

# “WHEN IN JOBURG RELATIVES SHOW THEIR TRUE COLOURS”: *The changing role of the family as a source of social capital among Zimbabwean migrants in Johannesburg*

## Abstract

This study analyses the changing role of the family as a source of social capital in aiding migration, settlement and social integration of Zimbabwean migrants. The study is based on qualitative interviews with 58 Zimbabwean migrants in Tembisa and Kempton Park in Johannesburg metropolitan city. The article makes an important contribution to literature revealing how as a result of decreased chances to get a good job, pressure to remit back home and expectations to look after newcomers, Zimbabwean migrant families are experiencing economic strain resulting in tense and hostile relations and rejection of new migrants.

## Keywords

Family • hostility • migrants • opportunity structure • Social capital

Received 1 February, 2014; Accepted 11 June, 2015

Chipo Hungwe

Human Resource Management Department, Midlands State University, Zimbabwe.

## 1 Introduction

Studies on Zimbabwean migrants in South Africa, Britain, Botswana and elsewhere in the world have generally reflected how family, friends and sometimes religious networks have aided the migration and settlement of new migrants (Bloch 2010; Crush and Tawodzera 2011; Landau and Wa Kabwe-Segatti 2009; Matshaka 2010; Rutherford 2010; Tevera & Zinyama 2002; Veary 2008; Zinyama 2002). They show how migrants depend on social and religious networks for information both within Zimbabwe and in the new host country. Indeed, these networks have helped migrants access jobs, houses, marriage partners, legal and illegal documents, and such. What has not been adequately captured by existing literature is the changing nature of family/kin relations that have deteriorated mainly due to harsh economic conditions that have narrowed the opportunity structure for migrants. This is the gap that the current study aims to address, showing how family relations among migrants in Zimbabwe have become hostile to the extent that it can be argued that family members are repelling new migrants and ill-treating those that have the misfortune of being unemployed. This line of argument has not been pursued in the literature of Zimbabwean migrants in South Africa, much of which has concentrated on the relationships between Zimbabweans and locals and how they fair at work, in hospitals and schools and on remittance behaviour of Zimbabweans (Chikanda 2011; Makina 2010, Maphosa 2007).

Literature elsewhere has already shown how family members and other migrant networks have become hostile to newcomers and in some cases, are beginning to redirect them elsewhere (Collyer 2005; Korinek, Entwisle & Jampaklay 2005; Menjivar 1995; 1997)

and how migrants lack collective solidarity (Madhavan and Landau 2011). Starting recently, an attempt is being made to understand preference for friends rather than family among Zimbabweans in Botswana by Mutsindikwa and Gelderblom (2014) who mainly explain the deterioration of family relations as consequences of the economic collapse and excessive downward mobility in Zimbabwe that increased competition for resources and reduced solidarity among kin. Sibanda (2010) also explained how Zimbabwean migrants in Johannesburg began to see some of their kin as ‘burdens’ but did not explore the reasons for such a perception.

This study explains why some migrants are viewed as ‘burdens’ by their kin; attributing the weakening of family ties to strains in the family structure, hardships in the labour market and pressure to remit from family members in Zimbabwe. All these factors create a narrow opportunity structure for established/older migrants, thus making it difficult for them to look after their newly arrived kin. Worby (2010) similarly studied how Zimbabwean migrants in central Johannesburg (Alexandra, Hillbrow) hide or disconnect from their relatives who intended visiting them and in the process, abandoned them. Such findings need to be complemented, expanded and accounted for through an understanding of the opportunity structure faced by Zimbabweans in South Africa. This study seeks to do just that, yet in a different and under-researched geographical location of Tembisa and Kempton Park.

Since the family is such an important institution in terms of determining who migrates and who does not (Stark and Bloom 1985), this study focuses on this particular network of relations instead of other

\* E-mail: hungwec@msu.ac.zw

migrant networks created on the basis of ethnicity, religion, and so forth. The study categorises Zimbabwean migrants as transmigrants, utilising the concept of transnationalism by Glick Schiller, Basch and Blanc-Szanton (2004) to explain how family members possess multiple obligations and identities both in the country of origin and destination. These family members themselves maintain fluid relations in both countries as a strategy of minimising risks associated with belonging to one nation. One of the mechanisms of maintaining membership in the country of origin is through remittance. This strategy has, among other factors, exerted pressure on the already vulnerable migrants and, in many cases, increased the urge to be hostile to newcomers. In this study, the term family is loosely employed to refer to members of the same kin group including the extended family.

## 2 Migrant social capital and opportunity structure

Locating this study within the debates of bonding, bridging and linking social capital affords it an opportunity to contribute towards the growing literature on social capital. This article locates the family/kin group within bonding social capital and adds to the view that bonding social capital 'both constrains and liberates' just as the hammer can be used to build a house and vandalise it (Woolcock 2005:219). This is so because the same family/kin group that aids initial migration to Johannesburg keeps on sending new migrants (who expect to be helped with accommodation, food, etc. at least until they have found their feet) to old/established migrants, while at the same time, expecting remittances back home. The piling up of this kind of pressure on the established migrants often leads to frustrations and eventually, the urge to disconnect as will be revealed in the discussion section.

Portes (1998: 6) highlights that social capital refers to the ability of actors to secure benefits by virtue of membership in social networks or other social ties. Portes and Landolt (2000:531) outline three ways that social capital has been defined: as a source of social control, a source of family-mediated benefits and a source of resources mediated by non-family networks. Putnam (2000 cited in Wilson 2006:349) distinguishes between 'bonding' and 'bridging' forms of social capital where bonding refers to the connections between like-minded/similar people and therefore reinforces homogeneity, while bridging capital refers to connections between heterogeneous groups. Woolcock (2005) identifies linking social capital as referring to ties that span power differentials. So, while bonding and bridging social capital may be viewed as referring to horizontal ties/networks of people of similar status, linking social capital concerns vertical connections with powerful members of public and private institutions.

There are clear benefits of social capital in the form of social networks that help the settlement of a new migrant in the receiving country. It lowers the costs of migration and offers psycho-social support to the new migrant. Migrant networks can help with the acquisition of information on the migration process itself; in the host country, networks aid in providing employment, accommodation, food, security, valuable services, such as child minding, emergency cash and even capital for businesses (Menjivar 1995; 1997; Dolfin and Genicot 2010; Woolcock and Narayan 2000). They may also serve as conduits for information that can ultimately lead to further migration (Collyer 2005; Korinek *et al* 2005).

However, social capital in the form of social networks presents both benefits and drawbacks. Sometimes bonds to migrant networks and families may lead to co-ethnic exploitation, especially for the extremely marginalised members of the group, thus entrenching

them in never-ending financial and emotional indebtedness. (Adler and Kwon 2000; Daly and Silver 2008; Hagan 1998; Krissman 2005; Lin 2000; Menjivar 1995, 1997; Ostrom 2000; Portes 1998; Portes and Landolt 2000; Portes and Sensenbrenner 1993; Woolcock and Narayan 2000; Wilson 2006). Portes and Landolt (2000) highlight four negative consequences of social capital: exclusion of outsiders, excess claims on group members, restrictions on individual freedoms and downward levelling norms. Terms such as negative social capital (Portes and Landolt 2000), perverse social capital (Woolcock and Narayan 2000), encapsulation (Granovetter 1973) and structural holes (Burt 2004) reveal the costs and dangers of social capital. Moreover, social capital may further perpetuate inequality and power differentials among members of a particular network.

This study maintains that while migrants may use different forms of social capital, their capacity to receive new migrants may also be constrained by the opportunity structure/structure of opportunity (I use these terms interchangeably) and challenges within the destination country. I adopt Menjivar's (1995:220) argument that "the structure of opportunity in the receiving country affects how one is received and their ability to help others. This structure of opportunity includes the state's reception of migrants, local labour market opportunities, the receiving community, which includes the history of particular migrations flows and the internal dynamics of the migrant groups". With regard to family /kin networks, newcomers may fail to get help if network members exist in an extreme state of marginalisation resulting in the severing of ties and tense relations among network members (Collyer 2005; Korinek *et al* 2005; Menjivar 1995, 1997; Worby 2010).

## 3 A description of research approach, methods and site

This study is based on the findings of a qualitative research that was conducted in 2012 among 58 (33 males and 25 females) Zimbabweans living in Tembisa (low-income area) and Kempton Park (high-income area) in the greater Johannesburg metropolitan area within the Gauteng province. Johannesburg is the largest city in South Africa and is considered the economic hub of the country with a population of about 4.4 million. It has a long history of both local and international migration. Forty percent of about three million international migrants are in the Gauteng province. Johannesburg has more of these migrants than any other areas in the province (Statistics South Africa 2012).

The areas under study are located about 25 km north of Johannesburg central on the east rand. They fall under the Ekurhuleni metropolitan municipality, which is a part of the greater Johannesburg metropolitan area. Tembisa is said to be the second largest township (with over 511,671 people according to the 2011 census) after Soweto. Kempton Park is the city closest to Tembisa with over 171,000 people (Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality 2012–2015). As stated in the theoretical framework, the two areas are less researched, although they have high populations of Zimbabwean migrants just as much as the more researched areas such as Alexandra, Benoni, Hillbrow, Orange farm and Yeoville.

The researcher used personal connections and referrals assisted in accessing participants. The research is mainly based on life history interviews/narratives and participant observation. Life history interviews are geared towards understanding the migrants' whole life course (Van Nieuwenhuyze 2009). Narratives afford the opportunity to listen to and grasp migrants' stories. Riessman (2008) argues that narratives generate detailed accounts rather than brief

answers or general statements. She defines narratives as stories told by research participants and interpretive accounts developed by an investigator based on interviews and field observations. To increase the validity of my findings, I carried out second and third interviews with 24 informants in order to substantiate my analyses. Polkinghorne (2005) advises against 'one short' interviews (where the participant is only interviewed once) as they do not afford the researcher the needed full and detailed descriptions that form the hallmark of qualitative research. I also engaged in participant observation (I participated in church activities, family dinners and attended a book club meeting with some migrants), compared migrant stories and employed data triangulation.

Participants were asked questions on the following themes: when and how they migrated, who sponsored the journey, who provided accommodation and food before getting a job, who helped to get the first job, the kinds of jobs they did, their evaluation of the labour market and employer preferences, their evaluation of family demands and obligations and whether they were still in contact with their family members.

The research used the interactive data analysis framework by Miles and Huberman (1994). Through the three processes of data reduction, data display and drawing and verification of conclusions, this method allowed me to classify data, identify emerging themes, display data through tables and come up with explanations and conclusions. All the interviews were recorded on audio and transcribed by the researcher. Tables were generated through the Statistical Package for Social Sciences Programme (SPSS). This article uses pseudonyms in order to protect the privacy of the participants.

The research participants had been in South Africa for at least 6 months. Forty seven out of fifty eight migrants had been in Johannesburg for more than 5 years. Forty three had legal stay in South Africa through use of documents such as the work permit, asylum seeker's permit, permanent residence permit and fraudulently acquired South African identity books; the remaining fifteen were staying illegally and could be referred to as undocumented. These Zimbabweans speak two main Zimbabwean languages: Shona and Ndebele. Fifty three out of fifty eight migrants were between the ages of twenty and thirty nine. In terms of education, 43 out of 58 had reached the Ordinary level, 11 had reached Advanced level, 2 had undergraduate degrees, while 1 had a postgraduate degree and 1 had a junior certificate (the lowest qualification in secondary school).

## 4 Migration down south: stories from the field

The migrants under study mostly migrated to South Africa between 1995 and 2008, a period characterised by great economic and political instability when the country experienced its worst economic downturn and increased political intolerance and violence (Crush and Tevera 2010; Makina 2010). Given such conditions, the new migrants needed little encouragement from 'old' migrants. In most cases, migration became a means to ensure survival and escape death (Betts and Kaytaz 2009; Rutherford 2010). However, it is also true that the desire for migration was created by stories that potential migrants received about South Africa in general and Johannesburg in particular. These stories are brought by visiting migrants on their annual visits to Zimbabwe. The returning migrants usually come back with new cars (largely borrowed - as claimed by some informants) and look good enough to create a positive image of where they are coming from. They then go on to talk at length about how easy life is and how one can move from one job to the other to the extent of convincing non-migrants to make a decision to leave. The following

narratives from Paradzayi, Bongani and Grace (please note that all migrant names used are pseudonyms) reflect the importance of the family/kin group in influencing migration:

What pained me most was that my uneducated uncles would come back boasting that they can employ me and pay me better. You are told that he is a security guard and he gets R1200. At that time, R1200 was far much more than my salary, which was equivalent to R100.

After my wedding in 2001, the economy had changed. I couldn't buy a four plate stove or even a cow with the money. I had friends and relatives here. They told me that doing art is a lucrative business in South Africa. All my family members are here.

I didn't really choose to come. My sister facilitated everything. But we had already heard good stories about South Africa and also receiving groceries from them, so it was easy for me to agree.

Migrants create and perpetuate migration through their stories to family members (non-migrants), while the mass media also plays a role in creating the desire to migrate. The perception of Johannesburg that is created is sometimes exaggerated. This is exemplified in the following narratives by Karen and Miriam, respectively:

I thought that if you are in Joburg you are in heaven. We were told stories about good life and thought you would literally pick money on the streets.

It's difficult, most Zimbabweans show their true colours when their relatives come. They promise you heaven and earth while in Zimbabwe but the moment you set your foot here everything changes.

Some migrants stated that stories of good living were heard and seen through the television. This is especially true for most Zimbabweans in Matabeleland and Midlands who had access to free SABC channels via satellite. As they watched television programmes, they created perceptions of how life in South Africa was and they desired that life. The television creates an imaginary but desirable world (King & Mai 2004; Mai 2005; Maphosa 2010). Levitt (2006:50) argues that 'non-migrants hear enough stories, look at enough photographs and watch enough videos...to begin imagining their lives elsewhere'. Sometimes the zeal to migrate among potential migrants is so strong that any negative information is ignored and those who pass negative information risk being viewed as jealous and trying to discourage others from being successful through migrating.

### 4.1 Family and migrant settlement

Migrants tended to have a family history of migration. They also tended to have somebody they knew first before coming to South Africa. This person was either a relative or a friend. For most individuals, it was the presence of relatives that gave them confidence to travel to South Africa. Fifty three out of fifty eight migrants agreed that they had family members in Johannesburg. These included parents, siblings, cousins, uncles and aunts. Migrants also made use of extended family ties including distant relatives. Only five had no relatives. However, these had friends already. Some migrants had both family members and friends in Johannesburg, so they had a wide choice in selecting whom to stay with. For example, Godfrey says:

I first stayed with my friend in Tembisa. My mom was also here but I didn't want to stay with her. I had many options. My friend had been here for a long time. I stayed 2 months with my friend and then moved out to stay on my own.

Felix also had part of his family in Johannesburg. When he came, he stayed with his mother and siblings in the two rooms that they rented in Tembisa.

Family relations seem to help more during the initial stages of arrival and settling in. However, as soon as an individual finds his/her way, other options may begin to be considered, sometimes because of strained relations with family members. Respondents' allegations about family members tend to be related to perceived jealousy and resistance to another migrant's success or generally neglect. As Daniel explains:

Relationships are strained by jealousies and hard times. If you don't have money you won't want visitors and when you have money you will not want any disturbances from family members.

#### 4.2 The causes of hostility towards new migrants

I use the concept of opportunity structure/structure of opportunity to explain why family networks become hostile to newcomers over time. While the receiving community may be evaluated as xenophobic (as is the general perception of South Africans by Zimbabweans), labour market opportunities and the internal dynamics of the migrant families are also important factors. Literature (for example, Portes 1998; Portes and Sensenbrenner 1993) reveals that in xenophobic and adverse situations, bounded solidarity increases and thus, migrants tend to unite rather than disconnect. This means that the family disintegration and rejection of other members could be a result of other factors.

Family members experience a lot of pressure from new migrants and their own hardships on the labour market render them hostile towards the more vulnerable new and sometimes undocumented migrants. The expectation that the same migrant must remit something 'back home' adds to this pressure. The following cases of Morgan, Vongai and Vivienne illustrate this argument:

I took in my mother, sister, brother-in-law and their children to come and stay with me. At one point, we were 10 in a 3-roomed flat. The caretaker was sympathetic. I would tell him I have people coming from Zimbabwe. We had problems of cutting keys for everyone.

You still have a family back home. You need to be a stepping stone for someone who wants to come to South Africa.

We are still so uncertain about the future. So, in case something goes wrong here, your home (in Zimbabwe) must be properly organised. I bought a house in Zimbabwe. I still want to invest more in terms of business, although I don't really know where my future would be. If everything was to end here in South Africa, at least I have got a house to go back to. I won't go back and be a burden. People would say; 'oh look at her, she stayed in Joburg all this time only to come back to be looked after by us!'

Forty nine out of fifty eight migrants still remit goods and money to families in Zimbabwe at least once a year. Remittance is a risk-diversification

strategy that, while endorsing the migrant as a responsible member of the family, increases the burdens of the same individual.

#### 4.2.1 Low paying and precarious jobs and their effect on the opportunity structure

As part of the narrow opportunity structure, low-paying job and precarious employment affect reactions towards new migrants and an individual's ability to help others. Thirty migrants worked in the formal sector, while twenty four worked in the informal sector and four (all women) were unemployed. Most of those in the informal sector were also self-employed. In total, self-employed migrants were seventeen. Most of the migrants worked in the following sectors: waitressing (nine), driving/transport (eight), hairdressing (three), domestic work (four), security (three), retail shops (four), construction and welding (three), information and technology (eight), accounts and finance (two) and teaching (three). These jobs were mainly on part-time and fixed-term basis. Migrants' earnings were generally low. Using the then exchange rate of 1 US Dollar = 10 ZAR, twenty three out of fifty eight migrants earned less than R3000 (or \$300) in a situation where renting a single room was at least R500 and transport costs were just as high if not more. Cumulatively, fifty two out of fifty eight migrants earned less than R15,000. This is reflected in table 1 below.

Table 1. Migrants' earnings per month

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative percent
None	4	6.9	6.9
Less than R1500	7	12.1	19
Between R1500 and R3000	16	27.6	46.6
Between R3001 and R6000	13	22.4	69
Between R6001 and R10,000	6	10.3	79.3
Above R10,000 but less than R15,000	6	10.3	89.7
Above R15,000	6	10.3	100
Total	58	100	

To further exacerbate the already precarious position of migrants was the fact that migrants perceived that while employers may want to employ Zimbabweans (because of their perceived 'zeal' to learn and better level of education, compared to locals), they still chose locals because of certain government regulations. Migrants alluded to the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE) Act of 2003 that encourages employers to promote black South African citizens into management positions. However, what migrants could have been witnessing was the implementation of the Employment Equity Act of 1998 that advocates for affirmative action towards historically disadvantaged groups, defined as designated groups that are the blacks, women and the disabled South African citizens.

The harsh conditions in the labour market have ensured that most migrants are confined to precarious jobs thus, increasing feelings of insecurity and instability. Borrowing from Reskin and



Roos' (1990) *Queuing* concept, I argue that migrants have been defined as the least attractive workers by employers and thus get the least attractive jobs. This is not because Zimbabweans are evaluated as unskilled; indeed all the participants in the study revealed that employers generally prefer Zimbabwean workers for various reasons, including better levels of education. However, because of lack of proper documentation on the part of the migrants, competition for semi-skilled and unskilled jobs with locals and also in trying to comply with government regulations (for example, concerning the employment of migrants through the Immigration Act and the need to consider locals, through the BBBEE Act), employers rationalise that foreigners are unattractive. Therefore, in keeping with the assertions by Reskin and Roos (1990), the best jobs go to the most preferred workers, while less attractive jobs go to workers lower in the labour queue. Bottom-ranked workers may go jobless. Employers who are aware of the government drive towards promoting black economic empowerment may be persuaded to employ locals (at least that is the perception Zimbabwean migrants have in explaining why they have lower paying jobs compared to some locals).

Because of these low-paying jobs, there is inability to provide for the family and thus, an adoption of hostile attitude towards the new comers. This is sometimes an indirect way of telling a relative to go. This attitude may be exacerbated by the fact that sometimes a new migrant comes uninvited. The following narrative by Hillary clarifies this point:

It was terrible. I stayed with them (uncle and aunt) for 1 month. In the first days, they would leave eggs and bread for me. Around the third week, they started ignoring me, not talking to me. Later, my uncle started beating my aunt regularly until the neighbours told me to move out. Sometimes they would shout at each other for small things like sugar and bath soap...Maybe they were angry that I just came without informing them.

Hillary had run away from home without telling her father whom she knew would resist her decision to migrate, but her mother knew. Following her 'disappearance', the father panicked and inserted a 'missing person' notice in the local newspaper. To make matters worse, Hillary had not notified her aunt and uncle whom she intended to stay with in Tembisa. When she arrived, they were unprepared for her and since they shared a room with their child, she became an extra burden and was not received well. They stayed together for a month but relations were strained to the extent that a neighbour told her to move away rather than destroy her aunt's marriage. Her aunt and uncle openly told her that she should have stayed in Zimbabwe where she worked as a nurse at a public hospital. A similar story was narrated by another female migrant called Tatenda.

We arrived in Joburg in February 2008 and stayed in Yeoville in the *malayitsha's* flat. The driver would phone people's relatives to bring money and collect their relatives. Some would switch off their cell-phones. In my case, my distant uncle did not know that I was coming. I got his details from his sister. He did not even know me. He is a distant relative. When they phoned him, he said he had no money and was not ready for my arrival. I had brought my mothers' friend who was also hoping she could stay at my uncle's place. We spent a week in Yeoville waiting for him to come and fetch us. The *malayitsha* was already complaining that we were wasting his food. He thought of returning us to Zimbabwe but then decided to take us to my uncle in Tembisa.

Low-paying jobs have a direct impact on the migrant's evaluation of life in South Africa and his/her ability to provide food and accommodation to unemployed migrants. The following quotations from William, Pastor Lloyd and Vongai highlight how some migrants feel about this issue.

Poverty strains relationships. It's the same even in Zimbabwean cities. If you overstay, they will hate you.

Life in South Africa is expensive...they will love you for the first few months. As time goes on, if you don't get employed, they get frustrated. Both of you have the burden of looking after relatives in Zimbabwe. Low wages affect relationships. You become an extra expense. Love drops and drops until he tells you point blank: "look for a job. Don't just sit". They start ill-treating you. You will either go back home or move out and live your own life. It's difficult for such people to reconcile again.

To get somebody coming and staying with you and the person does not take responsibility for everything that needs to be taken care of...that really strains relationships, especially concerning food. I stayed with two of my brothers and the experience was not nice...I have stayed with people I ended up throwing out because I couldn't handle it anymore. They didn't have money for rent, food and were unemployed. I couldn't carry on forever. They had become a burden. They couldn't find jobs and had no permits. It's a foreign land; it can get hectic.

While the majority of migrants agree that relations were hostile, some still maintained good relations with their kin. For example, Eric stayed for 2 years with his brother and sister-in-law. The brother rented one room but he insisted that Eric should not move out until he had bought all he needed to start a new life alone and was earning a better salary. Eric worked as a security guard. After he moved out, he continued to come and eat at his brother's place upon the brother's invitation.

#### 4.2.2. Other causes of hostility towards new migrants

Other causes of hostile relations were given as follows; leading a lifestyle that is not approved of by family members, such as prostitution and theft, having another wife or husband in Johannesburg when one had a spouse in Zimbabwe, ingratitude, petty jealousies and longstanding conflicts that can be traced 'back home'. These concerns are highlighted in the following quotations from the narratives of Daniel, Karen and Pauline:

I have aunts, step-brothers and cousins here. I also have a young brother who is a doctor. Relations are not good. There is no love. I come from a polygamous family so it was never good. Relations have worsened, especially with my stepbrothers...jealousies and generally hard times....

I have many relatives from my mother's side in Soweto. Relations weaken in Joburg. People cease to care. I have cousins who don't know where I stay and whose whereabouts I also don't know. Nobody cares. You phone them until you give up. They can switch off their cellular phones when you call...sometimes its because they live fake lives here, especially if they are married in Zimbabwe and have children but have partners here who don't know about the other family in Zimbabwe.

I lost touch with my uncle but I still communicate with my sister and my niece. I phone my sister regularly. She always says she is busy... every time...she is avoiding me. Relationships have deteriorated.

There was consensus, however, that even when relations were not hostile, individuals had busy work schedules, family members were dispersed over a wider geographical area such that distance was a problem and they had no time to spend together. This was different from the relations they had in Zimbabwe. However, they found ways of communicating, for example, via Facebook and WhatsApp. Their sentiments can be summed up in the following statement from Dorothy: 'relations are neither strong nor strained but people just tend not to visit each other. We are too far apart'.

#### 4.3 Reactions to hostility and rejection

Migrants deal with rejection in various ways. Some 'understand' and rationalise why their relatives become hostile and their relationships are not affected negatively. This is so, especially when the migrant has found a better job and can look after himself/herself well. Sometimes things turn for the worst and some migrants become homeless, staying in open spaces such as parks or sometimes living with friends in less habitable places like shacks. Some move away to other townships where they can identify sympathisers. In other cases, migrants manage by themselves, limiting visits to relatives that would have rejected them in the past, even when their fortunes change for the better. Relationships may be severed for a long time. The following narratives by Farai and Hillary reveal how newcomers deal with rejection:

I met a friend who told me that Cape Town has many job opportunities. We agreed to go and try, so we went together. I wanted to go away because of the ill-treatment I received from my uncle. When we arrived in Cape Town, my friend's relatives wouldn't answer their phones. We ended up at a police station. We spent a week there as the police were trying to locate my friend's relatives...I remembered a distant relative in Cape Town and phoned him. He came and gave us bus fare back to Joburg. That's when I was disowned by everybody and I started living in the park.

We started communicating very recently. I was still angry and so were they. They phoned me asking for money and I gave them (but) when I got sick, they only phoned and never visited.

Generally, all migrants deal with a harsh socio-economic environment through cultivation of connections outside the family, such as friends from church and work. These have the possibility of creating bridging ties.

#### 4.4 Bridging and linking ties to get ahead

My analysis of informants' life histories shows that as the individual becomes established in South Africa, especially after acquiring the necessary legal documentation, there is a tendency to free himself/herself from the family connections thus moving towards the wider networks. This may sometimes even mean moving away from the residential area of the family members who helped with settling in.

Although migrants may not necessarily move away from Tembisa or Kempton Park, they move from one area to another.

The argument on bridging social capital is that an individual gets connected to individuals that belong to other ethnic, cultural and status groups to the extent that the tie is able to close a 'structural hole' (Burt 2004; Lancee 2012b). A structural hole is a gap in information flow existing between different networks that give individuals the opportunity to broker or create connections in networks that are not connected. Such individuals stand a greater chance to benefit from this 'structural hole'. Ties with employers and colleagues helped migrants move ahead and sometimes change jobs. Migrants who have moved up the social hierarchy did not necessarily rely on their family members. For example, Miriam got her current job of accountant through an acquaintance she had come to know because they used the same public transportation system daily to work.

Migrants stated that there were 'sympathetic and understanding' employers who helped migrants to open bank accounts, access permits, find better jobs and do better in life. Self-employed Zimbabwean entrepreneurs were able to get 'good ideas' through their bridging and linking ties with former supervisors and bosses. For example, Maureen who owns a kindergarten was able to register her company with the advice from her Malawian former boss. She also borrowed R1 million from her Ghanaian church bishop in order to get a business permit that needed R1.2 million. Another entrepreneur was Bernard who moved from the big security company where he was employed and helped his former supervisor to start a company. It was at this company that he was motivated to form his own security company. Paradzayi is another entrepreneur who owns internet cafe shops. He uses his ties with his Nigerian boss to tap into ideas of Nigerians and gather information on latest computer technologies. He got his recent job (working for his current Nigerian boss) through casual acquaintances with clients at his former workplace. Vivienne used her relationships with restaurant customers to move from the restaurant where she worked as a waitress, to a private company where she started as an administrator, eventually getting enough training to start her own export company. Many migrants were able to use former bosses and especially customers, to progress. These migrants were able to progress because of tapping into relationships that span kinship, cultural, ethnic and status positions and in the process, becoming privy to information that their fellow kinfolk could not access. While the first job tended to be facilitated by relatives and friends, migrants' subsequent moves from one job to the other were facilitated by former workmates, employers and customers. Though sometimes shallow in emotional involvement, these links usher migrants into new career and job opportunities, thus showing the strength of weak ties (Granovetter 1973).

## 4 Conclusions

This study has revealed how the family network is very useful in providing information regarding jobs and accommodation. While the family is still important in providing financial and other forms of assistance to its members, its role has changed over time as perceived by the migrants. Hostile attitudes from more established migrants towards the newer less established migrants cut across the social classes as informants in both the high-income area (Kempton Park) and the lower income area (Tembisa) narrated similar stories, although there were more stories of being abandoned by relatives among those in Tembisa, whereas those in Kempton Park were more accommodative.

The hardships faced by Zimbabwean migrants may not be peculiar to them alone, but could apply to everyone in the city, including the locals/internal migrants. That is why some migrants argued that the same could still happen to them or other people in Zimbabwean cities such as Harare or Bulawayo. These findings concur with Madhavan and Landau's (2011) study of three African cities, which revealed that there is a general disenfranchisement and lack of collective solidarity even among kin.

This article addresses an area least explored in current literature on Zimbabwean migrants in Johannesburg. Existing literature has not analysed the changing attitudes of family members towards each other, especially towards the newcomers who have increasingly become a cost that the family network can not handle. The foregoing discussion elaborated the causes of hostility and rejection of newcomers. The main cause is the narrow structure of opportunity which, in this case, is interpreted to mean the conditions in the labour market and the internal family/kin dynamics and the pressure to remit

'back home'. The findings corroborate Mutsindikwa and Gelderblom's (2014) assertion that family support decreases if the social context for its continuation is unfavourable. A positive outcome of all this is that some Zimbabweans are making use of other networks such as former employers and clients, friends and church mates who can provide bridging and linking social capital.

Dr. Chipo Hungwe is a senior lecturer in the Human Resource Management Department at the Midlands State University in Gweru, Zimbabwe. She has published on migrant survival strategies and social exclusion.

## Notes

1. A *malayitsha* is cross-border taxi driver.

## References

- Adler, P & Kwon, S 2000, 'Social capital: the good, the bad and the ugly' in *Knowledge and social capital: foundations and applications*, ed EL Lesser, Butterworth-Heinemann, Boston pp. 89-115.
- Betts, A & Kaytaz, E 2009, *National and international responses to the Zimbabwean exodus: implications for the refugee protection regime*, New Issues in Refugee Research, Research Paper Number 175, UNHCR, Geneva.
- Bloch, A 2010, 'The right to rights? Undocumented migrants from Zimbabwe living in South Africa', *Sociology*, vol. 44, no. 2, pp. 233-250.
- Burt, RS 2004, 'Structural holes and good ideas', *The American Journal of Sociology* vol. 110, no. 2, pp. 349-399. Available from: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/356822/> [Last accessed 23.11.2011].
- Chikanda, A 2011, *The engagement of the Zimbabwean medical diaspora*, IDASA, Migration Policy Series No. 55, SAMP, Cape Town. Available from: [www.queensu.ca/samp/sampresources/samppublications/#policyseries](http://www.queensu.ca/samp/sampresources/samppublications/#policyseries) [Last accessed 6.12.2012].
- Collyer, M 2005, 'When do social networks fail to explain migration? Accounting for the movement of Algerian asylum seekers to the UK', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* vol. 31, no. 4, pp. 699-718.
- Crush, J & Tawodzera, G 2011, *Medical xenophobia: Zimbabwean access to health services in South Africa*, SAMP and OSISA. Migration Policy Report Number 54, Cape Town. Available from: [www.queensu.ca/samp/sampresources/samppublications/#policyseries](http://www.queensu.ca/samp/sampresources/samppublications/#policyseries) [Last accessed 6.12.2012].
- Crush, J & Tevera, D 2010, 'Exiting Zimbabwe', in *Zimbabwe's exodus: crisis, migration and survival*, ed J Crush & D Tevera, SAMP in cooperation with IDRC, Ottawa pp 1-51.
- Daly, M & Silver, H 2008, 'Social exclusion and social capital: A comparison and critique', *Theory and Society*, vol. 37, pp. 537-566, DOI:10.1007/s11186-008-9062-4.
- Dolphin, S & Genicot, G 2010, 'What do networks do? The role of networks in migration and 'coyote' use', *Review of Development Economics*, vol. 14, no. 2, pp. 343-359, DOI:10.1111/j.1467-9361.2010.00557.x.
- Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality 2012-2015, Official website, [www.localgovernment.co.za/metropolitans/view/4/Ekurhuleni-Metropolitan-Municipality](http://www.localgovernment.co.za/metropolitans/view/4/Ekurhuleni-Metropolitan-Municipality).
- Glick Schiller, N, Basch, L & Blanc-Szanton, C 2004, 'Transnationalism: A new analytical framework for understanding migration', in *Migration, Globalisation and Ethnic relations*, ed MM Mobasher & M Sadri, Pearson Education, Upper Saddle River, New Jersey pp. 213-227.
- Glick Schiller, N, Calgar, A & Goldbrandsen, TC 2006, 'Beyond the ethnic lens: locality, globality and born again incorporation', *American Ethnologist*, vol. 33, no. 4, pp. 612-633.
- Granovetter, MS, 1973, 'The strength of weak ties', *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 78, no. 6, pp. 1360-1380. Available from: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2776392> [Last accessed 23.11.2011].
- Hagan, JM 1998, 'Social networks, gender and immigrant incorporation: resources and constraints', *American Sociological Review*, vol. 63, no. 1, pp. 55-67.
- King, R & Mai, N 2004, 'Albanian immigration in Lecce and Modena: narratives of rejection, survival and integration', *Population, Space and Place*, vol. 10, pp. 455-477.
- Korinek, K, Entwisle, B & Jampaklay, A 2005, 'Through thick and thin: layers of social ties and urban settlement among Thai migrants', *American Sociological Review*, vol. 7, pp. 779-800.
- Krissman, F 2005, 'Sin coyote Ni Patron: why the migrant network fails to explain international migration', *International Migration Review*, vol. 39, no. 1, pp. 4-44.
- Lancee, B 2012a, 'The economic returns of bonding and bridging social capital for immigrant men in Germany', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, vol. 35, no. 4, pp. 664-683, DOI:10.1080/01419870.2011.591405.

- Lancee, B 2012b, *Immigrant performance in the labour market: bonding and bridging social capital*, Amsterdam University Press, Amsterdam.
- Landau, LB & Wa Kabwe Segatti, A 2009, *Human development impacts of migration: South Africa case study*, Human Development Research Paper 2009/05, UNDP, Geneva.
- Levitt, P 2006, 'God has no passport: defining the boundaries of belonging', *Harvard Divinity Bulletin* pp. 45-57.
- Lin, N 2000, 'Inequality in social capital', *Contemporary Sociology*, vol. 29, no. 6, pp. 785-795. Available from: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2654086>. [Last accessed 23.11.2011].
- Madhavan, S & Landau, LB 2011, 'Bridges to nowhere: Migrants and the chimera of social capital in 3 African cities', *Population and Development Review*, vol. 37, no. 3, pp. 473-497.
- Mai, N 2005, 'The Albanian diaspora in the making: media, migration and social exclusion', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, vol. 31, no. 3, pp. 543-561, DOI:10.1080/13691830500058737.
- Makina, D 2010, 'Zimbabwe in Johannesburg', in *Zimbabwe's exodus: crisis, migration and survival*, ed J Crush & D Tevera, SAMP in cooperation with IDRC, Ottawa pp. 225-243.
- Maphosa, F 2007, 'Remittances and development: the impact of migration to South Africa on rural livelihoods in southern Zimbabwe', *Development Southern Africa* vol. 24, no. 1, pp. 123-135.
- Maphosa, F 2010, 'Transnationalism and undocumented migration between rural Zimbabwe and South Africa' in *Zimbabwe's exodus: crisis, migration and survival*, ed J Crush & D Tevera, SAMP in cooperation with IDRC, Ottawa pp. 345-362.
- Matshaka, NS 2010, 'Marobot nemawaya' - traffic lights and wire: crafting Zimbabwean migrant masculinities in Cape Town, *Feminist Africa* vol. 13, pp. 65-85.
- McGregor, J 2010, 'Between obligation, profit and shame: Zimbabwean migrants and the UK care industry' in *Zimbabwe's exodus: crisis, migration and survival*, ed J Crush & D Tevera, SAMP in cooperation with IDRC, Ottawa pp. 179-201.
- Menjívar, C 1995, 'Kinship networks among immigrants: lessons from a qualitative comparative approach', *International Journal of Comparative Sociology*, vol. 36 no. 3/4, pp. 219-232.
- Menjívar, C 1997, 'Immigrant kinship networks and the impact of the receiving context: Salvadorans in San Francisco in the early 1990s', *Social Problems*, vol. 44, no. 1, pp. 104-123.
- Miles, MB & Huberman, AM 1994, *Qualitative data analysis*, SAGE, Thousand Oaks, CA.
- Mutsindikwa, C & Gelderblom, D 2014, 'The social context of migrant social capital: Explaining the rise of friends and the decline of family as the main bases of support for undocumented Zimbabwean migrants in Botswana', *South African Review of Sociology*, vol.45, no.2, pp. 27-43, DOI:10.1080/21528586.2014.917878.
- Ostrom, E 2000, 'Social capital: a fad or fundamental concept?' in *Social capital: a multifaceted perspective*, ed P Dasgupta & Serageldin, The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/ World Bank, Washington, DC pp. 172-214.
- Polkinghorne, DE 2005, 'Language and meaning: data collection in qualitative research', *Journal of Counselling Psychology* vol. 52, no. 2, pp. 137-145, DOI:10.1037/0022-0167.52.2.137.
- Portes, A 1998, 'Social capital: its origins and applications in modern sociology', *Annual Review of Sociology*, vol. 24, pp. 1-24.
- Portes, A & Landolt, P 2000, 'Social capital: promises and pitfalls of its role in development', *Journal of Latin American Studies*, vol. 3, no. 2, pp. 529-547. Available from: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/158574>. [Last accessed 20.11.2011].
- Portes, A & Sensenbrenner, J 1993, 'Embeddedness and immigration: notes on the social determinants of economic action', *Journal of Sociology*, vol. 98, no. 6, pp. 1320-1350.
- Reskin, BF & Roos, P 1990, *Job Queues, Gender Queues*, Temple University Press, Philadelphia.
- Riessman, CK 2008, *Narrative methods for the human sciences*, SAGE, London.
- Rutherford, B 2010, 'Zimbabweans on the farms of northern South Africa', in *Zimbabwe's exodus: crisis, migration and survival*, ed J Crush & D Tevera, IDRC in cooperation with SAMP, Ottawa pp. 244-268.
- Sibanda, O 2010, 'Social ties and the dynamics of integration in the city of Johannesburg among Zimbabwean migrants', *Journal of Sociology and Social Anthropology*, vol. 1, no. 1-2, pp. 47-57.
- Stark, O & Bloom, DE 1985, 'The new economics of labour migration', *The American Economic Review*, vol. 75, no. 2, pp. 173-178. Available from: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1805591>. [Last accessed 25.7.2011].
- Statistics South Africa 2012, *Census 2011 statistical release*. Available from: [www.statssa.gov.za/Publication/Po3014/P030142011.pdf](http://www.statssa.gov.za/Publication/Po3014/P030142011.pdf) [Last accessed on 1.11.2012].
- Tevera, D & Zinyama, L (eds) 2002, *Zimbabweans who move: perspectives on international migration in Zimbabwe*, Migration Policy Series Number 25, SAMP, Cape Town. Available from: [www.queensu.ca/samp/sampresources/samppublications/#policyseries](http://www.queensu.ca/samp/sampresources/samppublications/#policyseries) [Last accessed 6.12.2011].
- Van Nieuwenhuyze, I 2009, *Getting by in Europe's urban labour markets: Senegambian migrants' strategies for survival, documentation and mobility*, Amsterdam University Press, Amsterdam.
- Veary, J 2008, 'Migration, access to ART and survivalist livelihood strategies in Johannesburg', *African Journal of AIDS Research*, vol. 7, no. 3, pp. 361-374, DOI:10.2989/AJAR.2008.7.3.660.
- Wilson, L 2006, 'Developing a model for the measurement of social inclusion and social capital in regional Australia', *Social Indicators Research*, vol. 75, pp. 335-360, DOI:10.1007/s11205-2527-6.
- Woolcock, M 2005, 'Calling on friends and relatives: social capital' in *The urban poor in Latin America*, ed M Fay, The World Bank, Washington, DC, pp. 219-238.



- Woolcock, M & Narayan, D 2000, 'Social capital: implications for development theory, research and policy', *The World Bank Research Observer*, vol. 15, no. 2, pp. 225-249.
- Worby, E 2010, 'Address unknown: the temporality of displacement and the ethics of disconnection among Zimbabwean migrants in Johannesburg', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, vol. 36, no. 2, pp. 417-432, DOI:10.1080/0357070.2010.485792.
- Zinyama, L 2002, 'Cross border movement from Zimbabwe to South Africa' in *Zimbabweans who move: perspectives on international migration in Zimbabwe*, ed D Tevera & L Zinyama, Migration Policy Series Number 25, SAMP, Cape Town pp. 26-41.