate the practical significance, nature and content of diasporic identifications and activities and ways in which diaspora activities can be harnessed for the country's social, economic and political development (see Davies 2007).

The full potential of the diaspora can only be realised if a mutual and trusting relationship exists between the diaspora and the homeland government. Now, uneasy relationship exists between the diaspora and the homeland government. If diaspora capital is to be tapped, then it is important for government to engage the diaspora in productive ways designed to rebuild the country. As Davies argues, 'African nations have been far slower to realise the developmental potential of migration beyond the flow of remittances which have overtaken the continent's declining export earnings and official development assistance' (2007, 61).

If the Zimbabwean crisis is resolved, will the right to return be claimed by both men and women? A gendered approach to understanding women's and men's orientation towards returning to the country of origin or settling permanently in the country of destination consistently demonstrated that in most cases, where women have gained gender equality as a result of migration, they have a propensity to settle, rather than desiring to return. The majority of men in this study characterised their diaspora as a temporary condition, while the majority of women regard their diaspora as a permanent condition. Hence, this shows that the idea of homeland, which appears solid, is also a fractured one.

9.5 Problems in the hostland

Besides examining how the diaspora relates to the homeland, the thesis explored the participation of migrants in the labour market to evaluate their settlement outcomes. One of the major findings of this research relates to how migration has caused radical changes in the life circumstances of migrants. In spite of the language capital, human capital and social capital, the majority of Zimbabweans in the diaspora experience deskilling as they work in 'feminised' occupations that they are not trained for.

What is conspicuous about most of the black Zimbabweans in the labour market is the way they have become indispensable in the health sector and service sector of the industry. Structural barriers faced by migrants in formalising their qualifications, immigration status, institutional discrimination and everyday racism explain why the majority of migrants are not doing well in spite of the human capital acquired in their country of origin. Thus, ascribed social characteristics such as ethnicity and race play significant roles in determining the social mobility of migrants in the hostland. This has led some respondents to construct their diaspora experience as being akin to the biblical exile in Babylon and Egypt. However, in terms of gender the findings suggest an upward mobility in terms of women's social and economic status while men experience downward mobility. Future research may need to explore the gendered intersection of personal losses and gains between men and women in the diaspora and how that influences the future of the 'traditional' family.

Contrary to studies which reveal a high rate of unemployment among Britain's ethnic minorities, this research shows high levels of labour market participation

among the Zimbabwean diaspora, even for undocumented migrants. However, migrants participate in low-level health and service sectors of the labour market. Explanations of their labour market position lie partly in pre-migration characteristics such as their fluency in English language, partly in their human capital, which has not been fully realised, but equally so in the existence of strong migrant networks.

The predominant focus of most research on ethnic minorities and the labour market is centred on groups originally from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and black Caribbeans, with African (sometimes black African) being an add-on, barely visible-category. Hence, there is a gap in theorising about how black African migrants relate to the labour market in Britain. This research offers a modest contribution to the study of African ethnic minority in Britain and their labour market experiences.

Describing the salient features of diaspora, Safran (2005, 37) points to how diaspora members 'believe that they are not, and perhaps cannot be, fully accepted by their host society and therefore feel partly alienated and insulated from it.' Consequently, as classical diaspora theorists argue, hostile conditions such as discrimination, prejudice and racism in the places of settlement may heighten migrants' attachment to their original or imagined homeland.

The unceasing economic and political crises in the homeland provide the basis for a shared sense of despair and anguish in the diaspora. Whereas some have translated the anguish into pragmatic sources of political activism (visible and epistemic members), others have receded to the periphery of the diaspora (to a lesser extent dormant members but also largely silent members).

9.6 Diasporic identities

While the concept of diaspora has been theorised emphasizing solidarity and collective identity, the Zimbabwean diaspora does not represent a cohesive identity but fragmented identities. Early diaspora scholars have generally constructed diasporic identities in essentialistic and unitary fashion, with phrases like the 'Jewish identity', 'Palestinian identity' and 'Irish identity' denoting migrants as homogeneous ethnic communities. However, the concept of diaspora, by emphasising a static and singular conception of group identity, removes the distinctive ways in which diasporic life has been experienced: for example, overt forms of racism and discrimination in Wigan, the painful experience of exclusion endured by undocumented migrants in the labour market and demeaning care work, experiences that apply more to black Zimbabweans than it does for white Zimbabweans. Thus, a diaspora identity would flatten the different narratives and conditions in Britain into a coherent story which does not adequately describe the lived experiences in the diaspora. A notion of diaspora that emphasises homogeneity may be blind to the differing realities of disempowered groups. Using the term 'fractured diaspora' instead points to multiple meanings of crystallised and shifting notion of identities.

Cornell and Hartmann (1998) point out three primary issues that intersect in identity construction, that is, the boundary that separates the group members from non-members, the perceived position within society, and the meaning attached to the identity. The UK government and the media stereotype Zimbabweans in the country as predominantly asylum seekers and refugees. This kind of categorisation, strengthened by the political and economic crisis besetting Zimbabwe over the last decade to the present time, has helped to construct an

image of Zimbabweans in Britain as primarily a refugee diaspora. However, individually and collectively, Zimbabweans reject the refugee identity and construct alternative diasporic identities that place emphasis on religion, race, political belonging, gender, and longing for the homeland.

Zimbabweans articulate diasporic identities by making reference to the homeland through language, shared music, shared food, beer and the painful and unbearable conditions in the place of settlement. The pub and *gochi-gochi* are community spaces where sentimental bonds are etched, recycled and given a 'natural' basis in a hostland that frequently reminds them that they are the 'other'. One interpretation is that the pub and *gochi-gochi* can be perceived as cultural reservoirs as well as sites for remaking of identities instrumental for the bonding of the group together. As the pub is a predominantly male space, it shows how the formation of collective identities in the diaspora is encouraged by old patriarchy and cultural elites determined to preserve distinct pre-migration traditions.

The Vigil is a space where political identities are prominent. It was the only site where I found Zimbabweans from different racial, ethnic and gendered boundaries. What reinforced collective solidarity at the Vigil were evocative issues of asylum seekers, common experiences of suffering (demeaning care work and racism) in the hostland and the lack of international help in resolving the Zimbabwean crises. For those who have overstayed their visa or had their asylum cases rejected, life is punctuated by constant fear of arrest, detention and deportation to Zimbabwe. 'Increasingly, "deportation, detention and, most recently, dispersal have become "normalized", "essential" instruments in the ongoing attempt to control or manage immigration to Britain' (Bloch and Schuster 2005, 491). The majority of

Zimbabweans were aware of the Labour government's double standards of condemning the ZANU-PF government's human rights record yet simultaneously deporting failed asylum seekers to the country.

As I moved to Wigan, a city in the north of England, ethnic difference was not significant in forging community cohesion, but the mere fact of being a Zimbabwean. People from different ethnic groups were in solidarity in the diaspora. Yet the same kind of congenial environment was less evident in places like Coventry, where, for example, continuous playing of Shona or Ndebele music might be a source of tension. Meanwhile, unmistakably Zimbabweans in Birmingham were proud of their Zimbabweanness, something I did not come across in my fieldwork in Coventry or later on in Wigan. The realisation by respondents in Wigan that outward markers that point to their national identity may be detrimental to themselves contrasts sharply with my findings in Birmingham, where even undocumented migrants would put stickers of the Zimbabwean flag on their cars.

Diaspora congregations provided members with a sense of community solidarity, resources and spiritual comfort. These are spaces to socialise with co-ethnics, converse in the mother tongue, have a sense of belonging and strive to search for meaning in a particularly challenging hostland. Tigere explains why they hold a separate Shona mass: 'I feel I am at prayer when I pray in my language. There is a difference when I pronounce "*Mwari Baba*" in my language and when I say "Lord". When I say "*Mwari Baba*" I feel much closer to God than when I say "Lord".' As the quotation shows, diaspora congregations were spaces that

maintained a distinct Zimbabwean identity, insofar as they used Shona and Ndebele languages in their church service.

Even more so, the phenomenon of diaspora congregations provided migrants with spaces to escape racism and discrimination in the hostland, and consequently, help in forging group solidarity. The absence of proximate extended family and friends in the diaspora means that diaspora congregations are not only sources of spiritual solace, but provide social, material and financial support to its members in times of need. Diaspora congregations are spaces where ineffable feelings of solidarity are exemplified in pragmatic ways such as helping undocumented migrants in searching for jobs, accommodation and sending remittances. Hirschman (2004) explained how migrants joined or found religious organisations as expressions of their historical identity as well as their commitment to building a local community in their new country.

Diasporic identities were socially and historically constructed and reconstructed, and any sense of a collective identity among the Zimbabwean diaspora is contingent and constantly shifting. Zimbabweans create and maintain diasporic identities that exhibit strong connections with the homeland as a way of escaping their minority status in the hostland where they are regarded as refugees and economic migrants. Thus, identity manoeuvring entails a reconciliation of one's cultural identity with one's socially ascribed status. As this study has shown, the pub, *gochi-gochis*, the Vigil and diaspora congregations provide diasporans with platforms to enjoy majority status and exercise a sense of belonging to a community. Thus, political, cultural and religious identities expressed through the Vigil, *gochi-gochi* and diaspora congregations are bottom-up forms of resistance to

racism and discrimination and the hostland government's policy on Zimbabwean asylum seekers.

Others have argued that diasporic identities rely on territorial and primordial connections with the homeland, the very basis of the formation of nation-states. As Soysal (2000, 3) argues,

The primary orientation and attachment of diasporic populations is to their homelands and cultures; and their claims and citizenship practices arise from this home-bound, ethnic-based orientation. In other words, diaspora is a way of theorizing formations that are ethnocultural, and that constitute foreignness within other nations and ethnicities.

Insofar as primordial elements are points of identification for the Zimbabwean diaspora in Britain, hard conditions in Britain are in themselves instrumental in the emergence of Zimbabwean identities. Perhaps there is a resemblance to Marx's analysis of the rise of class consciousness among the industrial proletariat?

The thesis has deconstructed the notion of ethnicity among Zimbabweans in Britain; there are not only white and black Zimbabweans but also Shona and Ndebele ethnic groups. Hence, it can be argued that the diaspora is also fractured in terms of ethnicity. Yet Anthias (1998) and other scholars have described diaspora as relying on a conception of ethnic bonds as central elements of the social organisation. As Anthias (1998, 558) argues, 'the concept of diaspora, whilst focusing on transnational processes and commonalities, does so by deploying a notion of ethnicity which privileges the point of 'origin' in constructing identity and solidarity. In the process it also fails to examine trans-ethnic commonalities and relations...'. As this study has shown, ethnicity is not

the central organising feature of the Zimbabwean diaspora; it is the common experience of coming from a homeland gripped by economic and political crises and hostile conditions in the hostland.

Fixed and reductive (essentialist) forms of identity are often contrasted with multiple, fragmented, and shifting senses of identity. Some have called it the hard and soft versions of identity (Brubaker and Cooper 2000). The growth of postmodernist and poststructuralist social theory has challenged hard notions of identity. Social constructionists, influenced by postmodernism, draw attention to transnational and deterritorialised identities as a means of criticising unitary notions of diaspora and identity. As Adamson and Demetriou (2007, 497) argue, ‘whereas nation-states consist largely of territorialized institutional structures, diasporas consist of deterritorialized organizational structures and transnational networks of relationships.’ This coheres with Vertovec’s descriptive definition of a diaspora as ‘any population that is considered “deterritorialised” or “transnational” – that is, which has originated in a land other than that which it currently resides, and whose social, economic, and political networks cross the borders of nation-states or, indeed, span the globe’ (1997, 277). Some have argued that migrants retain original identities from the country of origin and combine them with those in the country of settlement and so develop hybrid identities (Pedraza 1999).

9.7 Gender and diaspora

The thesis has shown that both public and private spaces of the diaspora are important arenas in the construction and reconstruction of gendered identities. As the thesis has shown, men and women are positioned differently in the homeland and in the hostland. Gender differentiation adds to other significant factors such as

ethnicity, immigration status and political belonging in shaping the positions of men and women in the hostland. The entering of women into the productive sphere has increased their decision-making power in diaspora households. While power relations between husbands and wives remain a contested area within households, in public spaces attitudes and gender roles remain the same as they were prior to migration. Religious and social spaces provide for the affirmation of more traditional roles and relations, roles and relations that are being transformed in the private sphere.

Thus, the diaspora has been a contested space into which gender relations and roles internal to the group are being compared and contrasted with those of the destination country. For the majority of women, the diaspora conditions help them to question basic assumptions about traditional gender roles and relations and consequently carve out new gendered identities within households. The challenging of patriarchal traditions in the hostland in terms of women's primary migrant status and financial autonomy, different labour market experiences of men and women, and egalitarian laws in the hostland has caused tensions and conflicts within diaspora households. Thus, migration has resulted in a significant number of men losing not only their traditional role as head of the family but also their professional identity, an important aspect of one's identity. The primary migrant assumes the role of being a breadwinner of the family and in the majority of cases these are women in the nursing and teaching professions (see chapter six).

Although participating in productive work provides women with increased power within households, the lack of community solidarity in the hostland, a feature previously enjoyed in the homeland, leads them to use religion as a point of

identification. Just as much as Zimbabweans drive hundred of miles to buy meat in Milton Keynes, attend Mutukudzi's⁶⁵ musical show in Leicester, London or Leeds, diaspora congregations provide spaces not only for religious experiences but also the desire to consume homeland language, music and cultural products. One further interpretation is that men use religious spaces as a form of public resistance to changes happening within the domestic sphere in a bid to maintain pre-migration gender relations and roles. The diaspora has also seen the rise of 'move in' households, which involve a contract between two individuals as opposed to the traditional Shona or Ndebele marriage, which is family contract. Another emerging phenomenon is that of lone parent households.

The premise of feminist critique of diaspora has been that the concept tends to obscure or even silence internal differentiations and power dynamics within migrant groups. Feminist scholars have argued for the importance of gender in the constitution of transnational spaces and the construction of diaspora and transnational communities (Brah 1996; Dannecker 2005; Mahler and Pessar 2006). However, the few studies that explore the nexus of diaspora and gender have generally concentrated on women's experiences and lacked a more nuanced understanding of men's lives in migration as well. This thesis contributed to the gendering of the diaspora by exploring the public and private spaces in the diaspora and the way they are gendered, looking at both men and women. The theme that has run throughout this thesis is how migration has caused radical changes to the gender relations and roles between men and women in Britain.

⁶⁵ Oliver Mutukudzi, just like other Zimbabwean musicians, makes quarterly visits from the homeland so as to play musical shows to the Zimbabwean audience.

9.8 Further work

The thesis is one of the few scholarly attempts to investigate the experiences of the Zimbabwean diaspora in Britain. Although the thesis provided sufficient data on the articulation of the diaspora in Britain, further research on how the diaspora is constituted in other countries such as South Africa, Botswana, Australia and Canada would add further insight about the nature of the Zimbabwean diaspora globally.

Assuming the political and economic crisis in Zimbabwe is resolved and the diaspora returns, will the gains which women have realised remain? Will men reinforce their privileged position again pointing to Zimbabwean 'culture' and the laws that favour them? Or is the returning diaspora maybe a vehicle for changing gender relations in the homeland? These may be questions for future research. Another area that needs to be explored is the role of the Zimbabwean diaspora as a potential tourism market when their strong links to the homeland is considered. It can be speculated that diaspora tourism, facilitated by the global circulations of capital, goods, ideas, information and people, represents a new possibility for the Zimbabwean government to revamp its tourist industry.

Another suggestion to advance the findings of this study would be to explore the emergence of Zimbabwean diasporic congregations in Britain. What is the role of religion in the migration process? What role does religion play in the settlement process in the hostland?

Appendix 1: Overview of respondents

Respondent	Year entering Britain		Immigration status ⁶⁶	Age	Gender	Ethnicity	Marital status	Family size
	1967	1976						
Mthokhozisi	1967	1976	Documented	61+	Male	Ndebele	Married	7 children#
Mathew	1976	1979	Documented	41-50	Male	Shona	Married	4 children
David	1979	1980	Documented	61+	Male	White Zim	Married	2 children
Precious	1980	1984	Documented	51-60	Female	White Zim	Married	3 children
Mduduzi	1984	1985	Documented*	41-50	Female	Ndebele	Married	4 children
Phumuzile	1985	1986	Documented	41-50	Female	Ndebele	Divorced	3 children#
Patricia	1986	1997	Documented	41-50	Female	Ndebele	Married	2 children
Richard	1997	1997	Documented	18-30	Male	White Zim	Single	none
Ndunduzo	1997	1997	Undocumented	41-50	Male	Ndebele	Married	2 children
Fidelis	1997	1997	Documented	31-40	Male	Shona	Married	2 children
Tapfumanei	1997	1997	Documented	31-40	Male	Shona	Single	none
Bernard	1998	1998	Documented	31-40	Male	Shona	Married	2 children
Rudo	1998	1998	Documented	31-40	Female	Shona	Divorced	1 child
Sihle	1998	1998	Undocumented	31-40	Female	Ndebele	Divorced	2 children
Steven	1998	1998	Documented	31-40	Male	Shona	Married	3 children
Prosper	1998	1999	Documented	31-40	Male	Shona	Married	1 child
Blessing	1999	1999	Undocumented	31-40	Female	Ndebele	Married	1 child
Hlangani	1999	1999	Documented	41-50	Male	Ndebele	Married	3 children
Kennedy	1999	2000	Undocumented	18-30	Male	Shona	Single	none
Farai	2000		Documented	31-40	Male	Shona	Married	2 children

⁶⁶ Immigration status at the time of the interview.

* = estimate

= assumes the number of children

White Zim = White Zimbabwean

Respondent	Year entering Britain		Immigration status ⁶⁷	Age	Gender	Ethnicity	Marital status	Family size
	Year	status						
Tonderai	2000	Documented	31-40	Male	Shona	Married	2 children	
Rutendo	2000	Documented	41-50	Male	Shona	Married	2 children#	
Grace	2000	Documented	41-50	Female	White Zim	Married	1 child	
Vimbai	2000	Undocumented	18-30	Female	Shona	Single	none	
Tigere	2001	Undocumented	41-50	Male	Shona	Single	none	
Memory	2001	Documented*	31-40	Female	Mixed race	Married	2 children	
Margaret	2001	Undocumented*	18-30	Female	Shona	Single	none	
Kudakwashe	2001	Documented	31-40	Female	Shona	Married	2 children	
Nozipho	2001	Undocumented	18-30	Female	Ndebele	Single	none	
Florence	2001	Documented	18-30	Female	Shona	Married	2 children	
Tendai	2002	Undocumented	18-30	Male	Shona	Married	none	
Phathisa	2002	Undocumented	18-30	Female	Ndebele	Single	none	
John	2002	Documented	41-50	Male	White Zim	Married	2 children	

⁶⁷ Immigration status at the time of the interview.

* = estimate

= assumes the number of children

White Zim = White Zimbabwean

Appendix 2: Fieldwork timetable

July to September, 2005	Coventry
October to December, 2005	Birmingham
January to March, 2006	London
April to June, 2006	Wigan

Appendix 3: Interview guide

Biographical detail

Questions relating to the interviewee's sex, occupation, marital status and education.

Migration dynamics

Can you describe the circumstances that led to your decision to leave Zimbabwe?

Could you please share with me your experience of coming to the UK? Did you have any friends or relatives living in the UK at the time?

Settlement and marginality

For how long have you been living in the UK and what is your main activity?

What sector of employment do you work in now or did you work in most recently? Are there any similarities and differences between living in Zimbabwe and living in the UK? What are the major problems you have encountered so far?

What are your biggest fears?

Transnational ties

Do you maintain social contact with members of your family in Zimbabwe? How often are you in contact with members of your family in Zimbabwe? Do you send money to Zimbabwe? Which methods do you use when sending money to Zimbabwe?

Gendering the diaspora

If comparing the roles men and women have in Zimbabwe and the way you live today, what are the differences and similarities? Who makes decisions in the household? Who in your household decides whether to purchase a major household item, such as a television? Who mainly decides how the money you

earn will be used? Who does most of the housework? In what way is this similar or different from your experiences in Zimbabwe?

Identity

Would you describe yourself as Zimbabwean or British? Are you proud to be identified as a Zimbabwean? Do you speak Shona/Ndebele with your friends? Where do you meet other Zimbabweans in the UK and how do you relate to them? Reflecting on your self-identity and sense of attachment to both Zimbabwe and the UK, where is your home? Where do you belong? Do you prepare Zimbabwean dishes in your home? Where do you buy the ingredients? What kind of music do you listen to (Zimbabwean, African or Western)?

Diaspora politics and networks

Do you support any political party in Zimbabwe? If so, was this the reason for leaving Zimbabwe? Do you think political mobilisation abroad makes a difference in Zimbabwe? Are you part of any network that motivates people for political and social action about the Zimbabwean situation?

Future plans and aspirations

What if Zimbabwe's political and economic situations change for the better, do you intend to stay and settle permanently in the UK or return home? Can you tell me more about your experiences in the UK? What is most important to you now? Do you own property or land in Zimbabwe? Do you have long term plans of buying property or land in Zimbabwe? Is there anything else that you would you want people to know about your experience in living in the UK?

Appendix 4: British immigration policies

Year	Policy
1980	The basis of the work-permit system for non EEA skilled migrants was formalised.
August 2002	From now on, overseas students were restricted from applying for NHS bursaries for nursing diploma courses in the UK
January 2002	The government introduced the Highly Skilled Migrant Programme to attract most talented people to the country.
January 2002	A moratorium on returning Zimbabweans because the situation was considered volatile and dangerous.
November 2002	The introduction of visas on all Zimbabweans travelling to the UK
November 2004	The government resume the removal of failed asylum seekers from the country to Zimbabwe
October 2005	The Asylum and Immigration Tribunal (AIT) blocks the removal of failed asylum seekers from Zimbabwe for security reasons.
August 2006	Nursing is removed from UK's list shortage occupations making it difficult for foreign nurses to obtain or extend UK work permits

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