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UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND

School of Human and Community Development

Discipline of Psychology

# THE IMPACT OF INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION ON BLACK SOUTH AFRICAN FAMILIES

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**A research report submitted to the Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Community-based Counselling Psychology.**

## Declaration

This work is submitted for the degree of Master of Arts in Community-based Counselling Psychology in the Faculty of Humanities – University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

I, Nthopele T. Mabandla, do solemnly declare that this research report is my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at any other university.

Signature:_____ Date: _____

Nthopele T. Mabandla

PROTOCOL NUMBER: MACC/17/012 IH

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## Abstract

International migration is a global phenomenon. However, international migration out of South Africa appears to impact the various races differently. Thus this study aims to explore the experiences of Black South African families who have been impacted by international migration. Highlighted in the study will be the experiences of the family members remaining behind in addition to those of the emigrants abroad. Pertaining to Black migration, migration research in South Africa has primarily focused on racist internal labour migration, the dislocation of exilic migration and the "brain drain" phenomenon of Black medical professionals. Seemingly relatively little research exists on the impact of international migration on the Black family system. A snowball sampling strategy was utilised and six Gauteng-based families were identified through referrals. One-hour semi-structured interviews were scheduled with available family members remaining behind. For the emigrants abroad, thirty minute telephonic interviews were conducted. The interviews for both the emigrants and the remaining behind family members focused on the effects of being separated from their family members in addition to the coping strategies they employed to mitigate against the loss and separation.

Through thematic analysis, the findings of this study provided a nuanced understanding of the significance of close relational ties in the Black South African family system, which is essentially collectivist. Familial separation occasioned by international migration brought about a feeling of being off-balance for the remaining family members. Moreover, pull factors for international migration were primarily self-actualisation and increasing capital in order to return and continue living in South Africa. The maintenance of a Black South African identity while abroad brought about issues of belonging and integration. Thus the temporality of international migration is underpinned by the notion of home, strong ties to family remaining in the country of origin and a strong Black South African identity.



***Keywords***: Black South African international migration, Emigrants, Family system, Separation, Coping strategies, Black South African identity, Temporary Migration

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# CHAPTER 1

Although there has been a steady stream of South Africans leaving the country to work and live abroad, little research has been done on the psychological consequences of international migration on Black South African families (Marchetti-Mercer, 2012b, 2017). Recent international migration trends as noted by Marchetti-Mercer (2012a) and Crush (2000; 2011b) have been predominantly White, with the exception of Black health professionals, according to the SAIRR (2009). Specific to the South African context, a study conducted by Marchetti-Mercer (2012b) speaks mainly of issues of White international migration and its effects on remaining family members. Notably, Höppli (2014) along with Crush (2011b) maintain that recent White international migration seems to be informed by high levels of violent crime, political instability and a precarious economic climate. Little literature exists on the impact of international migration on the Black South African family, both on the emigrant abroad and on the family members remaining behind. Thus there appears to be a lacuna in the subjective experiences of Black South African families and international migration, which in and of itself has a particular history in South African migration discourse.

Significantly, Black migration trends in South Africa deserve special attention. Black migration is inarguably complicated and, according to StatsSA (2015), an emotional subject. Notably, Jacobs (2016, p. 290) described South African migration as having brought about "sustained and unbearable psychological turbulence" on Black South Africans. Characteristic of this phenomenon is the historic discrimination, oppression and domination of Black people in South Africa by a white minority government. As a result, racist and political

ideologies of the day were the main push factor behind internal labour migration. This had systemic consequences on the Black family system (Rabe, 2006). Historically, labour migration was a racial method of supplying a cheap Black male workforce to white capital. Land segregation was also imposed (Rabe & Taylor, 2012; Rabe, 2007; Kane-Berman, 1972). It was a circular phenomenon and necessitated a temporary movement of people from rural to urban areas in search of employment (Posel, 2004). According to Nunez (2009), circular migration is characterised by a circulation between sending and receiving locations, where the migrant labourer contributes to the home as a result from working in the receiving location. Apart from internal labour migration trends during apartheid, large numbers of predominantly Black people were forced to flee the country and were displaced into exile (Ellis, 2013). The shift consequently had serious implications for family dynamics and family structure.

However, with the advent of democracy in 1994 in South Africa, many exiles returned (Houston, 2015). Ironically, since then, large numbers of mostly white South Africans have been electing to emigrate to western countries such as Australia, New Zealand, Canada, the United Kingdom and the USA (How South Africa's white population has declined., 2016. Retrieved from https://businesstech.co.za/news/about/). According to the same publication, although Statistics South Africa has neglected to collect accurate data on South African emigration trends, emigration between 2000 and 2016 stood at 9.7% (approximately 102,793 people). The dearth of South African migration data may be informed by emigrants not declaring their departure, or some unintentionally lengthening their stay abroad (Höppli, 2014). The majority of emigrants have been of white and Indian descent (How South Africa's white population has declined.,2016. Retrieved from https://businesstech.co.za/news/about/;

StatsSA, 2012). Hence, reports on South African international migration trends appear to have overlooked contemporary Black international migration, which may or may not be similar to other South African ethnicities.

International migration is thus understood as having an array of psycho-social consequences on family systems in the country of origin (Sluzki, 1992). According to Falicov (1998; 2002), several of these psycho-social consequences include loneliness, loss, and mourning. Neimeyer (2000), on the other hand, speaks of "social ecologies" (p. 267), which refer to the interconnectedness of social systems. It is these systems which are irrevocably changed by both internal and international migration.

By means of qualitative research, this study explores the experiences of international migration in Black South African families. Verbal accounts of various family members, including the emigrants, were examined to determine the impact on these social systems and thus describe which coping and adaptation strategies families employed in the face of change. It is hoped that the results of this study will provide additional depth to a family systems framework of the impact of international migration on Black South African familes as well as illustrate Black perspectives on this theme.

## Rationale

Experiences of Black South African families affected by the international migration of a family member deserve investigation. International migration literature predominantly discusses the experiences of white, Mexican, or Chinese populations while little research has been conducted on families of South African origin, particularly Black South African families remaining behind and their family members who have emigrated (Marchetti-Mercer,

2017). Falicov (2005) asserts that international migration is never a singular individualistic event. Its impact on the family system is significant and it is not always a positive experience for the family members remaining behind. Thus the sending family's experiences warrant an in-depth exploration (Baldassar, 2007a), as do the experiences of those who have relocated.

Apart from historic political exilic activity during the apartheid years, little is known of Black international migration trends post-1994. It appears as if Black female nurses have increasingly been leaving to work internationally lately. This has generally been understood as part of the predominantly white brain drain phenomenon (Crush, 2000; 2011b).

By employing a family perspectives framework (Bowen, 1978) throughout the study, the researcher views the family as an emotional system. The family is thus understood in relation to its interdependence and its interconnectedness with each family member after international migration has occurred. A family systems perspective therefore aims to address structural and relational patterns holistically (Bertalanffy, 1975). Additionally, coping and adjustment strategies in the face of international migration will be viewed in relation to the family's social contexts (Minuchin, 1974). Finally, the study contributes to a larger knowledge base of the Black South African family.

# CHAPTER 2

# LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter I will provide an overview of pertinent literature relating to international migration and the family's psycho-social well-being**.**

Human migration can be defined as the movement of people from one place to another and has been a feature across many generations and populations (Castles, 2010). It can either be voluntary or involuntary. Additionally, migration is often an outcome of a number of life disrupters: they can be natural disasters, economic and political upheavals in addition to violence (De Haan, 2000). Furthermore, De Haan (2000) argues that various phenomena such as brain - drain, political unrest and the decline of public social systems are repeatedly attributed to migration.

Migrants have been categorised into two groupings: economic migrants and humanitarian migrants. Economic migrants generally leave their home countries to find better paying jobs abroad in wealthier countries with higher levels of temporary migration (Vadean & Piracha, 2009). On the other hand, humanitarian migrants leave their home countries as refugees and asylum seekers (Piesse, 2014).

## Theories of Migration

Studies on human migration reveal that a universal theory of migration does not exist. According to Bakewell (2010) and Arango ( 2000), no one single theory exists in understanding issues of international migration. More recently, Castles (2010) and Portes (2010) have maintained that a universal theory may not have utility due to the unique multi-factoral nature of migration. Similarly, Cohen and Toninato (2010) suggest that

contemporary migration approaches are informed by issues of identity, transnationalism and diversity, including the lived experiences of the migrants.

Chiswick (2009) maintains that there are several migration myths which need to be challenged, one of them being an all-encompassing theory on international migration. Still relevant today, Richmond (1984) maintains that it is implausible that "one general theory could encompass all specific empirical foci". Similarly, Portes (1997) corroborates this by acknowledging the impossibility of creating a universal theory. The difficulty in creating a grand theory seems to be due to the complex and often unrelated factors underlying human migration (Castles & Miller, 2009). According to Triandafyllidou and Blair (2006), in addition to Portes (1997), in view of the foregoing elements, a grand theory of migration may thus be found wanting and deemed overly simplistic. De Haas (2014) refers to eclecticism where numerous contextual economic and social theories ought to be integrated into the various theories of migration (Massey et al., 1993).

**Push - pull theory**

Lee's (1966) push - pull theory, an economic model of migration, provides one of the theories for understanding the genesis of migration. It explains various emigration and immigration motives. A push factor denotes an adverse element in the country or location of origin (sending country) causing the individual to leave. On the other hand, a pull factor denotes that which attracts an individual to a receiving location (host country). Push-pull factors can be either economic, political and / or environmental. Portes and Böröcz (1989) suggest that a mixture of push and pull factors inform the magnitude and course of migration. Key to this push and pull perspective, is that the more impoverished and

discriminatory a region is, the higher the possibility of migration will be. However, this falls short of elucidating the reasons a particular region may have higher or lower migratory practices in addition to migratory decision-making and or the choice of the final destination (Papastergiadis, 2000).

However, international migration theories seem to be split into two categories. First there are classical migration theories which explicate the onset and outcome of international migration. The second category seeks to explain the continuation of international migration. The latter category is underpinned by significant kin and relationship links and systems throughout migratory experiences. These foster temporary migration and minimise migratory hazards (Williams & Baláž, 2012).

**Features of International migration**

Thus Massey (2013) speaks of five characteristics underlying theories of international migration. First, countries of origin have structural elements causing migration. Second, host countries similarly have structural elements causing the need for migratory labour. The third characteristic is the reason behind the choice to migrate. The fourth characteristic is the development of various social organisations as the outcome of globilisation and international travel. Lastly, governmental policies are formed in response to migratory structural elements within the host country (Massey, 2015).

**New Economics of Migration model**

Furthermore, the new economics of migration model, known as the NEM theory, asserts that international migration tends to be temporary and is underpinned by familial

interconnectedness (Stark, 2003). Thus international migration is borne out of either gaining professional experience or increasing capital to be utilised back in their countries of origin, or both (Massey et al., 2002). The NEM theory goes further and argues that international migration is not permanent due to the migrants' economic and social aspirations in their countries of origin.

### Transnationalism

One of the contemporary theories of migration includes the theory on transnationalism, as discussed by Schiller, Basch, and Blanc-Szanton (1992). This theory focuses on space-time interactions and continued connections to the country of origin. Initially, transnational theory was underpinned by political and economical ties to the mother country (Remennick, 2003). Vertovec (2001) posited that a contemporary theory central to migration is the connection emigrants have with their families and communities remaining behind. Similarly, Baldassar (2007) as well as Baldassar and Baldock (2000), speak about the act of caring in transnational families. Waldinger (2008) maintains that the relationship between "here" and "there" is governed by emigrants who maintain and sustain ties to their country of origin (Mahler, 1998). Notably, Torres, Alcántara, Rudolph, and Viruell-Fuentes (2016) argue that the effects of transnational relationships either result in a form of hardiness or have negative consequences.

#### *Remittances*

Central to migration literature is the issue of remittances (Glick, 2010; Akesson, 2009), which is connected to transnational perspectives. Remittances occur where migrant labourers send money back to their families in the homeland (De Haas, 2005). In South Africa,

Marchetti-Mercer (2012b) argues that the issue of remittances is not a feature in the phenomenon of white South African emigration. Remittances are, however, common amongst the Black population in South Africa and according to Taylor (2001), remittances have been in existence even prior to apartheid and after. For the Black population, the phenomenon originated as a consequence of internal rural-urban migration driven by the labour mining industry.

***Transnational communication***

Seemingly globilisation and developments in technology enable migrants to remain engaged with their home countries. Accordingly, Madianou and Miller (2013) assert that family life for transnational families is reliant on new communication technology. Thus Hoover, Clark, and Alters (2012) maintain that for many, family life includes a blend of mediated and non-mediated communication. On the other hand, for a large number of transnational families, their family life is reliant on new communication technology (Madianou & Miller, 2012). Deuze, Blank, and Speers (2012) refer to this phenomenon as "media life". Thus, being in constant communication with their family members abroad and in their country of origin fosters feelings of closeness (Clark, 2013).

Transnational communication refers primarily to the movement of ideas and feelings in addition to the movement of remittances and information central to sustaining emotional ties across oceans (Ukwatta, 2012). Furthermore, there is growing evidence that new forms of social media improve transnational communication, sustaining familial ties over great distances (Diminescu, 2008). The evolution of social media is such that it has become a significant information and communication tool. Mahler (2001) maintains that the evolution

of information and technology is pertinent to transnational families who maintain relationships across borders with relative ease. Licoppe (2004) found the following:

> Communication technologies, instead of being used to compensate for the absence of our close ones, are exploited to provide a continuous pattern of mediated interactions that combine into "connected relationships", in which the boundaries between absence and presence eventually get blurred. (p. 135–6)

Additionally, Cairncross (1997) speaks of both the "annihilation of space" as well as "death of distance" which have allowed for international migration to be less precarious and less costly. In the same vein, Licoppe and Smoreda (2005) refer to the connectedness and co-presence as "filling in absence by a sort of incantation" (p. 331). The caveat, according to Komito (2011), is that the omniscience of social media means that migrants in the host country may feel that they are connected to the family remaining behind and thus forego creating new relationships.

**Migration, Loss and Psycho - social Impact**

A key element in migration literature is the concept of loss, which is an integral element of the human experience. A study on migratory loss and mourning by Henry, Stiles, and Biran (2010) illustrates how the loss of one's culture can have a negative impact on emigrants in their host country. The study also found that the continued maintenance of emotional ties with migrants' native countries fosters integration in the host country as well as being an aid to the mourning of their sense of loss. Research indicates that an inability to accept the loss of one's culture after international migration has occurred, can result in feelings of seclusion and isolation. To this end, Klass, Silverman, and Nickman's (2014) "continuing bonds" model of mourning explicates how emigrants include aspects of their families, homes and communities from their

home countries into their host countries. Maintaining emotional ties to their countries of origin is seen as an aid towards adjustment and acculturation (Henry, Stiles, & Biran, 2010).

Accordingly, the assimilation model has been utilised to illustrate the assimilation of the migrants' native left-behind culture after migration (Portes, Fernandez-Kelly, & Haller, 2005). Consistent with migratory loss, Chang (2015) notes that migration can result in mental health challenges which are born out of the loss of status, material goods and one's native culture. Doka (1989) refers to "disenfranchised grief" where the migrants' losses are either not publicly recognised or validated, or both. Elaborating on the theme of loss, Boss (1991; 1999) speaks of an "ambiguous loss", which is often opaque and disorienting and may be likened to Doka's (1989) "disenfranchised grief". She maintains that having a family member moving afar may result in an ambivalent sense of loss for the remaining family members (Boss, 2000). There is thus a vacillation between feelings of hope and feelings of despair in the remaining family unit. Moreover, the loss is often exacerbated by longing and missing grandchildren who have moved away (Baldassar, 2008).

**Migration and the Family System**

Yet migration is now understood as a family event rather than an individual one with lasting consequences (Falicov, 2005). Taking this further, contemporary conversations in migration highlight contextual narratives and are informed by micro-level decision-making influenced by socio-economic factors (Crush, 2000). Accordingly, consequences of migration include varying degrees of anxiety pertaining to issues of adjustment and safety (Gómez de León del Rio & Vicencio Guzmán, 2006). Considering the family, Falicov (2011) posits that migration is characteristic of separation and distance. In the same vein, Pollock,

Van Reken, and Pollock (2010) posit that family separation can result in alienation and cultural dissonance. This can be exacerbated by migrants shielding those left behind from negative migratory experiences in their host countries. Similarly, those remaining behind may choose not to communicate family tensions caused by the migration. According to Hugo (2002), the migration of a family member has an impact on the family structure in both the home country and the host country.

Falicov (2011) maintains that the restructuring of the family system of those left behind may be the outcome of international migration. Family roles and responsibilities change as family members adapt to the absence of the migrant. This is corroborated by "…family membership change within the family during migration necessitates family restructuring of roles and functions and transactions" (Pitkänen, Korpela, Aksakal, & Schmidt, 2018, p. 160). In addition, Bryceson and Vuorela (2002) maintain that the restructuring is underpinned by the idea of "relativising". This speaks to how families modify responsibilities and relationships determined by the distance, duration of the relocation and, significantly, their needs. The duration of the relocation is thus the key factor in the extent of psycho-social challenges experienced by remaining family members (Lu, 2012). Roles and responsibilities in families are seldom static, as they become modified in response to the family's objectives and events in the family's life course. It is clear that families seem to cope with emigration through what is referred to as familism. This speaks to a socio-cultural framework, underpinned by a strong sense of responsibility to the family as a unit (Sabogal, Marín, Otero-Sabogal, Marín, & Perez-Stable, 1987). Familism is also emblematic in culture and tradition, in a sense of identity and discipline, as well as in the belief that the family is the bedrock of society (Cauce & Domenech Rodriguez, 2002).

The concept of "other mothers" (Collins, 2002) comes into play as it speaks specifically to women, particularly Black women assuming the role of nurturing mothers to children not biologically tied to them. The reconfiguration of families in transnational families is borne out of necessity to fill the void created after international migration. This restructuring does not appear to have been agreed upon by the family members remaining behind but signals the imperceptible shifts in responsibilities and obligations over time.

A study by Asis, Huang, and Yeoh (2004) on Filipino migrants residing in Singapore revealed that the restructuring of family systems is dependent on the availability of a family member to fill the gap left by the emigrant. Adding to the transnational perspective, Falicov (2007) notes that advances in technology enable transnational families to maintain emotional ties and close relationships.

**Migration and Psycho-social impact**

Various social psychological theories illustrate how international migration may bring about critical psycho-social and environmental shifts for families and societies. Connotations of death and mourning have been recorded in the experiences of those who have had family members relocate internationally. This is consistent with the theory of loss (Parkes, 1998). Corroborating this, is Falicov (1998; 2002) who maintains that there are several psycho-social consequences, which include lonelineness, loss and mourning.

It is not surprising that, apart from loss (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989), loneliness frequently features in migration literature (Knodel & Saengtienchai, 2007; Miltiades, 2002).

Though international migration in the family of origin may have occurred geographically, the emigrant's physicality is emotionally and relationally, albeit long-distance,

maintained by the family of origin (Gómez de León del Rio & Vicencio Guzmán, 2006; Falicov, 2002). To alleviate the loneliness and the loss, and to maintain close attachment links in the family system, parents and family members of migrant children can develop "relational resilience" (Falicov, 2002. p. 274). They can also construct a type of shared "(co)presence" (Baldassar, 2008), be it through technology, surrogacy or in their imagination. Thus family members remaining behind and migrants alike, imagine scenarios where their families are present in their daily lives, irrespective of distance.

## Migration and its Contemporary Complexities

A key challenge in international migration studies is the complex and multifactoral nature of international migration. This includes novel trends informing international migration, different population groups and different receiving countries. It also involves adjusting to the perpetually fluctuating global milieu (International Migration Institute, 2006).

The notion that only young men are the drivers of international migration is no longer relevant in the 21st century. International migration has increasingly become feminised (Webb, 2015). Zlotnick (2003) maintains that lately, women constitute half of the world's migrant labour. Here gender relations, determined by socio-cultural norms, have played a significant role in the cycle of migration (Petrozziello, 2013). Significantly, research indicates that the feminisation of migration is driven by poverty (Richter & Taylor, 2008). Accordingly, Kobayashi and Preston (2007) maintain that human mobility for both men and women is now informed by the individual's life cycle, be it part of a retirement plan or the sending family's emigration for better education and/or medical services. (Levitt, DeWind & Vertovec, 2003).

International migration research indicates that the feminisation of migration, where women emigrate for employment opportunities, alters the family structure, caregiving relationships and roles within the family (Curran & Saguy, 2001). Hence, migrants returning home bring back "social remittances" in the form of specialised expertise, novel social trends and modified cultural beliefs. International migration could therefore be viewed as a stimulus for global change (Levitt & Lamba-Nieves, 2011).

Contemporary patterns of international migration have become complex and multifactoral (Castles, De Haas, & Miller, 2013). People are seemingly connected across time and space through various links and networks. The diversity of international migration is such that migrant motivation, receiving countries and transport choice are no longer uniform. Notably, differentiating between sending and receiving and transit countries has become challenging, as evinced by numerous countries experiencing the aforementioned forms of mobility (Vertovec, 2001). Migrants can either elect to move permanently to the receiving country, or elect to live there temporarily. They may also elect to live there in transit migration, i.e. live temporarily in the receiving country with the intention of moving to a better host country later.

Significantly, contemporary research illustrates the decline in fertility and the increase in the ageing demographic around the world with its impending impact on the labour force supply (Arango, 2017). This change in the global labour supply has the potential for encouraging dialogue in sending and receiving countries. In the light of this, different theories of migration may be developed as the current frameworks discussed earlier in the text may no longer be relevant (Arango, 2017).

**Experiences of those who leave and those who stay behind**

Though different, the experience of migration impacts upon those who leave and those who stay behind, leaving an indelible mark on the individuals involved. This is further corroborated by Falicov (2005) who reflects that migration has far-reaching implications for both the individual and the family, which may include structural, psycho-social and cultural changes.

International migration is not solely an individual event. As a result, it has a significant effect on the remaining family. For family members remaining behind in countries of origin, individuals may experience difficulties ranging from the interpersonal and the intrapersonal to various socio-political concerns. These may include issues such as racism, acculturation and cultural differences between the sending country and the receiving country (Ainslie, 1998; Baldassar, 2014; Berry, 2001; Falicov, 2007; Glick, 2010; Levenbach & Lewak, 1995; Sluzki, 1992).

Thus Baldassar (2007a) posits that "the very act of migrating affects the stay-behinds" (p. 283). Malki (1995) argues that migration has elements of uprootedness and displacement, which are indicative of an automatic loss of identity and traditions. For Winbush and Selby (2015) along with Henry et al. (2005), as well as Ward and Styles (2005), migratory loss is extended to include the actual loss of the migrants' native country and the abstract loss of their sense of familiarity, their language, family relationships, their standing in society, and their societal responsibilities. The loss of family members through death poses various coping challenges for individuals living abroad (Bravo, 2017). Nesteruk (2018) asserts that attending family funerals in the country of origin is important to the

emigrant. Consequently, the inability to travel back to their motherland for the funeral may compound feelings of sadness and guilt (Baldassar, Baldock, & Wilding, 2007).

Migratory loss is complex. Though it has been likened to death, it can simultaneously be more than a death and also less than the trauma and loss of a death (Falicov, 2002). Elderly parents of migrants are not immune to loss and loneliness either (Knodel & Saengtienchai, 2007; Miltiades, 2002). Furthermore, migrants also experience a sense of ambiguous loss as described by Boss (1991; 1999). According to Castles, De Haas and Miller (2013), countries of origin also face challenges of brain drain, but this is often buttressed by remittances and the expertise migrants bring back upon their return. After migration has occurred, there is a process where family members are engaged in recovery, rethinking and realignment of family structures (Sluzki, 1992). Thus both family members remaining behind and the emigrants inadvertently restructure their familial roles and / or find replacements to fill the relational lacuna.

Accordingly, Neimeyer (2000) speaks of "social ecologies" (p. 267), which refer to the interconnectedness of social systems. These systems are irrevocably changed by both internal and international migration. As a result of the aforementioned changes, families therefore develop transnational relationships which preserve financial and relational links across time and space (Trask, 2010). This may be seen in various crises such as family members' ill-health, or significant family events such as the birth of a new baby, school graduation ceremonies and funerals. All these are experienced without the physical support of the absent migrant (Falicov, 2002; 2016). Skrbis (2008) describes the lack of the migrant's presence as having an impact on the experiences of the transnational family.

To this end, the Migration-Mobility Survey (2016) established that the significance of emigrant visits to their country of origin cannot be downplayed (Steiner & Wanner, 2015). The findings from this study maintain that over 90% of migrants managed to visit their country of origin. This is corroborated by Mulder and Cooke (2009), who highlight the significance of actual contact in the maintenance of interpersonal relationships. Horn (2017) argues that the frequency of migrant transnational visits to the country of origin is determined by transnational connectedness. However, the distance between host country and country of origin, as well as legal status, influences the regularity of the migrant visits (Nesteruk & Marks, 2009). Additionally, Wray and Rae (2014) maintain that there is a direct correlation between the regularity of migrant visits to their home country and the kind of welcome they receive from the remaining behind family members. Finally, Schmoll (2011) argues that these visits may be considered as an interactional method of constant self-exploration in addition to the emigrant developing their identity.

For the emigrant, the actual process of international migration is fraught with stress, anxiety and issues of loss (Foster, 2001). Also, the lack of sufficient information and preparedness concerning the migration and the destination country may have a negative psychological impact on the individual (Mirsky, 2004).

Loss includes the loss of country, home, beloved possessions and, importantly, the loss of significant relationships. Added to this, issues of integration into the receiving country are key to the emigrant (Favell, 2016). Being in the receiving country propels issues of integration and acculturation, which have the potential to radically alter the socio-economic and socio-political landscape of communities (Castles et al., 2013). This phenomenon was evinced in 2012 during the American presidential elections, when 71% Latinos, a minority

immigrant group, voted for Obama (Taylor, Gonzalez-Barrera, Passel, & Lopez, 2012). This irrevocably changed the nature of politics in the United States.

Similarly, Eisenbruch (1990) refers to cultural bereavement where the emigrant undergoes a sense of uprootedness borne out of the tension relating to cultural norms and a sense of identity. This sense of bereavement could be the outcome of cultural and socio-economic dynamics in the host country. Bhugra and Becker (2005) maintain that cultural bereavement is a principal element underpinning an individual's post-migration experience. This is governed by a combination of migratory procedures, the individual's cultural identity and the individual's physical and mental state.

Moreover, with increased levels of international migration, there is an upsurge of xenophobia (Berezin, 2006) and terrorist attacks (Koslowski, 2004). Though issues of xenophobia and racism are often overlooked by receiving countries, this has become a global dilemma (Crush & Ramachandran, 2010). Foreign employees suffer the risk of being discriminated against, the most vulnerable of this group being women. A UN study published in 2001 on xenophobia and migration, reports that women have the double jeopardy of being women as well as being foreign (Boehnke, 2001). The dignity and safety of migrants is often jeopardised through instances of exploitation, discrimination, victimisation or accusations of criminality, or both.

**The South African Context**

Migration and mobility are embedded in the South African economic and socio-political landscape (Bennett, Hosegood, Newell, & McGrath, 2015). According to StatsSA (2016), 25.7% of South Africans migrated internationally in 2015. This has been the largest

number of people who have emigrated from South Africa in a year. In the previous years, emigration statistics were 11.1% and 8.8% respectively in 2014 and 2013. However, *BizNews* (2017) reports that emigration statistics for 2018 may even be higher than in 2015. This may be attributed to the escalating crime rate, the water crisis, international employment opportunities and cynicism about the political landscape of the country.

According to an online publication, *Fin24* (2018), whites remain uneasy about permanently residing in the country and continue to seek dual citicizenship in European countries, despite South Africa's change in government (Smith, 2018). A local Afrikaans language newspaper, *Rapport* , reported that the South African Department of Home Affairs decided to track people residing outside the country for longer than three months (Du Plessis, 2017). This was in a bid to control the brain drain phenomenon. The White Paper on migration reported that over half a million people emigrated between 1989 and 2003, and that at least 7% of this group had been skilled professionals. The White Paper also reports that there has been an annual 9% increase since. Many of these were members of the white population. According to *Businesstech*, in an article titled "*G*overnment plans to track all South Africans who leave the country for longer than 3 months", emigration control has recently been incorporated into South Africa's migration policy ("Government plans to track", 2017). However, a report by Van Rensburg (2017) in *fin24.com* maintains that white emigration statistics decreased by 36%. Seemingly, StatsSA acknowledges that the figures reported are largely approximate due to a dearth of empirical data.

South Africa is a country characterised by a divided multicultural society (Msomi & Shilaho, 2008) with a vast socio-economic disparity. It displays tropes of First World

development, yet it is also punctuated by instances of extreme poverty, crime, illiteracy, political instability and violence. Thus an understanding of South African families would require a multicultural perspective. Additionally, the South African context is characterised by both collectivist and individualistic principles often reflected in differences between the Black and white population (Eaton & Louw, 2000). This collectivism, largely evident in the South African Black population, determines social relationships, culture and tradition.

**South Africa and Collectivism**

Hofstede (1980) argues that individuals from collectivist societies tend to have a solid identity. South African collectivism thus lends itself to the important concept of "Ubuntu" which, when viewed through a social-political framework (Kamwangamalu, 1999; Marx, 2002; Nolte-Schamm, 2006), refers to the reciprocal and symbiotic relationships between individuals, underpinned by a sense of community, social obligations, compassion, kindness and warmth. Accordingly, Mphahlele (1962) declared that Black people were naturally drawn to others as the relationships with others in their families and communities provided them with happiness.

Similarly, De Mooij (2011) Chelminski and Coulter (2007) , as well as Leigh and Choi, (2007) add that collectivism is underpinned by the mutual spreading of beneficial information within the community, participation in the lives of others, social cohesion and the upholding of the status quo in terms of certain behaviours. Since post-apartheid democracy, the identity of Black South Africans has been in a state of readjustment (Steyn, 2001). Steyn (2001) further argues that South Africa's dynamic socio-political landscape gives rise to changes in the political, social, cultural and economic lives of individuals.

## South Africa and Black Identity

Though Ndlovu (2011) may have struggled with defining "Blackness", Mangcu (2008) maintained that the development of a Black identity can be understood through the prism of engagements with whiteness and racism. Thus, according to More (2017), apartheid brought into question one's being, in relation to self and to others. Pertinent to this study, for Ndlovu (2011) the concept of Blackness is underpinned by global connection and shared emotional ties to other Black people. This perceived shared connection gives rise to an illusory sense of community and communal history (Ratele, 2003). On the contrary, Black identity is not a homogenous concept but can be marked by "social and historical processes that produce differences" (Mahon, 2000, p. 286). Manganyi (1973; 1977), however, cautions against a "false consciousness" where Blacks adopt whiteness resulting in self-alienation coupled with disconnection from their communities.

Integral to the culture dimension is the concept of cultural identity, which Shah (2004) maintains comprises of communal elements joining people together, such as faith, customs, dialect, food and social activities (Bhugra, 2004). Thus systemic values espoused by the family are borne out of specific family dynamics, structure and unity.

It seems that individualism has elements of autonomy and agency, while collectivism is embedded in the interrelatedness and interdependence of one's family system and one's culture (Gorodnichenko & Roland, 2011). Some of these elements, such as social activities, permit emigrants a sense of their home culture while in their host country.

## South African Migration

As illustrated in Black internal migration, South African international migration history is burdened by specific complexities of race, class and politics. Also, the steady

exodus of families leaving the country continues. Thus in the South African context, push factors relating to Black migration, denote the forced removal of people from their homes as evinced by the egregious forced removal of predominantly Black people from their communities by the Group Areas Act during the apartheid era (Wentzel & Tlabela, 2006). Furthermore, more so for white South Africans than for the Black population, other South African push factors have been the failing economy, a stagnant labour market and the violent nature of crime (Crush, 2000). With respect to employment, Collinson et al. (2007) refer to rural-urban migration where individuals seek better employment in large cities.

Additionally, pull factors, also defined as place utility (Brown & Moore, 1970; Simmons, 1985; Wolpert, 1965), denote the attractiveness of the destination country and this may be perceived as an advancement to a family's situation. Pull factors in South Africa and across the world consist of employment and educational prospects, security as well as lifestyle (Crush, 2000). Push-pull factors notwithstanding, migration literature recognises the psychological consequences on families, predominantly on those leaving their country of origin. However, pertinent to this study will be the consequences of international migration on Black families remaining behind in South Africa.

Thus historically, patterns and processes of Black internal migration in South Africa have been steeped in racism and poverty and, significantly, have been characterised by disruptions in social systems. It is generally understood that emigration suggests permanency; people are meant to work and live in their host locations on a long-term basis. However, peculiar to the South African context is the notion of circularity.

Fargues (2008) utilises the notion of circularity in migration studies to denote regular movement between home and host location, where sojourns in both locations are temporary

and driven by the maintenance of familial ties. In the South African context, a parent moved residence to another province for employment, with infrequent returns to the family and community. Haug (2008) maintains that this was a family's survival strategy and involved buy-in from the family as a unit (Simmons, 1986). Thus internal migration was neither an individual nor an isolated decision. Internal migration consequently resulted in a strained but flexible family system amongst the Black population (Sharpe et al., 1996).

**The South African Black Family**

Holborn (2011) argues that the life of a South African Black family cannot be understood in simple terms. The notion of a nuclear family is not the only composition in Black family life and is recognised by some as a western construct (G'sell, 2016; Hunter, 2010; Pieterse, 2002). A South African Black family may be nuclear, extended or multigenerational and / or comprise of guardians or caregivers (Amoateng & Richter, 2003; Holborn, 2011; Sooryamoorthy & Makhoba, 2016). While what denotes a family in South Africa is complex, family structure generally speaks to an emotional unit comprising of a mother, a father and offspring living together. This normative structure has been irrevocably altered by past labour migration systems, poverty, industrialisation and urbanisation generated by colonialism (Morwe et al., 2015).

Historically, South Africa's dehumanising social engineering policies brought about family fragmentation amongst the Black population, placing specific constraints on the family's ability to relocate and reside together (Hall & Hendersen, 2009). It has been argued that the Black South African family system, its configuration, construction and its progression has been affected by apartheid (Madhavan et al., 2008). Nevertheless, the essence of the family system and dynamics therein, comprising of relational and communication patterns,

remain consistent across time and space. Notably, Van Dijk (2002) maintains that "primary attachment and primary fear" underpin the notion of family (p. 180).

**Caring in the Family**

Viljoen (1994) believes that the family is the mainstay of Black South African life. Central to Black families in South Africa is the concept and practice of shared care within families (Bozalek, 1999). Thus the family could function as a sytem for welfare, healthcare, and education (Harari, 2014). While physical caring has largely been perceived as women's work, contemporary studies illustrate the shift involving both men and women, who can either be remunerated or not (Collins, 2002; Glenn, 1994; Graham, 1993; Stack, 1990; Williams, 1989). Caring also refers to the actual day-to-day care of family members in the household, or to an emigrant family member sending remittances to the family remaining behind.

Additionally, a significant element of caring within Black households includes the important relationship between grandparents and their grandchildren. (Mtshali, 2015). Despite there being extensive research on parenting, little appears to be documented on the relationship between grandparents and their grandchildren (Smith, 2005). However, Dench and Ogg (2002) assert that three out of four adults will have grandchildren by the age of 54. Accordingly, a third of one's lifespan would have been spent on grandparenting. Statistics from Child Trends (2013) indicate that approximately 70% of children share a home with other family members, most typically their grandmothers. In Black families, grandparents play a crucial part in the upbringing of their grandchildren. Hunter (1997) also maintains that grandmothers occupy a central role in the raising and nurturing of their grandchildren.

Chazan's (2008) study on Black grandmothers in KwaZulu-Natal illustrates the commonplace parenting role grandmothers occupy. Additionally, this is often viewed as

normative and intrinsic to womanhood. Though the grandparent-grandchild care relationship is axiomatic, in Black South African households, grandparents perceive themselves to be tied and intrinsically connected to the health and welfare of the grandchildren and their parents (Chazan, 2008). Notably, it is culturally normative in the first few weeks after childbirth, that a new mother often lives with her own mother and/or is visited by her mother, who will assume the role of caretaker and nurse for both the new mother and the new baby (Moore, 2013; Lie, 2010).

Supporting this view, Chohan (2012), in addition to Jewkes, Morrell, and Christofides (2009) maintain that Black South African families believe in the traditional custom of the maternal grandmother's active involvement in the bringing up of their grandchildren. Finally, Dolbin-MacNab, Jarrott, Moore, O'Hora, Vrugt, and Erasmus (2016) argue that the resilience of Black South African grandmothers is attributable to their close emotional ties to their grandchildren. Good communication is thus an essential component of a resilient grandparent-grandchild relationship (Walsh, 2003, 2012). The feelings of satisfaction resulting from delight and love also come into play here (Dolbin-MacNab et al., 2016). After international migration, families have found sustaining the grandparent-grandchild relationship and continuity in the family taxing. Pertinent to that, international migration tends to disrupt family unity. It also tends to interrupt intergenerational relationships and the transfer of indigenous languages and culture (Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001).

Black families are thus understood as interdependent on each other, where enduring reciprocity is highly valued (Bozalek, 1999). However, Glanz and Spiegel (1996) contend that caring relationships in the South African context are underpinned by violence and apartheid, the latter which Biko and the Black Consciousness activists referred to as "an

absolutely evil system" (Biko, 1996). While the apartheid regime ensured that the poor white population had access to a State Maintenance Grant, the Black population was excluded (Mazibuko, 1996). Thus Black families relied on each other for economic support while the white poor population was supported and strengthened by the Department of Welfare (Harvey, 1994). Bozalek's study (1999) elucidates how family members within a household were obliged to assist each other. As a result, family relationships are governed by a certain level of reciprocity.

Significantly, there is an understanding in Black households that children are responsible for caring work, which includes looking after younger siblings, domestic chores and sometimes finding employment to contribute to the household's earnings. This responsibility continues well into adulthood and is often referred to as "Black Tax" (https://mg.co.za/article/2015-10-29-how-Black-tax-cripples-our-youths-aspirations), or a form of Tronto's (1993) ethic of care. However, Antman's (2012) study of Mexican migrant labour in the US seems to suggest that care of remaining family members and parents is dependent on inheritance motives. Finally, to understand the Black South African family, its structures and patterns, one needs to consider the impact of institutionalised racism, the migrant labour system, poor education, discriminatory welfare practices and poverty (Seekings, 2008).

**Place Attachment**

Pertinent to Black South Africans is the notion of place attachment, which describes the emotions individuals attach to certain geographic locations (Kaltenborn & Bjerke, 2002). Manzo (2005) maintains that place attachment and an individual's identity provide insight into an individual's relational connection to place. Significantly, Kaltenborn and Bjerke

(2002) further argue that place attachment also includes the growth of sentimental ties to family and friends back home. Similarly, Yuval-Davis et al. (2006) maintain that an individual's sense of belonging is centred around their relational efforts and their need for connection. and Basu (2005) and McGregor (2008) have established that first-time African migrants tend to have a strong sense of patriotism and, as a result, consider their native country to be their "real" home, to which they wish to return.

Ulltimately, Egoz (2013) maintains that with notions of rooting, uprooting and rerooting, there exists a deep relationship between one's identity and the land. This notion may deepen understanding of the Black family's sense of attachment to their native land once emigration has occurred.

# CHAPTER 3

# METHODOLOGY

## Introduction

This section presents an overview of the study's theoretical framework and methodological considerations. It incorporates the research questions drawn from the literature around which this project is centred. This will be followed by a description of the research approach, including the methodology utilised to answer the research questions.

The case study method was utilised for each family unit. According to Yin (2009), a case study is "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (p. 18). Furthermore, Yin (2017) argued that the use of case studies may be governed by research questions. Thus pertinent to this study, the research questions sought to extensively elucidate a particular phenomenon, such as international migration amongst Black South African families. Additionally, case studies generally include a small number of participants and are geographically limited, in that the participants would be from a particular location. Furthermore, the case study method is aimed at producing rich in-depth descriptions which would illuminate the complexities of migration (Zainal, 2007). Finally, though case studies have earned the reputation of being deceptively simple to utilise, Yin (2017) recommends that the research be thorough, eschew conflation with non-scientic case study research, avoiding assumptions and lastly acknowledging the value of its comparative utility.

In-depth accounts obtained from both those remaining behind family members and their migrant family members contributed rich data pertaining to their migratory challenges and experiences. There is synergy between the case study method and the family systems framework, particularly the transgenerational approach. According to Goldenberg and Goldenberg (2012), the transgenerational approach is underpinned by a focus on the family unit as a system of interwoven relationships with the aim to understand relationships after international migration has occurred. Similarly, Marchetti-Mercer (2012a; 2012b) adds that a transgenerational perspective would highlight the relational structures and styles passed on from previous generations to future ones. This will be followed by outlining the sampling method utilised. Subsequently, the research interview process and the analysis will be discussed, followed by researcher positionality. Reflexivity will be discussed in addition to how positionality may have had a bearing on the data analysis. A discussion on ethical considerations concludes this chapter.

## Theoretical Paradigm

For the purposes of this study, in the South African context, the family systems framework was employed as a theoretical framework in an attempt to understand Black familial relations after international migration has occurred. Recent literature on international migration literature highlights the psycho-social impact on the sending family (Gómez de León del Río & Guzmán, 2006; Marchetti-Mercer, 2012b, 2017; McGuire & Martin, 2007) and that of the emigrant. Thus a family systems approach is appropriate for this study.

According to Bowen (1978), a family systems framework involves a way of understanding the family through the prism of its relational interdependence and

interrelatedness. Significantly, Bowen's approach is also referred to as the transgenerational and/or multigenerational approach. Originally known as the general systems theory (Bertalanffy, 1968) due to its relevance to family systems and other relational systems at the micro level, this approach is underpinned by the focus on communication patterns, systemic boundaries, familial subsystems and significantly, the view of the family as a holistic unit.

Key to the family systems theory is that the individual ought to be understood in relation to the family unit and not as a sole entity. Additionally, existing challenges will remain unless the basis of familial relational patterns are recognised and interrogated. Thus Bowen (1978) hypothesised that there is a connection between relational interactions which have become the family norm and the way family members interact throughout generations. Though Bowen's (1978) theory consists of eight interconnected elements, the concepts of "differentiation of self" and "triangulation" are central to the theory. The remaining concepts are the nuclear family emotional system, the family projection process, the multigenerational transmission process, emotional cut-off, societal emotional process and the position of the sibling (Kerr, 2000).

Pertinent to this study are differentiation of self, triangulation, the nuclear family emotional system and the multigenerational transmission process, which will be discussed in more detail. Differentiation of self speaks to how a person within the family system may find it challenging to exercise independence. Second, triangulation involves a relationship with three people and though not large, is understood as a secure relational structure within the family system. Third, the nuclear family emotional system indicates the potential site of familial communication challenges. Lastly, the multigenerational transmission process

describes the various relational styles that have been perpetuated across generations within the family system. Thus transmission from parent to child and across generations is either deliberate and/or unconscious and this thus influences a person's sense of self (Gilbert, 2006).

What distinguishes family sytems theory from other systemic approaches, is that it does not homogenise the notion of the family (Schiff, 2004 ). Thus this theory recognises that the family can have various configurations and need not subscribe to the traditional hetero-normative notion of the nuclear family. On the contrary, however, the theory attempts to critically explore common emotional models, fusions and triangulations (Hall, 1981). Bowen (1978) is thought to concentrate on chances and opportunities as opposed to ways of normative behaviour but does not provide a clear description of the family. This may be pertinent to the Black South African family as it can comprise of several formulations of adults and children in the same household.

Significantly, the multigenerational family systems theory is utilised to identify, to understand and thereby to decrease signs of relational anxiety within the family system. This is achieved through the recognition of existing familial patterns. Central to familial anxiety is the balance of relational intimacy and detachment between family members in the emotional system (Brown, 1999). Hence, familial anxiety would be the culmination of stress from outside the family system, informed by a specific topic which has been a thorny issue for generations. Therefore long-term familial anxiety borne out of misplaced expectations within the family system may culminate in extreme stress (Brown, 1999), leading to sustained health challenges for those remaining behind.

Specific to this study, the multigenerational family therapy framework is relevant as it investigates family dynamics across generations, with specific focus on how the past has an effect on the present family interactions (Boszormenyi-Nagy, 2014; Bowen, 1978). This is significant as a social construct of family and identity. Key to this multigenerational family therapy approach is the systemic belief that family members are emotionally interdependent and thus affect each other. Similarly, Boyd (1989) asserts that social networks comprising of family, friends and the larger community, are a significant factor in migration. Accordingly, the experiences of the family remaining behind, viewed through this framework, will reveal patterns of multigenerational responses to the separation caused by international migration. Neimeyer's (2000) notion of "social ecologies" (p. 267) furthermore corroborates the systemic idea of relationships and the social connections therein. In this way the system will be impacted and will need re-structuring when significant relationships are uprooted from the system, as will be the case with international migration. Psychoanalysts Grinberg and Grinberg (1989) speak of adaptation, restructuring and reorganisation processes occurring in individuals within the family systems subsequent to the family member moving away.

One of the important elements to the family systems theory is the assertion that the individual is central to all relationships in his or her microcosm (Goldberg & Goldberg, 1996). However, the family systems perspective is contextual and is embedded in the culture and traditions of the country in which it is practised. Given the complexity of South African family structures, an indigenous model would best suit the multicultural needs of the population (Hodgskiss, 2009). To this end, it is evident that issues of intersectionality will feature strongly in a divided and multicultural context (Santisteban, Mena, & Abalo, 2012). In this regard it would involve understanding the various social identities an

individual occupies and practices in certain spaces in the South African context. Specific to this migration study, with its focus on the Black family, the issues of race and gender and their interconnectedness cannot be overlooked (Anthias, 2012).

Therefore the multigenerational family systems approach highlights the interrelatedness and interdependence of individuals in the various family systems. Given this theoretical overview of international migration, it is clear that an exploration of Black international migration may require a multidisciplinary integrated approach (Palmary, 2008). Accordingly, to find meaning and resilience in the family of origin, there ought to be an awareness of the various psycho-social complexities related to coping, adjustment to the loss and change after international migration has occurred.

## Research Design

### Qualitative Approach

This study adopted a qualitative approach. Qualitative research is built on the in-depth exploration of individuals' subjective experiences (Fossey, Harvey, McDermott, & Davidson, 2002). Central to qualitative research is the individual, whose thoughts and feelings are scrutinised and interpreted in context. Dilley (2004) posits that a goal of qualitative research is the attempt to recognise the specific context surrounding that which is being investigated in addition to addressing the lacunae in knowledge. Another goal of qualitative research would be to deepen understanding of the human condition (De Konig, Ashworth, & Giorgi, 1986; Elliott, Fischer, & Rennie, 1999;). Pertaining to this study, a qualitative research design would thus enable connections and relational patterns within the family to be observed (The Bowen Centre, 2005). Accordingly, Rosenblatt and Fischer (2009) recommend

that within each family unit qualitative reasearchers ought to obtain data from more than one family member to explore discrepancies between the family members' accounts.

Qualitative research is underscored by contextual factors shaped by socio-economic, cultural, political, historical and temporal factors, as well as the ensuing elucidation of the meanings (Terre-Blanche & Kelly, 1999; Seedat, 1997; Burman & Parker, 1993; Patton, 1990). Significantly, phenomena in psychology are context driven. Furthermore, Romanyshyn (1971) asserts that psychological knowledge is underpinned by the mutual understanding of the participants' lived experiences. Similarly, qualitative research attempts to decipher meaning and the human condition within a temporal range. One of the goals of this research approach is to understand the importance of lived experiences with regard to various modes of subjectivity and their social impact. Packer and Addison (1989) maintain that in an attempt to unearth meaning, qualitative research is characterised by an iterative process. Thus qualitative research can be said to appreciate the dynamic nature of the human experience and pertinent to this study, it allows for further exploration of the impact of international migration on Black sending families.

Qualitative research recognises that the researcher is in vigorous engagement with meaning-making (Henning, Van Rensburg, & Smit, 2004; Berg, 1995; Gergen, 1982). It has a theoretical base which puts forward that meaning is a continuous process of construction, elucidated by a specific interpretive approach (Packer & Addison, 1989; Romanyshyn, 1971). Here then, the subjectivity of the researcher, which is not value-free, is understood as shaping data interpretation in addition to shaping the results (Titscher, Meyer, Wodack, & Vetter, 2000; Packer & Addison, 1989).

The evaluation of qualitative analysis comprises of constantly changing and developing practical steps (Parker, 2004; Elliott, Fischer, & Rennie, 1999). As a result, meticulousness in qualitative research can be maintained. Furthermore, the practical steps provided by Elliott, Fischer, and Rennie (1999) consistent with sound research principles, can be utilised to evaluate this migration study. Therefore, through a qualitative lens I hoped to provide a subjective and eventually contextual understanding of the experiences of Black South African family members affected by international migration.

**Research Aims**

The aim of this research project is to explore the experiences of Black South African families whose adult children have emigrated, and to explore the experiences of the emigrants themselves. Thus this study intends to present a local perspective on the psycho-social effects of international migration on Black families. Findings from the study of Marchetti-Mercer (2012a; 2017) seem to suggest that international migration irrevocably alters the family structure and family dynamic of families remaining behind in the country of origin. Furthermore, this study will specifically explore the coping and adjustment mechanisms of the remaining behind family members and the emigrants abroad, including their ability to adapt to the "ambiguous loss" as described by Boss (1991; 1999).

**Research Questions**

In the context of Black South African emigration, the research project was based on the following questions:

- What are the experiences of those family members remaining behind?

- How do the family members, who remain in the country of origin cope with the reconstituted family structure and the new family dynamics?
- How have the individuals who have emigrated experienced their emigration process?
- How have the individuals who have emigrated experienced their relationships with family members remaining behind?

**Sampling**

Snowball sampling, a nonprobability sampling method was utilised wherein the I, the researcher progressively accumulated a suitable sample via contacts and references (Terre Blanche, Durrheim, & Painter, 2012). To this end, six Black South African families who met the required criteria were selected. Selection criteria included being a Black South African ageing parent above 60 years of age, living in Johannesburg and whose adult child has left the country to live abroad.

Aside from the adult child who has emigrated, the remaining behind parent and in some cases, a close family member (two granddaughters and a husband who were present at the time of the interview), joined the conversation during the interview. The ability to speak English was preferred, though I used a combination of other indigenous South African languages, such as Sesotho and isiZulu, with some of the participants. No additional sampling criteria were required. Nevertheless, the exclusion criteria for this migration study included parents younger than 60 years of age, whose children living abroad were not yet adults but over 18 years of age.

Snowball sampling was pertinent to this study, as the sample of Black participants from families where international migration had occurred tended to know about other families who had experienced emigration. Padgett (2008) maintains that snowball sampling can be understood as a strategy to gain pertinent information required for the study. Consistent with this, selected participants were primarily obtained through referrals, which guided suitability as well as the willingness to participate. Snowball sampling is simple and cost-effective and can be conducted by a single researcher. However, Griffiths et al. (1993) caution that the researcher ought to be aware of sampling bias and lack of representativeness of the sample. Since the study has employed a qualitative approach with the express purpose of collecting participants' in-depth experiences, rich data was collected despite the small number of participants.

It is worth noting that due to the modest sample size of six Black, Johannesburg-based families, there may be questions raised on limitations regarding generalisability, also known as external validity (Terre Blanche, Durrheim, & Painter, 2012). However, small sample sizes are characteristic of qualitative research (Henning, Van Rensburg, & Smit, 2004). Elucidating this point further, Elliott, Fischer, and Rennie (1999) maintain that synergy between qualitative research and small sample sizes provides the researcher with the opportunity to gain rich data of the experiences of the participants (Smith & Osborn, 2007).

**Procedure**

Semi-structured interviews are typically used in qualitative research. Pietkiewicz and Smith (2014) maintain that semi-structured interviews enable dialogue engagement in real time and space. In addition to this, semi-structured interviews provide sufficient room and

elasticity to explore unique and unanticipated information when it emerges (Rubin & Rubin, 2011).

During snowball sampling, permission was sought from the participants who had volunteered for the study. The interview schedule was adjusted slightly to suit the various families, to accommodate their personalities and/or various circumstances in their lives. The personal interviews were approximately an hour in length, while the international telephonic interviews, which were audio-recorded, were approximately thirty minutes in length. The primary family members - typically the mother - each had once-off interviews in their homes, aside from one mother who was interviewed at her workplace. Although the plan was to include both parents of the emigrant in the semi-structured interviews, only the mothers availed themselves. Amongst the families, one mother had been widowed, one had had no relationship with the emigrant's father since childbirth and another was divorced. As previously mentioned, all semi-structured interviews took place after telephonic arrangements had been made. For the adult emigrant children abroad, interview arrangements were confirmed by means of email correspondence.

## CASE STUDIES

**Family 1**: Gogo, Linda and Mama Sally

Gogo, born in 1934, is an 84-year-old Black South African woman, living in an old-age home in a predominantly white Afrikaans-speaking neighbourhood, on the West Rand. She made the unlikely move after living alone in Soweto following the international relocation to the United States of America (USA) of her adopted son, Moss ("Papa Moss",

his wife, Mam Sally and three children). She realised that she would be safer in a home for the elderly and did not want the bother of having to keep house alone anymore.

Gogo is married and has three children. When she was in her forties, she divorced her husband, whom she reported had been abusive to her. She never remarried. Gogo is independent and in healthier times was able to drive. A bit of a migrant herself, she has lived all over South Africa in various townships around Johannesburg, most notably in Soweto; in Bophuthatswana; in Zeerust and in Roodepoort, where most of her extended family still reside. Gogo was in her early teens in 1948, when the then South African government introduced the apartheid policy with its restrictive pass laws and other discrimatory acts of oppression. It is againt this backdrop that Gogo feared for the well-being of her son when he emigrated in 1995. Papa Moss, a pastor, has been living between the United States and South Africa with his wife and children since 1995. The duration of their first relocation was five years. Papa Moss's wife, Mam Sally, agreed to be interviewed.

Gogo is a retired primary school teacher and remains passionate about early childhood development and community development. Gogo has strong ties to her family and her house has been a home to many children, cousins, nieces and grandchildren over the years. She is a staunch Christian and used to be an active member of the church.

**FAMILY 2**: Ruby and Angie

Ruby is a 66-year-old Black South African professional divorcee, living alone in the northern suburbs of Johannesburg. She is from a large family in the North West Province but reports to have strained relations with all of her siblings. Ruby has an older sister, a nurse in the UK, who she hasn't spoken to in years. At the time of the interview, Ruby

had recently lost her younger brother due to illness. None of her siblings attended the funeral. Ruby has one daughter, Angie, living in a small town in the UK. Angie is in her 30s, is separated, has two young children, one of whom has special needs. She is unemployed but teaches netball and is studying part-time. Ruby travels extensively and visits her daughter and grandchildren in the UK at least twice a year.

Though attached to the city of Johannesburg, Ruby was born in Matatiele, in the former Eastern Transkei but spent her childhood in Bophuthatswana. She once worked for the Bophuthatswana Broadcasting Corporation where she was a television journalist. As a result of her gruelling work schedule, her daughter Angie was in boarding school from a very early age. It is this that she attributes their past strained relationship to but reports having no regrets. Ruby has had a difficult relationship with her only child, who she feels has not conducted her life in a manner consistent with Ruby's family values. Before Ruby's daughter emigrated to the United Kingdom, they seldom spent any time together. However, since the relocation and the birth of her two granddaughters, Ruby's relationship with her daughter is much improved and they enjoy spending time together. Her daughter's emigration did not cause too much anxiety as the United Kingdom had been familiar to Ruby and was relatively simple to travel to. Consequently she was not too perturbed when her daughter Angie moved after her first child had been born. Ruby had advised that Angie give birth in South Africa to enable Ruby to assist her with the baby while she recovered.

Ruby's previous employment was at the Johannesburg Stock Exchange, which involved extensive travelling. As a result, she has a large circle of friends around the world and a large circle of friends and extended family in South Africa.

**FAMILY 3**: Aunt Dudu and Phindile

Aunt Dudu is a 61-year-old Black married South African professional woman, who lives with her husband and two daughters in the northern suburbs of Johannesburg. Her third and eldest daughter, Phindile, lives and works in the Netherlands. Aunt Dudu hails from KwaZulu-Natal and this is where she met and married her husband, the father of her three daughters. Most of her siblings and relatives live in Durban. Her ailing mother, who is mute and partially blind as a result of a stroke, lives in the same city with a relative who has assumed caretaking duties at the behest of Aunt Dudu. Aunt Dudu tries to see her mother at least once a month but only manages to visit her every two months, when she takes her to her various doctors' appointments. Aunt Dudu has offered for her mother to come to Johannesburg to live with her and her family, but to no avail. Aunt Dudu is a religious conservative Zulu woman, who is a staunch church-goer and a strict disciplinarian. She is family-oriented and has a close relationship with all of her three daughters, who still live at home, save for Phindile. Aunt Dudu has never travelled abroad. At the time of the interview she was making plans to travel to the Netherlands, with or without her husband, who she described as being anxious about air travel. The prospect of her eldest daughter who had been the family anchor emigrating to the Netherlands, to a country unfamiliar to herself, had filled her with dread and anxiety. But because "Phindile had been a respectful and dutiful child", Aunt Dudu and her husband had given Phindile their blessing to temporarily emigrate. Aunt Dudu fears that her youngest daughter may also want to emigrate once she completes her degree at university.

Phindile, Aunt Dudu's eldest daughter, describes herself as "proudly South African" and thus has a strong sense of allegiance to South Africa. Phindile is a qualified chartered accountant, who left her job at a multinational corporation to pursue an acting and singing career. She is currently in the Netherlands as a cast member of the Netherlands *The Lion King* production. This is her first international trip abroad. Though acculturation and integration in the Netherlands have reportedly been a challenge, Phindile extended her work contract without consulting her parents (she had sought their counsel upon receiving the initial offer from *The Lion King*). Coincidentally, she found a substitute family with the same surname as hers in the Netherlands. Phindile is single and has no children. She is adamant that her emigration to the Netherlands is temporary.

**FAMILY 4**: Aunt Doris

Doris is a 66-year-old Black South African woman, living alone in the northern suburbs of Johannesburg. She is a retired Zulu teacher and used to work at a girls' private school in the suburbs. Doris is widowed and has four adult children living nearby. Three of her children have lived and worked abroad. She has two young grandchildren whom she sees regularly. Doris was married to Andrew, a general surgeon and practioner who succumbed to lung cancer after a long illness. Her only daughter had had to cut her emigration short due to her father's illness. She had only been in the United Kingdom for a mere six months when she was summoned back home by her mother, Doris. Her father died shortly thereafter. Doris's husband's medical practice was left to their eldest son, also a medical doctor, who subsequently sold the practice two years later before his emigration to the United Kingdom. He had sold the practice without consulting his mother. This caused tension within the family. Unlike the earlier emigration of her only daughter, her eldest

son's emigration after her husband's death resulted in her going into a major depression. She describes feeling ambushed and abandoned by her son's decision to emigrate.

Doris lives a quiet and solitary life in the northern suburbs of Johannesburg. She lives with her two maltese poodles and nephew, her sister's son. He came to live in the household after the home had been rendered empty by her two youngest sons going off to university in Cape Town. After her depression diagnosis, Doris was encouraged to engage in more social activities. She now reaches out more to her friends, has joined a charity and a feeding scheme, and regularly meets her ex-colleague from her teaching days for a coffee and a movie. Doris has close ties to her two grandchildren from her eldest son. She often fetches them from school and spends afternoons with them. Before her husband's passing Doris was involved in a car accident, in which she lost her left arm. She now wears a prosthetic arm when in public. She visited two of her children while they were living abroad. The threat of terrorist attacks in London had terrified her, as one of her sons narrowly missed the underground bombings in 2005. Shortly thereafter, back in South Africa, Doris also experienced a break-in and robbery, while her daughter-in-law and grandson were visiting her at home. Since then, Doris feels that the world has become an unsafe place for her and her children.

**FAMILY 5:** Mama Daisy, Neo, Koko and Katlego, the niece

Mama Daisy is a 60-year-old single Black South African woman. She shares a home with her elderly 84-year-old mother, "Koko" along with several nieces and their children in a two-bedroomed house in Soweto. She has one adult daughter, Neo, who lives in New Jersey, USA. Neo has two jobs: one as a PR consultant at a hospital and the other at the YMCA. Neo is married to an African American and has two young sons. Mama Daisy is from a large family but has tragically lost four siblings through suicide, assault, ill health and poisoning in the last two years. She is the only person in the household who is employed. Mama Daisy is family-oriented and has very close emotional ties to her two small grandchildren living in New Jersey. She wishes they could come and live with her in South Africa. Though living in a modest house, Mama Daisy is proud of her living quarters; she has built a garage at the back of the family home, which she has turned into a type of studio apartment.

Mama Daisy is a vibrant woman. Though not educated, she is savvy and street-wise. She looks much younger than her years and is proud of her youthful looks. She is often asked whether she and her daughter Neo are siblings. She works at Ster Kinekor as a cashier and takes a taxi to and from work. Mama Daisy gave birth to Neo while still young and in high school. As a result, Mama Daisy's mother Koko raised Neo. This resulted in Neo referring to her grandmother as "Mama" and her mother by her first name, Daisy. While mother and daughter share a very close bond, Neo considers her grandmother her primary mother. Neo calls home in South Africa daily and is concerned about her grandmother's current ill health and general well-being.

Immediately after her emigration approximately ten years ago, according to Mama Daisy, Neo seldom called home. Mama Daisy reports being sick with worry and was concerned that her daughter had been trafficked. When Neo initially emigrated, it had been arranged through her old high school. She entered the United States on a student visa and was placed with a host family, where she provided au pairing services for the very same family. Though she admits that life in the United Sates is hard, she nonetheless is not ready to come back to South Africa. She feels that her "family back at home in South Africa" is in a better economic situation due to the regular remittances she sends.

**FAMILY 6:** Pulane

Pulane is a 69-year-old African American professional woman and is married to a Black South African man. They live in the northern suburbs of Johannesburg. Both her daughters live in the United States, are married and have two children each. Pulane and her husband met and married in the United States, while he was in exile, engaged with African National Congress (ANC) intelligence activities. She was brought up in a close-knit family in the American South (Mississipi and Memphis). Her family was very active in the American Civil Rights Movement and reports having extensive knowledge in current affairs of the time, in addition to South Africa's apartheid policies. Pulane describes her family members as keen social justice activists. It was during this time she became aware of injustice and world politics. As a result of her marrying a South African who was active in the ANC, they left New York when Nelson Mandela was released from prison in 1990 to come work and live in South Africa. Her daughters were born in New York and Boston

respectively, but her youngest chose to come and live with her parents in Johannesburg, when they immigrated in 1990.

Pulane has managed her relocation to South Africa well by staying connected to her daughters, elderly mother and extended family in the USA. She maintains close emotional ties through several international visits per year as well as relying on modern technology, such as social media and Skype to communicate with her family in the United States.

**Data Collection**

Subsequent to ethical clearance, semi-structured interviews were arranged, with referrals which had been obtained through snowball sampling for participants who had experienced migration. Denzin and Lincoln (2004) assert that conducting interviews as a means of collecting data, is the preferred method for qualitative researchers. Based on the research aims, a semi-structured interview protocol was employed to elicit the participants' accounts of their lived experiences. Participants received an information sheet containing relevant information about the study and what their participation may involve. Included in the information sheet were matters pertaining to ethics and confidentiality, the use of pseudonyms as well as there not being any direct benefits to the participants. Participants were required to read and sign the consent form (as set out by the University of Witwatersrand guidelines). Significantly, Wiles et al. (2008) put forward that researchers have found the matter of confidentiality anxiety-producing and problematic.

As soon as an acceptable sample had been collected, I carefully explained the purpose of the research and ensured that the participants fully understood what was required of them for the research interviews. To draw out the participants' emigration

experiences, a semi-structured interview format was used. Included in the semi-structured interview schedule were open-ended questions which served to enhance the richness of the data. To this end, Hollway and Jefferson (2008) maintain that open-ended questions serve as a prompt to the participant. Pertaining to this study, the participants were encouraged to describe details of their authentic lived experiences of international migration. Additionally, open-ended questions afforded the family members an opportunity to address systemic disruptions within the family since the international migration. In this way open-ended questions in semi-structured interviews provided insightful information in relation to would-be negative experiences of international migration in the family.

These questions were also beneficial to the study as the participants were able to describe their lived experiences without restrictions (Terre Blanche, Durrheim, & Painter, 2012). Semi-structured interviews allowed me, the researcher, to ask probing questions when clarification or more information was required. Consistent with Hollway and Jefferson's (2008) guidelines, I sometimes used my own words during interviews which elicited interesting, unexpected data. Thus, instead of following the interview schedule verbatim, I would use the language and style of the participant to elicit rich data. Consistent with Gubrium and Holstein (2002), as the researcher during the interview process, it was imperative for me to create a feeling of knowing the participants in addition to hearing their authentic perspective on the topic. All the participants were asked similar questions as per the interview schedule and the sequence of the questions depended on the family members' histories or personalities.

Though the aims of the study were met, the use of interview-based accounts of the participants may have certain limitations. Spence (1983) cautions against participant

reconstructive memory and fabrication. Significantly, an acceptable descriptive account ought to have generality and should provide contextual detail (Terre Blanche et al, 2012). For a systemic understanding of the remaining Black family's communication system, the adult child who migrated internationally was interviewed telephonically. This was based on her willingness and availability and as such, one emigrant was not interviewed. Interviews were thus held with six Black families and the participants interviewed were all female. All names were changed to protect privacy and confidentiality.

For accuracy, semi-structured interviews were recorded with a voice recorder in the participants' home or in the office, at agreed-upon times convenient for the participants. While some of the interviews were transcribed by an ethically-bound professional, I translated and transcribed into English the two interviews which were predominantly in either Setswana or isiZulu. Being multilingual, I was careful not to lose the meaning of the vernacular nuanced metaphors and/or figures of speech when translating and transcribing simultaneously (Squires, 2009). Though semi-structured interviews are advantageous in qualitative research, transcribing the recorded data is notoriously time-consuming. Roberts (2004) maintains that it is imperative that transcriptions are detailed and as such should illustrate pace, laughter, pauses, pitch and volume of the participant's description. As such, the participants' utterances would provide added meaning to the transcriptions and can be useful in the interpretation of data (Roberts, 2004). Bryman (2001) put forward that five to six hours would be required to transcribe an hour's recording. The interview material and transcripts were securely locked in a suitable cabinet.

## Data Analysis

Data gathered from the interviews was analysed by means of thematic content analysis. Thematic content analysis is a methodical process which is aimed at generating specific environmental knowledge and thus highlights pertinent information (Eagle, 1998). Put in another way, thematic content analysis is understood as a method for naming, scrutinising and documenting themes within the collected data. Additionally, thematic content analysis is a recursive and gradual process which evolves over time (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Ely et al., 1997). According to Braun and Clarke (2006), using thematic content analysis provides flexibility and allows the researcher to group patterns of data in the study.

Furthermore, these researchers assert that thematic content analysis is unencumbered by theory and epistemologies; hence, it is applicable to a diverse range of data, such as data from the subjective lived experiences of Black families in South Africa after international migration has occurred. Employing a family systems framework, I treated each family as a discrete case study. Consistent with this framework, a rich thematic account across the whole data set was produced. This enables the reader to have a holistic sense of dominant themes, more so where little research exists (Braun & Clarke, 2006), as is the case with this particular study.

To provide a holistic analysis of the data set, Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest that thematic analysis be conducted in six phases. The six guidelines as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006) include that the researchers familiarise themselves with the data, generate initial codes, search for themes, review and refine the coded themes, define and name the

themes thereby recognising their essence, and lastly, synthesise findings and produce the report (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

To begin with, after each English interview the content of the interview was transcribed by a professional transcriber, who was bound to adhere to ethical requirements of confidentiality. Having had some of the transcription conducted by someone else, required me to spend even more time refamiliarising myself with the written data. This also required a reinterpretation, as sometimes the language used by the participants may have been perceived through my own biased socio-cultural filter. To become familiar with the professional transcriptions, I repeatedly read through the data and listened closely to the audio recordings of the interviews. This allowed me to know the data and to immerse myself in the accounts of the participants (Ashmore & Reed, 2000).

I then translated and transcribed two of the interviews which were in Setswana and Isizulu respectively. After transcription, the data was analysed first through organising the data into codes and categories. Next, themes contained within the data were identified (Braun & Clarke, 2013). The accounts of the participants from each family were each depicted as a story and subsequently grouped into themes consistent with the research questions. Braun and Clarke (2006) define a theme as capturing "something important about the data in relation to the research question" (p. 82). They also state that it "represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set" (p. 82). Additionally, thematic analysis allows for latent embedded themes to be exposed. This requires an in-depth below-the-surface examination of ideas and opinions which may be hidden and thus missed through the interpretation of surface-level themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

By employing this methodical process for data analysis, to begin with, I concentrated on reading and re-reading the transcribed interviews. These were subsequently presented as individual case studies. Consistent with observable themes from the analysed data, research findings are corroborated verbatim by the participants' own accounts which will be explained further in this text.

To work according to the guidelines outlined above, the various transcripts were repeatedly read, thus fostering a deep understanding of the participants' accounts. Importantly, during this process, I started making notes for the next coding phase. Second, there was the searching of words and phrases in line with the research questions with my being mindful of not losing the contextual relevance of the codes (Bryman, 2016). The third phase commenced as soon as all relevant data had been coded and organised. In this way words and phrases from the participants' accounts were combined to form themes which were further categorised and substantiated by the remaining family members' subjective language. Key to this phase is the relationship between the various codes and themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The fourth phase entails the reviewing and the refinement of themes. For instance, while themes in contemporary migratory experiences of the white South African population have been documented, (Marchetti-Mercer, 2012), specific to this study, the Black population yielded several different themes as noted by Marchetti, Swartz, Vithoo, Mabandla, Briguglio, and Wolfe (under review ) in their study on international migration and the elderly. The fifth phase of thematic content analysis included having titles for the various themes as well as recognising the fundamental elements of each individual theme. This involved revisiting the collated data and including the relevant participants' accounts. In the last

instance, the sixth and final phase of themaric content analysis commences when themes have been crystallised, analysed and generated into a report.

For consistency, the study's findings will ultimately be discussed utilising the themes from the data analysis. Furthermore, the discussion of the study's findings is grounded in the research questions. This discussion serves to illustrate the relations and inconsistencies across the various themes (Eagle, 1998). Finally, I, as the researcher, co-constructor and co-narrator (Elliott, 2005) endeavoured to interpret and re-tell the accounts of the participants by means of a thematic discussion, informed by the aims of the study and the research questions at the beginning of the report.

**Researcher Reflexivity**

Constant reflexivity on the researcher's part is key to preserving the reliability of the research as I, the researcher, effectively assume the role of an interpretive tool (Burck, 2005). Reflexivity speaks to the manner in which researchers view that which will be studied, while also observing themselves. According to Jootun, McGee, and Marland (2009), the act of reflecting on the research process while recognising one's subjectivity will enhance the credibility and integrity of the study. Reflexivity describes the researchers' constant self-reflection of their own assumptions, prejudices, morals, conduct as well as that of the participants (Parahoo, 2006).

The realist reflexive approach was utilised in this study to achieve some distance and objectivity. It has been pointed out that the researchers' frame of reference, their gender, beliefs and culture inevitably colour how the corpus data may be perceived. Therefore it

was imperative that I used self reflexivity to maintain credibility. As four out of six respondents were known to me prior to the research, I, as the researcher had to guard against bias and inserting previously known information during the research project.

Likewise, reflexivity allows the researcher to be aware of and acknowledge the tension in the separation between the researcher and the research participants. Seemingly, by assuming the role of participants, family members could be understood as producing knowledge in a joint enterprise with the researcher. However, Shefer (2004) speaks of a power dynamic inherent in the researcher-participant dyad, which is inevitably skewed towards the researcher in the production of knowledge. Both researcher and participant constitute the research process. Additionally, both these subjects may be influenced by issues of either age, class, race or aptitude (Eagle, Hayes, & Sibanda, 2006; Vaz, 1997).

Complete researcher impartiality is unattainable in qualitative research as the lens through which the accounts are interpreted will be informed by my own subjectivity and positionality as the researcher. Consequently, this would require self-analysis and introspection (Jootun, et al., 2009). While my being a Black woman and a mother may lead me to over-identify with my future self and the parents remaining behind, not being elderly or over 60 years of age may limit my understanding of the parents' reality of separation. It may also limit my dealing with issues of an ambiguous loss after international migration has occurred. Additionally, having personal relationships with some of the families, I was mindful of constructing a certain type of knowledge or inclining towards anecdotalism (Tindall, 2001) and thus manipulating a certain outcome. As a result, the binary role of an insider and that of an outsider may have been suggestive of skewed power relations (Pollner & Emerson, 2001). Also, my being witness to the participants' distressing emigration

experiences during the in-depth interviews, sometimes led to "compassion stress", where I would leave the interview feeling depleted and melancholic (Malacrida, 2007; Lalor et al., 2006; Rager, 2005). Similarly, the participants' perceptions of the researcher, my own role as a researcher and the fact that I was known by the participants may have informed the type of data which emerged (Richards & Emslie, 2000).

I kept a reflective journal from the commencement of data collection. Several reflections have been included in the discussion section of the report to provide a comprehensive perspective.

## Ethical Considerations

The onus of ethical practice throughout the research process lies with the researcher (Anastasi, 1976). In consideration of research trustworthiness, as the researcher, I was guided by Elliott, Fischer, and Rennie (1999). These researchers provide relevant principles for good ethical practice in research, particularly in qualitative research in the social sciences (Elliott et al., 1999). As issues of validity and reliability are often challenging to address in qualitative research, the credibility of qualitative research is thus frequently queried (Shenton, 2004). While validity refers to truth, reliability refers to the consistency of events found by different researchers or the consistency of varying events found by the same researcher (Hammersley, 1992), or both. With regard to validity, I attempted to accurately illustrate the participants' perspectives by repeatedly listening to the audio recorded semi-structured interviews. This served to verify emergent themes as well as being faithful to the participants' accounts (Smith & Noble, 2014). Additionally, by using rich verbatim extracts from the various participants may illustrate the accuracy of the themes being consistent to

the participants' accounts. Similarly, with regard to reliability, a clear and unambiguous description of the research process was provided. In addition to this, themes emerging from the data were regularly examined and discussed with the research supervisors (Smith & Noble, 2014).

To address these concerns, Silverman (2015) warns against anecdotalism, where researchers may base their findings on prior examples found in research versus the accurate investigation of the actual data. To ward off anecdotalism, triangulation and the constant comparative method were utilised .

Terre Blanche et al. (2006) refer to triangulation as the collection of data in various ways and from various sources. Parker and Addison (1989) maintain that data triangulation yields credibility, by researchers verifying results with participants and evaluating the findings against two qualitative viewpoints. Pertinent to this research project, the research supervisors were actively involved throughout the research process and consistently supplied the researcher with comprehensive feedback and input. The research results were contrasted against similar research projects outlined in the literature review and were connected to the results. The research findings were categorised as themes which were at times inconsistent with themes discussed in previous contemporary migratory research in South Africa by Marchetti-Mercer et al. (Under review).

Key to this research project and in addition to triangulation, research on South African emigration by Marchetti-Mercer (2012a; 2012b; 2016; 2017) was extensively investigated. There were similarities in some of the themes. Of these, strong family ties, racism, strong attachment to country of birth, and migration being temporary, to name but a few, have been further explored in the current study. According to Glaser and Strauss

(2017), constant comparative methodology would entail repeatedly examining and evaluating all the codes and themes arising from a case study.

The research process commenced once Ethical Approval had been granted by the Ethics Committee of the University of the Witswatersrand. Prior to the interviews, participants were provided with all information pertinent to the study **(Appendix A).** Key to ethical considerations is the researcher's awareness of impartiality. As previously stated, impartiality cannot be guaranteed and thus requires constant self-reflexivity. Additionally, it is imperative that the researcher be honest and transparent, as well as allow the participants to abandon the voluntary research process should they wish to do so (Anastasi , 1976).

Significantly, the integrity of the research process is imperative and the researcher was obligated to be respectful of the participants and not to cause harm. The ethical norms which inform how participants are to be treated, provided me with the foundation upon which I conducted this research project. These norms are that a) consent should be informed and without charge, b) issues of confidentiality and privacy are ensured, c) no harm should be caused to the participants, d) the research process should be open and honest, e) research information should be freely available, and f) particpants should be debriefed after the research process (Henning et al., 2004; Berg, 1995).

Permission to ask the families to participate in the study had been sought from the primary informants during the initial phase of snowball sampling. These primary informants were individuals who had referred other individuals with experiences of emigration. Thereafter, permission was sought from the individual family members willing to participate in the study. Subsequently, all participants filled out a consent form preceding the interviews (**Appendix B).** Prior to the actual interview (**Appendix D*)***, the interviewer explained the

aims of the study to the participants and a document outlining the key elements of the study was presented to the participants (**Appendix A).**

It was also made clear that there would be no benefits, financial or otherwise, due to the participants for their contribution. Data was audio-recorded with a voice recorder after the participants' permission and consent had been sought **(Appendix C).** Lastly, permission was sought from the participants that their recorded interviews be transcribed by an outside person, who adhered to the rules of confidentiality (**Appendix E)**.

Issues of confidentiality were discussed and explained clearly to the participants. To this end, no names or any distinguishing evidence was used in the study as the participants have a right to privacy and confidentiality. Participants were thus given pseudonyms to protect their identities. However, in spite of pseudonyms, participants may find their accounts identifiable ( Lieblich et al., 1998).

A confidentiality clause was included in the informed consent document (**Appendix B)**. The interviewer explained that the study was voluntary. The participants received detailed information sheets. In the informed consent document, amongst others, attention was drawn to the fact that participants could withdraw from the study at any stage. Participants also had the right to prohibit the interviewer from using their interview. Key to informed consent, was that participants were "protected from physical and psychological harm" (Mouton, 2001, p. 244). Fortuitously, there was no requirement for a debriefing session. However, participants were informed that in the event of distress, they would be debriefed by a trained professional at no cost to them.

# CHAPTER 4

# FINDINGS

## Introduction

This section presents the findings and analysis of the research project from the interview data as well as the researcher's reflexive journal. Consistent with thematic content analysis by Braun and Clarke (2006), a number of themes and subthemes relevant to the research project were identified. Excerpts and quotes from the interview data are provided to support the various themes. Thus the inclusion of quotes and excerpts in a qualitative research report illustrates how the study's findings and interpretations emerged from the data set. Furthermore, it increases transparency as well as credibility (Morrow, 2005).

## Themes:

The main themes identified from the interview data are as follows: 1) The Importance of Maintaining a Black South African Identity, 2) Fear of the Unknown, 3) The Importance of Family and Sense of "Home", 4) The Important Relationship between Grandparents and Grandchildren, 5) Family Restructuring following Emigration, 6) Maintaining Transnational Relationships in Families, 7) Experiences of Racism, and 8) International Migration as a Temporary Experience. While there may be themes which appear to overlap, these are nonetheless relevant to the research project.

## The Importance of Maintaining a Black South African Identity

### Participants Remaining Behind

The importance of a Black South African identity for the family members remaining behind was reflected in the significance of their close emotional ties to their family,

including that of their extended families: "…and you know how white people are, they don't care for extended families!" (Ruby).

The connection between Black South African identity and strong family bonds is further illustrated by Gogo, an elderly retired teacher, who against all odds was determined to provide familial support and affirmation to her children during their graduation ceremony in the United States of America:

"We must go, what about the children that side? It'll seem as if they're orphans!" (Gogo).

"…and also, they must see somebody - a family who cares" (Gogo).

These participants revealed their commitment to maintaining a Black South African identity through the recognition of certain tropes associated with being an African. For instance, Aunt Dudu showed her admiration of the humility found in a Black Zulu family living abroad which her emigrant daughter, Phindile had befriended, "They are humble people, you know" (Aunt Dudu).

Additionally, the importance of the relationship between culture and Black South African identity is illustrated by Aunt Doris's words: "You know culturally, we are friendly people…you want to greet everybody. Whereas the Brits…" (Aunt Doris).

Similarly, during wedding preparations cultural practice within some Black families requires that the would-be-groom be introduced to the bride's maternal uncle. Ruby, in

keeping with tradition and culture, said the following: "He even went to… meet my brother. Because when you marry you need to meet the uncle."

The practice of leaving children to be raised by their grandparents is illustrated below where a family member describes her current family situation and structure: "She stays with her grandchildren. I built myself a garage there at the back. There were many of us here in the house" (Mama Daisy).

Similarly, for the participant below, it may be culturally normative that during migration, grandchildren be left to live with their grandparents while their parents are abroad: "You know us Batswana, they should have left behind at least one child here with us. So we help them raise one" (Gogo).

Similarly, during a visit to her daughter Neo in the United States, Mama Daisy expressed the desire to take her American-born grandchildren to South Africa to live with her:

> I once told him when I was that side that I was going to keep Damon. He got upset with me and told me I'd get arrested… just wish they were all here…I wish I could go and just take them and keep them forever... (Mam Daisy).

Another aspect of the maintainance of Blackness and South African identity was illustrated by the importance of language. Some reflected on the cultural dissonance of not being able to hear and/or understand the type of English spoken in a foreign country as illustrated by this excerpt:

> On the phone, they say "Toto" then it's gibberish I can't hear with their American accents. I can't really hear their English. After a while, they start sounding like that father of theirs and I can't understand what they are saying to me! (Mama Daisy).

**Emigrants' Experience**

The importance of maintaining a Black South African identity appears to have also been a very pressing matter for the participants abroad. For these participants who have left South Africa, this theme appears to encapsulate their sense of connection to family and their attachment to South Africa, their country of origin. Angie emphasised the importance of this by stating: "I want to still keep that, um , South African touch, um… " (Angie).

Similarly, while living abroad with her husband and children, it was important for Mama Sally to instil and maintain Black African values in her household: "They should know that they are Blacks before they are anything else" (Mama Sally).

It seems that having a Black African identity and embracing one's cultural heritage may assist with a sense of self, more so when one is a migrant abroad. As a Black South African emigrant, it appeared that there was a sense of pride and self-affirmation in how Phindile felt abroad:

> So when we came in with our very Black ...[laughing] selves…And very African and very proud of that, I could see that they, a lot of them were frightened by it because they couldn't relate to it. (Phindile)

Being proud of one's cultural and ethnic heritage seemed to help maintain close emotional ties between the emigrant in the receiving country and the family remaining

behind. For Phindile, her Black South African identity seemed to give her a sense of cultural and ethnic pride which appears to be closely connected to the cultural and/or familial ties in her home country: "I am not going to be apologetic about my existence, you know….That's not how **we** do things" (Phindile).

Black South African identity may additionally support ethnic group cohesion, assist with coping strategies as well as support the emigrant's well-being while in the host country: "…not because they're Black, it's just because we have the same kind of beliefs" (Angie).

Recognising that there may be social support deficiencies in her host country, Angie chose to give birth in South Africa in order to receive care and nurturance from her mother Ruby, as per cultural tradition:

> Well, uh, my daughter was born in South Africa …We stayed because of the support structure, she was born in South Africa and we stayed for three months and then moved here …So I could have that help. (Angie)

It was also important that children being raised in the host country, away from the familial traditions and cultures, were taught cultural practices relevant to the emigrant's cultural norms: "Uh, I want to still keep that, um , South African touch, um , so the only person I can go to is my mum for, you know, advice on how to do this and how to do that" (Angie).

While largely enjoying their work and living experience abroad, some participants were wary of adopting foreign customs. Angie who has two young children, spoke about

the desire to raise her children according to a particular set of African cultural values: "I want to still keep that, um, South African touch" (Angie).

The reinforcement of African cultural identity and thus connectedness to her family remaining behind and to her country are illustrated by the following quotation:

> Before I made friends with the Ghanaian and the Zambian, I thought I had to raise my kids British, but when I started interacting with these people, I thought, You know what? I can – they can still be half South African. (Angie)

Though separated by ethnicity and thus not a homogenous group, some members of this group of participants display a tendency to seek out other Black African migrants:

> I've made friends with a Ghanaian lady and a Zambian lady and they've become the closest thing that I've got to home. (Angie)
> …ja, it's been an interesting one where I keep meeting people who are South African or linked to people that I know. (Phindile)

Sometimes making connections with Black South Africans was considered fortuitous: "The support system this side…so lucky for me, I met a family that has the same surname as me as well" (Phindile).

Phindile also highlighted the importance of social support, preferably from Black fellow South Africans: "…Um, it is also nice just to have someone who will text you once in a while and say how are you doing, are you fine, do you want to come over for dinner to the house?" (Phindile).

Whereas for Angie, the lack of social support and connection to her presumably white British neighbours and community, may have brought about feelings of exclusion:

"It's a lovely little town, um, village, but it's – like I said earlier, they're very snooty and really cliquey and um, until you get in, um, no one really accepts you" (Angie).

The maintenance of a Black African identity also brought about feelings of homesickness: "I also just miss seeing lots of Black people everywhere" (Phindile) and "So living there was just a shock!" (Mam Susan).

Homesickness and a longing for their home country was sometimes assuaged by the cooking and eating of indigenous South African specialities, which the emigrant's mother would bring. "When she comes, she does... bring some things and I'm not very good at cooking, so when she comes, she like cooks, uh, oxtail and samp and all those things for us" (Angie).

Maintaining their mother tongue did not necessarily seem to be a concern. However, some experienced a sense of longing for their native language: "Lots of white people everywhere speaking a foreign language. I don't hear people having a conversation in isiZulu or Sesotho" (Phindile). As well as: "…so I am glad that we maintained that uh, …authenticity and nobody has lost their language" (Mama Sally).

Whilst maintaining a Black South African identity was deemed important, one of the participants felt that her children who were mixed-race were not wholly embraced on account of their Blackness:

> I think actually because the children are mixed. Um, she doesn't understand why her son would have gone for….A person of my colour…And my kids are darker than – because I'm dark, the kids are taking on my complexion a bit. Uh, so they don't look – they don't have the straight hair that some mixed kids have got, so it's – I think it's hard for her. (Angie)

**Fear Of the Unknown**

**Participants Remaining Behind**

The participants interviewed had experienced varying levels of fear and anxiety about not knowing what to expect of the international migration. For example, Gogo stated:

> …so they decide to go away. I did not know what to feel , I didn't know what I was going to experience when they leave … My greatest worry was…that they went to a land unknown, like from Jerusalem to Egypt. Now I'm worried about how they are doing.

Additionally, some participants expressed fear and apprehension about the loss of their children's Black identity, culture and language once abroad: "The language, unknown, so it means she would be able to focus, she would be able to just follow her dreams" (Aunt Dudu).

As the countries which the emigrants had relocated to were generally unknown to the family members remaining behind, not having a sense of the new host country may have caused anxiety and concern: "So we were very concerned, fearful, uh, very anxious" (Aunt Dudu). Thus for Aunt Dudu, the imminent relocation of her daughter and thus separation from the family brought about emotional distress: "I was very anxious. I was torn apart… by the time it got to her departure" (Aunt Dudu). Accordingly, Mama Daisy's description of her first flight to the United States to visit her daughter Neo, illustrates this: "I was worried. I thought that maybe Neo wants me to get lost over there. But then I told myself that this was the devil talking... I was soooo sooo scared!" (Mama Daisy). Not being familiar with the location and culture the emigrant had relocated to, filled an emigrant's grandmother with great emotional distress: "We've been waiting here with heavy hearts wondering what you will be telling us? And also wishing you were not coming to bring us bad news" (Koko).

Further accounts provided by one of the mothers remaining behind expressed anxiety concerning possible terrorist attacks in the country where her children had emigrated to: "It's not safe and I mean now it's even worse" (Aunt Doris).

Consistent with the above, many participants also expressed concern about their loved one's safety and security: "When…someone is that side, you think of many things…Maybe something has happened to Neo" (Mama Daisy).

Fear of the unknown was also compounded by the gender of the emigrant. Despite the feminisation of international migration being on the rise, parents remaining behind were concerned, more so about issues of safety and security: "Well, we were very concerned…Being a girl. You know, we didn't know where she was going [laughs]" (Aunt Doris). In addition to, "Um, she's never been away from home, hey" (Aunt Dudu).

Against this background of perceived fear, parents have a somewhat negative view of international migration and this appears to be associated with security and family separation to "a land unknown", as Gogo had eloquently put it. The fear of the unknown was also exacerbated by the impending career change in the destination country: "…so now you're changing a career and you are relocating. So we were very concerned, fearful, uh, very anxious because none of us had been to Netherlands " (Aunt Dudu).

**Emigrants' Experience**

While emigration had been voluntary, offering these participants financial independence in addition to new and different experiences, some experienced moments of

fear and anxiety. For some participants, who were incidentally all female, not being familiar with the country and cultures they were relocating to, filled them with some anxiety: "That was really hard, uh, coming to a place that I had no idea I was coming into, a different world, completely different way of life, um, so that threw me" (Angie).

For most of the participants, the decision to relocate had not been made in consultation with their family members, therefore the announcement of the decision to emigrate had caused great anxiety, underpinned by change and the fear of the unknown:

> Um, so it was the, a major adjustment. Just thinking about it, I think everyone was kind of panicked. (Phindile)

Some participants expressed the uncertainty of the outcome of their decision to relocate. Phindile was fearful of the uncertainty of forming new relationships and what the outcome might be: "Like I am separating with all my friends and my family. I have got to start afresh and I have no idea what it's going to be like" (Phindile). Fear of the unknown may have also brought about uncertainty regarding the decision to relocate: "You think, why are you doing, why – you know?" (Angie). Similarly for Mama Sally:

> So living there uh, …was just a shock, I think on the day that we left…I think we had ten or eight suitcases and uh…between all of us…I remember a thought crossing my mind, I said to my husband, Wow, everything we have accumulated for sixteen years…

Another concern raised pertaining to the participants's fear, was the lack of integration in the receiving countries: "Where I live, is very, um , how do I say; very snooty, it's very cliquey and if you're not part of the clique, if no one knows you, you're like an outcast" (Angie).

While some participants may have been concerned with emigration issues in their host countries, Neo in the United States was often anxious about not knowing about the well-being of her family members remaining behind in her home country: "…but it was hard especially for my grandma… 'Something is going to happen to me…' and then I have to come home… 'I won't be here anymore'. So that was very hard" (Neo). This brought about anxiety and dread in Neo's life:

> So now I'm thinking, oh my gosh, like is there an emergency, you know what I mean?...and I'm like I don't want to live like this, like you always think that oh, you know, what happened? I just get paranoid that oh gosh, you know, what's next? (Neo)

**The Importance of Family and Sense of "Home"**

**Participants Remaining Behind**

This appears to be a central theme identified amongst the participants in this study. For those remaining behind, family appeared to be very important, and consequently feelings of isolation and loneliness were experienced as a result of family separation: "After they moved, I found that they'd left me alone in Bophuthatswana and now to realise that the only family I have now is in Gauteng" (Gogo). Aunt Dudu expressed her sadness at the fact that her daughter in the Netherlands was going to celebrate her birthday without her, her husband and their two younger daughters: "It's going to be the first time that she celebrates a birthday without family, you know" (Aunt Dudu).

However, Mama Daisy was happy that her daughter Neo, who had relocated to the United States, had become part of a "good family" in her host country: "She was lucky. She

found a good family. That's why I say that she won't be coming back. No. Let me not say she won't come back. One never knows, this is life" (Mama Daisy).

Linked to this was the sense that "home" in addition to the recognition of one's cultural and familial roots, was also significant: "We must go, what about the children that side? It'll seem as if they're orphans. Everybody will be saying there: 'This is my mom.' and also they must see somebody, a family who cares" (Gogo).

Additionally, a sense of home was also maintained through food. Mama Daisy had attempted to bring a condiment favoured by many Black South Africans to her daughter Neo in New Jersey.

> …another time when flying through Dubai. Those people searched me and even took away my container of achar! Achar! What's wrong with achar? They scanned that thing so many times and they kept on asking me what it was. I tried to explain that it's made from mangoes, but they didn't understand. So they took my achar. (Mama Daisy)

The importance of family was also reflected by the importance of shared care and reciprocity: "She's my sister's daughter. The sister who passed away first. She died when the children were small. So she's been here with us ever since. She's the one who looks after my mother" (Mama Daisy).

Consistent with this was the importance of family/cultural rituals, such as funerals. In this regard, Mama Daisy was grateful for the financial help provided by her daughter, as well as in other family crises:

> Yes, she does come, shame...She sent money though. But shame, when there are problems here in the family, she helps out a lot…Because there's no one who's working in the house. I'm the only person in the family who works. (Mama Daisy)

The absence of a loved one was specifically felt during times of stress. Below, Ruby had expected her eldest sister to intervene and resolve tension within the family about their only brother's burial:

> …And she is the oldest. She should have been the one to bring us together, but then she is the one tearing us apart. So I said, you know what, they can go to hell! I don't care even if I died tomorrow, they must not bother! (Ruby)

Similarly, for Ruby whose daughter had married a British national and was living in the United Kingdom, she had experienced feelings of sadness that her daughter did not have the means to come home following the death of a close family member:

> …so Ayanda couldn't come to that funeral as well. So you see the disadvantage of being away from home? And then now Nomsa's father dies, still now she couldn't come to the funeral. So being away from home has its own problems. (Ruby)

It appears that there may also be an expectation that the emigrant return home at a time of crisis. In one instance, Aunt Doris had to ask her daughter to return in order to provide support and assistance in caring for her ailing father:

> … so eventually we had to say, 'Hey, please can you come back. Your dad is not looking too good.' So she came back and, uh, ja. So I mean, she didn't resent having to come back, I mean, she felt she had to be back home. (Aunt Doris)

The importance of family was also reflected by the relief experienced by one of the participants when her daughter Phindile was introduced and welcomed into a Black South African family living in the Netherlands, thus providing an alternate support system: "She has made relatives, you know. Um, she introduced us to her Netherland parents" (Aunt Dudu). Aunt Dudu added further, "She has found family… so we have relatives now, she has made relatives" (Aunt Dudu).

In spite of an emigrant participant having lived abroad for more than ten years, for the participants remaining behind, it appears that "home" will always be the country of origin: "Aggy must come back home. It's for the long time that she's been gone" (Mama Daisy).

**Emigrants' Perspective**

This theme appears to have resonated strongly with the emigrants living abroad. Separation from family back in South Africa was particularly hard for those with very young children: "…because like living here without family, once we have children, it's really hard" (Neo).

While abroad, maintaining a sense of "home" and connection to family in their home country was important:

> Um, when I first moved as well I went to church…It's an international congregation and there was a lady who was South African….. so it was, ja it was interesting… we text each other…I go over to her place for a dinner, so it's like I have got a granny here as well. (Phindile)

This continuation of Black South African customs was shown in one instance by the serving of non-British food during the Christmas period when Angie's mother visited from South Africa: "…I mean, we try and make it as South African as possible when she's here" (Angie). Consequently, serving and eating certain types of food seemed to also bring forth a sense of home as well as the preservation of their cultural roots for those living abroad: "…but I would say as far as you can bring anything that reminds you of home, you know, um all the things that you… that make home more comfortable uh, more, ja, things that, that just feel right." Phindile furthermore reflected, "So I miss flavours, so, when I came home one of the things that I did do was buy spices so I like made sure I stocked up on South African spices…" (Phindile).

Home for these emigrants appeared to be the geographic location in which they were born and raised and where the majority of their family members reside. The excerpt below illustrates the loss and longing for home, with Mama Sally attempting to alleviate it by evoking images of the landscape at home: "Kentucky has big trees like Swaziland….I can just pretend if I look outside" (Mama Sally). For Neo in New Jersey, South Africa remains "home", while in the excerpt below, "here" is where she currently resides with her husband and two young sons:

> When I came home after staying here like three and a half years, things were still the same and if I stayed home, I wasn't going to be helping them the way that I'm able to help them when I'm here. (Neo)

Despite having lived in the United Kingdom with her husband and two children for over five years, South Africa was still home for Angie: "…quality of life is so much better at home" (Angie).

Now that she had separated from her husband, returning to South Africa was contingent on the availability of resources for her young son with autism: "…but I'm not sure about, uh, what kind of – I mean, it's something that my mum was going to look into about the support that he could get at home" (Angie). Similarly, irrespective of regional and international relocations throughout her adult life, Mama Sally's sense of home has always been centred around South Africa, despite personal and familial transformations back home: "…if you do plan to resettle at home, just remember you have changed and home has changed" (Mama Sally).

However, separation from family back in South Africa was particularly hard for those with young children: "…because like living here without family, once we have children, it's really hard" (Neo).

For some emigrants the notion of home is not only restricted to a physical tangible space. Angie seemed to recreate home through the forging of relational connections reminiscent of home while abroad: "I've made friends with a Ghanaian lady and a Zambian lady and they've become the closest thing that I've got to home" (Angie).

Furthermore, there was an emphasis on the importance of recognising one's heritage and nationality while abroad: "The Africans that are here, they are here, they are fully African - they know where home is" (Phindile).

Coming from and having lived with a large extended family, filled with aunts, uncles, cousins along with her mother and grandmother, Neo's maintenance of family and

a sense of home was the desire to have a large family and fill her home abroad in New Jersey with many children of her own: "I don't have a family here and I had children… I'd love to have more…Like yeah, like just one more. Like you know, I don't have any siblings and I always like loved a big family" (Neo).

The notion of home may be an ambiguous emotive issue for some migrants: "You think what are you doing, why – you know? Because South Africa is absolutely fantastic and, um, the only reason why I moved here, was because of marriage" (Angie).

While Neo may have very strong emotional and psychological ties to South Africa, her country of birth and where her mother, Mama Daisy and the rest of her extended family reside, she made the financial decision to put down roots and permanently live in the United States with her American husband and their two children. Thus home for Neo may be a dual concept, here and there:

> If I stayed home, I wasn't going to be helping them the way that I'm able to help them when I'm here. So I came home and realised that you know what, there's really nothing for me here, like there's no future for me here. (Neo)

Similarly, for Mama Sally's son, who relocated to the United States with the family when he was eight years old, the notion of home may also be a binary construct. The quote below indicates the ambiguous nature of home and that the connection to home endures the physical separation: "South Africa is home by name…but he has that connection" (Mama Sally).

**The Important Relationship between Grandparents and their Grandchildren**

**Participants Remaining Behind**

This theme highlights the significant relationship that grandparents seemed to have with their grandchildren, thus reflecting the important role that grandparents play in Black families. The quote below illustrates the relationship between Koko, Mama Daisy's octogenarian mother and the grandchildren she shares the house with: "She stays with her grandchildren. I built myself a garage there at the back. There were many of us here in the house…it was crowded" (Mama Daisy).

Seemingly, the quote below highlights the important relationship between grandmothers and their grandchildren in some families. Furthermore, the quote illustrates the certainty and assurance which Koko, Mama Daisy's mother, feels about her important role as a grandmother in the family, "She's not really bothered about her mother" (Koko). To which Mama Daisy, Koko's daughter added, **"**Yes, my mother raised her… The first thing Neo says on the phone is 'Where is Mama?' She doesn't refer to her grandmother as 'Koko', but it's 'Mama' " (Mama Daisy).

Consistent with the importance of a close grandparent-grandchild relationship, Gogo expressed her wish that a grandchild remain behind with her in South Africa when her son, his wife Mama Sally and their three children emigrated to the United States:

"You know us Batswana, they should have left behind at least one child here with us. So we help them raise one...this is our custom, you know" (Gogo).

The importance of the role grandmothers play after their daughters have given birth was highlighted by Mama Daisy who travelled abroad to assist her daughter Neo after the birth of her child:"I was there a month…helping her with the new baby" (Mama Daisy).

Irrespective of the cost of international travel, there was a readiness and willingness to assist Angie, her emigrant's daughter's family in the United Kingdom: "…so she called, 'Mom, please come and help me' …so I went…I obviously have to do stuff for her and help her... do this, do that " (Ruby).

The participants with grandchildren living abroad were predominantly concerned with their well-being and nurturing support. For one participant, Ruby, the lack of support for her daughter Angie and young grandchildren in their host country caused her great emotional distress: "So Angie has to do everything, she has to run around…go to therapists, do this….she has to fight for this child" (Ruby).

Additionally, the fact that grandmothers could not easily access their grandchildren due to the distance created by the relocation was a cause for concern: "That's the one thing that really gets me down…the distance [sigh] that place is far" (Mama Daisy).

At the same time, the longing for the grandchildren seemed to feel unbearable and led grandparents such as Mama Daisy to suggest certain extreme measures: "I once told him when I was that side that I was going to keep Damon…he got upset with me… told me I'd get arrested…wish I could go and just take them and keep them forever" (Mama Daisy)

Furthermore, grandparents spoke about the importance of staying in touch with their grandchildren, talking to them regularly over the phone and being able to spend quality

time. Doris, a widowed grandmother of two, had the fortune of being physically present in her grandchildren's lives after their emigrant parents chose to resettle back in South Africa: "Ja, and also it's nice to have them quite close by" (Aunt Doris).

The importance for grandparents to spend quality time with their grandchildren is reiterated below. The quote below illustrates the intergenerational relationship between Neo's grandmother Koko, and Neo's two young sons, who had visited and spent time in South Africa. It also illustrates the grandmother's appreciation for Neo, her granddaughter, having travelled from the United States to celebrate her birthday: "No, they've come here before. We know them. She's **even** come for my birthday" (Koko).

**Emigrants' Experiences**

For the emigrants, the theme of the important relationship between grandparents and their grandchildren was highlighted by the caretaking roles the births of the new babies engendered in the mothers of the emigrants, irrespective of geographic location. For one participant, she chose to give birth to her first child in South Africa as her mother would be on hand to support her: "We stayed because of the support structure…were there for three months and then moved back" (Angie). The important relationship between grandparents and their grandchildren is also highlighted by Neo, a mature mother of two, who had been raised by her grandmother: "It was especially hard for my grandmother…'Something is going to happen to me'" (Neo).

The loss and longing articulated by the grandparents remaining behind was highlighted by the stoicism of an emigrant participant abroad, who herself had young grandchildren living in South Africa: "So we just stand it" (Mam Susan).

Relationally, it would seem that raising young children abroad, without the daily physical presence and support from family, required the use of communication technology as reflected by Angie's words: "…we speak every day…the distance has made me appreciate and value her" (Angie).

**Family Restructuring following Emigration**

**Participants Remaining Behind**

This theme highlights the impact on the family structure post-emigration. For some, the change in roles and responsibilities seemed sudden and irrevocable. Without prior warning, Doris's eldest child had made the decision to sell his deceased father's medical practice and emigrate:

"Like in my mind, 'Okay, now that your dad is gone, you're just making all these decisions, you are not even consulting me before you do it?[laughs]'" (Doris).

Family separation due to international migration appears to have left participants alone and feeling isolated. Gogo recalls her sense of alienation and the emotional and logistical changes:

> After they moved, I found that they'd left me alone in Bophuthatswana…now to realise that the only family I have now is in Gauteng. So when there are family things, it would take me 4 whole hours - from there to Johannesburg. (Gogo)

The notion of the extended family maintaining close ties with the conventional nuclear family appears normative amongst the participants. Thus, once emigration has occurred, it almost seems natural that a niece and/or a nephew would fill the role and take on the responsibilities of the emigrant in the family. Of her niece Katlego, who lived in Mama Daisy's household: ''She's the one now who looks after my mother. She's very good with her. Even when I'm away at work I know…" (Mama Daisy).

Now that Mama Daisy's daughter had relocated, her niece filled the gap which her daughter's emigration had created: "I tell Katlego, I share everything with her, now that Neo's not here. She's my sister's daughter" (Mama Daisy).

The loss of social support was also experienced by Doris:

> And, uh, I mean I was like, depending on him. And now there, he's gone and it's not easy to communicate, you know, once someone is that far, even for me it wasn't easy for me to say, 'Hey, look, my car has this problem, what do you think, should I take it in?'. (Aunt Doris)

The sense of the loss of support as expressed by Aunt Doris seemed acute due to her eldest son's sudden emigration shortly after the death of her husband:

"I mean I was like, depending on him…To be like sort of a father figure to them" (Aunt Doris).

After both her children had emigrated, Aunt Doris brought her sister's son, her nephew, to live with her. This seemed to have alleviated a sense of loneliness and perhaps restored a sense of home and family for her:

> Fortunately I've got my – there's a relative, um, Sipho. He's been – even when they are away, he's been living with me. It was like, a big…a weight was lifted off my shoulders. So ja, even though I knew that they were going to the UK, at least Sipho was there. (Aunt Doris)

For some family members remaining behind, emigration seemed to have required an actual relocation of their own in order to replace the support lost when their children emigrated: "After they moved, I found that they'd left me alone, in Boputhatswana and now to realise that the only family I have now, is in Gauteng. So I decided to come back to Rustenberg" **(**Gogo). In later years, the continued absence of Gogo's son and family resulted in her making the unexpected decision to live in a formerly whites-only care facility for the aged. This decision was also compounded by the lack of familial support near her home in the southwest of Johannesburg: "But to live amongst white Afrikaners was not my plan… I chose this place because they have better care facilities, unlike the Black ones" (Gogo).

While family restructuring after emigration may have caused some emotional distress for family members, the modification of roles and responsibilities may also have been an opportunity for growth and new experiences. Thus, after Dudu's eldest daughter emigrated to the Netherlands, the family had to readjust and learn to cope without her guidance: "We had to adapt. We realised she was taking a lot of leadership. So a lot of adjustment" (Dudu).

**Emigrants' Experiences**

While family roles and responsibilities often changed after emigration had occurred, the change was not necessarily experienced as detrimental by those who emigrated. Thus,

in some families, the restructuring of familial roles in the country of origin, seemed to have been a positive development:

> I think as well it's been good because it gives everyone else an opportunity to get closer as well …but after the month or after six months you realise, okay, we have to live like this for two years and we need to work on it. (Phindile)

For these participants, there was evidence of finding and developing substitute families while abroad: "I've made friends with a Ghanaian lady and a Zambian lady and they've become the closest thing that I've got to home" (Angie).

Finding substitute families and relationships was seen as a positive experience as expressed by Phindile: "So um, here I am…more reliant on like family that I have chosen for myself" (Phindile). In her case she had even found a family which shared her family name: "The support system this side, um , okay so lucky for me, I met a family that has the same surname as me" (Phindile).

It appears that the existence of tangible support contributed to the emigrant's well-being while abroad. Though Angie had formed strong emotional connections with Black African emigrants who had settled earlier than she in her host country, the absence of reliable familial support was a constant source of stress and anxiety: "Why am I still…am I stuck here with no support, no nothing? That's a constant on my mind" (Angie).

Ostensibly, emigrant social networks appeared to act as a form of family substitute in addition to facilitating access to relevant services and amenities in the host country:

> So I met this Ghanaian lady, who'd been living in England for many, many years…she kind of took me under her wing…she's the one that showed me the ropes and took me around and you know because you don't know, there's so many things available to you. (Angie)

Furthermore, during a time of crisis Neo was able to ask and receive material support from her "substitute mother" for a family funeral back in South Africa: "I asked, uh, this lady who's also like, you know, my second mum. Uh, she was actually my tutor and when we got together, we were really close" (Neo).

In finding and forming familial substitutes while abroad, there was evidence that emigrants tended to be drawn to familiar faces: "I have bumped into quite a number of people as well, where I have seen OK, this one is South African and we form a friendship" (Phindile). Additionally, where there are behaviours and values reminiscent of their country of origin, emigrants may gravitate towards those individuals and forge substitute familial relationships with them: "So that for me was good, just to have those people…we kind of came from the same background" (Angie).

## Maintaining Transnational Relationships in Families

### Participants Remaining Behind

The evolution of technology appeared to be a significant factor in the maintainance of emotional and relational ties between transnational families. From written letters to modern telecommunication and social media, these were ways that seemed to connect family members with each other as well as forge connections between the home country and the

new host country. Pulane's words highlight the significant advances that have taken place over the years: "Technology has changed communication over time…in a positive way. Um, first it was letters and it was especially a lot of those blue air letters". Gogo found letters to be a positive way to maintain relational ties, time and space notwithstanding: "One thing I really liked about Sally is the correspondence. Sally used to write…She would tell me how they are getting on, and the children at school. I was quite contented".

Those left behind were often distressed by irregular communication: "She took so long to call us…I just thought this person is gone from us" (Mama Daisy).

Even with parental support through the provision of telecommunication aids to their emigrant child, this did not alleviate parental apprehension concerning their child's well-being in the host country: "…those days, wasn't even easy to phone…giving her one of those, you know those phone cards" (Aunt Doris). As a result, communication between the emigrant and the parents remaining behind was not regular: "She couldn't possibly phone every day" (Aunt Doris).

The quotation below is in contradistinction to the above participant's experience of long distance communication between her daughter who had temporarily emigrated in the late 1990s: "Neo phones every day around 2pm" (Mam Daisy).

Seemingly, with the advent of technology and its accessibility, it became easier and more affordable to maintain emotional ties through the use of social media: "Especially with WhatsApp now, it's so easy to communicate with people…outside the country" (Aunt Doris).

Mama Daisy echoed the above sentiment while also demonstrating the various ways individuals utilise their mobile phones: “This is the phone that Neo sent me from America. So I can Whatsapp, save pictures of Damon and Shane…communicate nicely” (Mama Daisy).

However, despite the advancement of communication technology, Gogo wistfully preferred maintaining ties through the use of the postal service:

> We are now sophisticated so we talk on the “Yap-yap” [laughter] I told Sally to send me her postal address, but we now communicate with the “Yap-yap”. It’s bad you know. I don’t like communicating that way and I love letters and writing.

The quote below illustrates how, with modern technology, Aunt Dudu keeps tabs on her daughter in the Netherlands and maintains an emotional connection:
“I’m friends with her on Facebook, so I always look [chuckles]” (Aunt Dudu). Communication technologies thus bridged the geographic distance and allowed family members to feel intimate and connected despite the distance: “These pictures are very special to me. When I’m really feeling down, I look at the pictures of Neo and the boys and feel a little better” (Mama Daisy).

Notwithstanding the technological advancements, it may not always be sufficient to mitigate against feelings of fear and uncertainty for family members in the country of origin “When…someone is that side, you think of many things…problems that side…Maybe something has happened to Neo and she didn’t want to tell us herself” **(**Mama Daisy).

Visits seemed to be ways to strengthen and rekindle reciprocal emotional ties with emigrant family members. The excerpt below encapsulates the importance of transnational

visits for family members and how specifically, for Aunt Dudu and her daughters, those emotional ties are maintained through observing family birthday rituals:

> The sisters were very clever. On her birthday, Sanele just said, 'I think I'm going to pass. Maybe if you guys can just support me to go to Phindile, her first year being away on her birthday'.

Aunt Dudu continues, "Because with family…we have always had a tradition, wake up, there's a little cake with a candle, we're still in pyjamas. It's a routine, like we all know but it still feels good".

Koko found the fact that Neo unexpectedly visited her from New Jersey while she was in hospital miraculous to her: "…To show that GOD is funny…the day I was discharged, I just see Neo walking into the hospital!" (Koko).

The excitement linked to transnational visits is further echoed by Mama Daisy who had visited Neo and her family in New Jersey several times since her grandchildren were born: "They also can't believe that I've visited…America. But I tell them, one day is one day. Who knows? They should start playing the LOTTO! [chuckles]" (Mama Daisy).

For those elderly participants, visits were not merely a familial obligation, they were also a source of unparalleled pride and joy. The quote below illustrates Gogo's disbelief in having flown to the United States to attend her adult child's graduation: "Seriously. How was it that I'd gotten to the States? Me? Me? And who was I, to be going to America?" (Gogo).

Visits were often linked to important family events and Gogo showed great determination to be present at the graduation from Bible school of her son Moss and

Mama Sally in Kentucky: "I was telling her other grandmother…that me must go, what about the children that side. It'll seem as if they're orphans" (Gogo).

Additionally visits were seen as ways to physically support the family abroad: "… and I will never forget that time! That we were there for our children" (Gogo).

In some cases visits were seen as ways to provide support where needed, as in the case of Ruby, who was quick to respond to her emigrant daughter's leg injury by travelling to the United Kingdom to support her and assist with household chores: "I went there in December and came back in January and then Angie twisted her ankle…so she called, 'Mom, please come and help me.' So I went in April" (Ruby).

However, maintaining transnational relationships did hold certain challenges for those left behind:

> That's the one thing that really gets me down. The distance [sigh] that place is far…This one day, I think I was really missing her. I told Mama that I think I'm going to go to the police. Ya so they can, so they can tell Neo to come back home. I think I was just missing her way too much. You know she's my only child...my heart...Then sometimes when I think of her, I would just lose my appetite. (Mama Daisy)

**Emigrants' Experiences**

For these participants, maintaining ties with those remaining behind was extremely important in order to maintain their emotional and psychological well-being: "You know, just talking…writing letters to my grandmother and her sister…they don't have like phones, they don't have like Facebook and WhatsApp" (Neo). Similarly, during the initial six years that

Mama Sally and her family lived in the United States without visits to home, they maintained close relational ties with family in South Africa:

> We were calling, we did buy that card and we would call them maybe once every two weeks or more at least once a month and we wrote letters...we wrote back and forth and the father likes to write. (Mama Sally)

Phindile found that her mother and younger sisters were comfortable with the use of modern technology: "Mostly um, WhatsApp, video call or emails as well…if there is something more formal that needs to be communicated" (Phindile).

Maintaining a close relational connection with her mother in South Africa helped Angie stay connected to her country of origin: "…South African touch, um, so the only person I can go to is my mum for you know, advice on how to do this and that" (Angie).

Similarly for emigrants, during transnational visits to and from family in the country of origin, one of the ways of maintaining a transnational connection with "home" is through food. Thus during visits to family in South Africa, Phindile would stock up on South African foodstuffs to utilise abroad: "I miss flavours, so, when I came home one of the things that I did do was buy spices so I like made sure I stocked up on South African spices" (Phindile). Consistent with the quote above, when family members came for visits they often brought food items which reminded them of South Africa and home: "When she comes, she does bring….some things…I'm not very good at cooking, so when she comes, she likes to cook… oxtail and samp and all those things for us…spices from home" (Angie).

Sending remittances in the form of gifts and money also seemed to be part of participants' experiences: "…clothing everybody in the family because at one time when I was working at a department store here…[laughs] my colleagues used to say 'You shop for the whole village in Africa!'" (Mama Sally).

Furthermore, every visit was experienced as a wonderful event as illustrated by Mama Sally's words: "So I just imagine her, so when she did come here, wow, it was awesome" (Mama Sally). Phindile was particularly happy when her two younger sisters decided to travel to the Netherlands to spend time with their sister on her birthday as per their family custom: "Ja, they came for my birthday, they came to visit. For my birthday which was amazing".

Seemingly, maintaining reciprocal ties between the emigrant and the family remaining behind is essential for the emigrant's health and well-being. The quotation below illustrates transnational implications for the emigrant's well-being and the importance of maintaining family rituals while abroad: "And ja it was, it was perfect. Because I know, I know if they weren't here I would have just cried ...[laughing] I would have just cried the whole day" (Phindile).

At times, participants had to fulfil family obligations and return to South Africa to attend family funerals:

> "My uncle was like just 'Yep, she passed in her sleep.' So that was so unclear, that was so unbelievable. I was like there's no way I will stay here because I'm not going to believe it, I had to go home" (Neo).

However, this was not always possible, ostensibly causing distress in participants: "I was able to attend just two. The other two, yeah I wasn't able to attend" (Neo). This is reflected in Angie's sense of devastation when she was unable to attend her maternal uncle's funeral, who had filled the role of a father for her: "I couldn't get my passport in time. I literally – my passport – the funeral was on Saturday, my passport arrived on Monday…It was heart wrenching" (Angie).

It may have been that visiting home solely for sad family occasions could also have been a bittersweet experience: "You know, I always tried to go home, have a good time. Then people started passing and all" (Neo).

Visits also put a certain amount of stress on participants as the amount of time was often limited, impacting on who they could see whilst visiting: "Ja things are different, so when I, when I am around I need to do what, you know I am there for a specific mission…so ja, it has affected my friendships" (Phindile).

Due to their family circumstances, visits were also not always possible for participants and thus they had to rely on their South African family members coming to visit them abroad. "Most of the time, it's her coming here only because it's very hard to travel with my little boy" (Angie).

**Experiences of Racism**

**Participants Remaining Behind**

The possibility of racism and discrimination their children may experience in the host countries is of great concern to the remaining behind participants. Aunt Doris described

her concerns about her son, a medical doctor working in the UK, being allocated tasks that local doctors were not keen to do:

> "I don't know how to put it, you know the Brit doctors, there were some kinds of things that they…didn't want to do. Like Thabo ended up doing Psych and they would push the Black patients to him" (Aunt Doris).

Thus not having any prior knowledge of the racial dynamics in the country their child was emigrating to, may have filled the parents remaining behind with fear and anxiety: "So we were very concerned, fearful, uh, very anxious…Because none of us had been to the Netherlands" (Dudu).

The fear and anxiety may have been fuelled by the emigrant participants relocating to predominantly white communities in Northern and Central London, The Hague, and Kentucky where racism and xenophobia may be experienced. For Ruby, below, the concern for her daughter's well-being after she got married and relocated to a small village in the United Kingdom, was mitigated by her perception of her daughter's husband's maturity: "… yes, especially that Ayanda is leaving home, he will be able to look after her" (Ruby).

News of racial violence in the country where her daughter lived had filled Dudu with terror: "You'll hear racial issues in the Netherlands, when she had not experienced that. Then when that artist came into the media who was thrown out from the B&B…You get into such a panic, you know" (Dudu).

**Emigrants' Experiences**

The emigrant participants also reported a number of racist experiences in their countries of destination: "I walk into a restaurant and everyone stares at me because they are thinking what is the Black girl doing here?" (Phindile).

Though instances of racism may not have appeared as overt as Phindile's experience above, the quote below is suggestive of Angie's perception of racial prejudice in her overseas neighbourhood: "Where I live, is very, um, how do I say; very snooty, it's very cliquey and if you're not part of the clique, if no one knows you, you're like an outcast" (Angie).

Having been part of a Black majoritarian population in South Africa, upon relocation Mama Sally had not been prepared for the size of white Americana: "My challenge was being a minority, you know at home we are 80% of the population…here we are the minority…very visible when we came…we were in just a sea of white people" (Mam Sally).

Angie who was married to a white British man experienced racism in her relationship with her British mother-in-law which she felt may have impacted on her relationship with her children:

> I think actually because the children are mixed. Um, she doesn't understand why her son would have gone for…a person of my colour…and my kids are darker than – because I'm dark, the kids are taking on my complexion a bit…they don't have the straight hair that some mixed kids have…I think it's hard for her. (Angie)

Living overseas also seemed to challenge some participants' notion of their own identity as Black people:

> And even the people from here…I would say they are Black, that's another thing, they don't consider themselves Black, even though they are Black....[laughing] They say, they consider themselves like international or like um, mixed but never Black…Which is also another thing that just it, it irritates me because I mean look, you are Black and I find that a lot, the Black people here just have an identity crisis.

> And at the same time I don't completely blame them because um, they are in a country that doesn't really favour being Black. (Phindile)

Some highlighted the importance of maintaining one's cultural identity while abroad and how it sustained ties with the country of origin, more so for children growing up abroad: "So I am glad that we maintained that uh…authenticity and nobody has lost their language…look Tshepo is back home now and Linda and they are not uh…strangers" (Mama Sally).

Phindile also experienced pride in her cultural identity and heritage: "So when we came in with our very Black ...[laughing] selves…And very African and very proud of that". Furthermore, she seemed confident and assured about who she was: "People say she is a girl and she is walking around as if she owns this town…I am not going to be apologetic about my existence you know ...[laughing]…That's not how **we** do things" (Phindile).

Out of the emigrants interviewed, Neo was the only one not to make reference to any experiences of racism in her host country. Challenges in her host country were mainly to do with immigration conditions of entry into the United States. Thus in the early years, Neo could not risk jeopardising her immigration status by visiting her family in South Africa: "So I stayed here and it was very hard, uh, like close to four years not seeing your family, but if I came home, I wasn't going to be allowed entry back here" (Neo).

## International Migration as a Temporary Experience

### Participants Remaining Behind

Common throughout the accounts of the participants was the notion of South Africa being "home", irrespective of where the emigrant had relocated to or what the duration of their emigration was. Both the family members remaining behind and the emigrants felt that their emigration was a temporary arrangement and that South Africa was "home": "Neo must come back home! It's for the long time that she's been gone" (Mama Daisy). Aunt Doris's daughter-in-law had decided to shorten her stay in her host country to find opportunities back at "home": "Ja, but I think after she finished her Masters…wanted to see what she can get back home". Similarly, for Gogo, there was a sense that the host country to which Mama Sally and the family had relocated, would not be permanent: "In our mind, they are going to school, to the Seminary, whatever it was. They were not going to be working… but I was now happy that they'd gone to do something, to promote…".

International migration for these participants is thus understood as not being a permanent state. Notwithstanding, Neo, who married an American national, still refers to South Africa as "home", even after being an emigrant for the last ten years: "…but there's nothing like home" (Neo). Seemingly, international migration may be viewed by these participants as a temporary means to an end; either obtaining an international educational qualification and/or career experience, with the intention of returning to one's country of origin: "She had just finished at, uh, varsity…And she – I think she wasn't ready to work yet, so she decided, no, is going to the UK…" (Aunt Doris). Some, like Gogo, saw the move as mainly for educational purposes: "They decide to go further their education" (Gogo).

Thus some experienced a certain level of comfort in knowing that family members will return after a certain time: “But then knowing that it’s a contract, they’re going to come back” (Doris).

Some felt that it was important for Black people to return back “home” after the tribulations that their parents had endured during the apartheid years: “We had, um, worked so hard for the change here…we were like-minded in the need to come back” (Pulane).

Bringing back skills and expertise gained abroad was also seen as important: “It doesn’t matter how long they take to come back, as long as they finish their project. When they come, they are going to bring back a complete new system” (Gogo).

However, for this participant, the loss, longing and frustration in not knowing when her daughter will return is illustrated in the quotation below: “Neo must come back home. It’s for the long time that she’s been gone. She left going to school and that was that” (Mama Daisy).

In Ruby’s instance there was a sense that South Africa would regrettably not provide the appropriate medical support for her grandchild and therefore the relocation to the UK may be permanent: “She is not coming back because of the condition of her child and she is getting a lot of help that side than she would get here” (Ruby).

The ambiguous feelings which participants often experience regarding international migration are reflected by Mama Daisy, whose daughter had ostensibly relocated to the United States to study, but subsequently had gotten married and had children there:

> But Neo is happy there with her boys…If she weren't happy, then I'd tell her to come back home… I wouldn't be proud that my child is in America, and yet she's suffering there. Actually that's not even her home. Home is here with us. (Mama Daisy)

**Emigrants' Experiences**

Most of these participants viewed their emigration as a short-term employment, travelling and/or educational experience, challenges notwithstanding: "It's an opportunity to live abroad, it's an opportunity to break away from an office job and Corporate" (Phindile).

For Mama Sally's family of five, the objective of their international migration to the United States was not to establish any form of permanency abroad but to further their studies thereby increasing their capital: "Our plan is to be here temporarily you know" (Mama Sally).

However, South Africa was always seen as "home": "…even though we have the two homes…yes, a little of peace of mind and uh…thinking that OK, at least when we come back we have some, somewhere to come back to" (Mama Sally).

Some participants' intentions for emigrating may also have changed over time: "…from being an au pair to being an international student" (Neo).

Significantly, the temporary nature of the emigration seemed to be closely linked to strong emotional ties with their family in South Africa:

> Like I am separating with all my friends and my family. I have got to start afresh and I have no idea what it's going to be like but, so... [laughing] I mean this is quite

> a thing…And I have always lived around everyone else. So I, I am not sure I would still do that. (Phindile)

After years of uncertain exilic migration, Pulane's husband's decision to return to his country of origin was expedited by the need to be with his ageing mother: "Mom was still alive and he felt a strong call to be with her in her later years" (Pulane).

Alongside Mama Sally's initial relocation to Kentucky and subsequent return to South Africa, the temporal nature of her family's emigration may have further been motivated by a strong attachment and connection to the South African landscape as well as the yearning for "home":

> You know and then I had talked to myself I said 'No, there are big trees', Kentucky has big trees like Swaziland, so I said, well, I can just pretend if I look outside and say 'Well, I can see the garden outside.' (Mama Sally)

For these participants, a strong sense of identity and belonging to the country of origin may have counteracted the possibility of permanency in their respective host countries:

> Now all I see is lots of white people everywhere speaking a foreign language. I don't hear people having a conversation in isiZulu or Sesotho…I don't have that anymore. So those are the elements that I miss. (Phindile)

Seemingly for Phindile, difficulties in assimilating into a new culture may have also resulted in her yearning to return back home: "I also just miss seeing lots of Black people everywhere" (Phindile). Echoing this, Aunt Doris's daughter-in-law had exclaimed: "I'm going back home! I can't stand the Brits [laughs]" (Aunt Doris).

Yet this strong sense of identity may additionally have been a protective factor for the emigrant abroad in mitigating assimilation and acculturation challenges: "Listening to Brenda Fassie and us South Africans…you know we braai. So absence makes a heart grow fonder…when you are in a foreign country…maintain your own authenticity" (Sally).

Significantly, while Pulane's migration may have been longer than that of the other participants, her sense of identity and connection to South Africa as home did not wane: "They were always at our house for braais and parties. Our house was the South African hang out, you know? We'd have 100 people for a braai" (Pulane).

Pertinent to the sense of alienation may be a level of cultural dissonance, where emigrants may perceive a lack of alignment with the social norms of their host country:

> One thing that I miss for example in South Africa is, if you pass someone on the road, 'Hello'. You don't have to start a conversation, but you greet them…but here generally they don't greet. (Phindile)

Seemingly, the lack of social support and the physical absence of familial interactions, appear to have brought about doubt to Angie's decision to settle abroad: "Why am I still – why am I stuck here with no support, no nothing? That's a constant on my mind" (Angie).

Consistent with Angie's experience of lack of support (though part of the emigrant experience), the disconnection from significant relationships and familiar supportive institutions in the country of origin may lead to feelings of isolation and dejection:

> A lot of my friends and family are in South Africa, so one thing, moving away, ja your support system kind of dwindles down. So there are not as many people that you can call on or anything like that. But ja, it's okay. (Phindile)

Notwithstanding the aforementioned factors contributing to the temporal nature of international migration for some of these participants, Neo appeared to be managing the acculturation process moderately well: "Life in America is very expensive, uh, and you have to work here. No, here you have to work, you have to pay the bills" (Neo).

On the other side of the pond, Angie, a mother of two young children, who had recently separated from her British husband, has decided to plant roots and settle there, despite the instances of discrimination she has experienced. Though Angie sometimes thinks about moving back to South Africa, this may currently not be a viable option for her: "Um, so I've toyed with the idea, uh, but I'm not sure about, uh, what kind of – I mean, it's something that my mum was going to look into, about the support that he could get at home" (Angie).

Despite the significance of family connectedness, financial family obligation may have been the motivating force behind the decision to permanently reside in the host country:

> …like I always had to be the breadwinner at home like since age 18. So when I came here, uh, it was even worse. Like, you know, somebody in my family will pass and then they'll call me and like for the funeral. Like whenever there was a huge thing, and even small things, like they always called me and I always helped, and when I came home after staying here like three and a half years, things were still the same and if I stayed home, I wasn't going to help them the way that I'm able to help them when I'm here. (Neo)

For Neo, remittances thus significantly contribute to her family's livelihood and well-being in the country of origin. Though the choice to settle permanently in her host country

may largely have been economically beneficial to both herself and the family remaining behind, South Africa remains "home":

> … But there's nothing like home. (Neo)

# CHAPTER 5

## Discussion

The results of this research highlight very interesting aspects related to the original research questions. In this section these will be discussed in the context of the relevant literature. While the experiences of emigrants in other parts of the world have been extensively studied, little information exists on the experiences of Black South African families who have been impacted by international migration (Marchetti-Mercer, 2012b, 2017). Thus this research project endeavoured to explore the experiences of Black families with regard to international migration, with reference to both those family members who remained behind, as well as those who emigrated. The following research questions were posed at the beginning of the project:

- What are the experiences of those family members remaining behind ?
- How do the family members, who remain in the country of origin cope with the reconstituted family structure and the new family dynamics?
- How do the remaining behind family members cope with the reconstituted family structure and the new family dynamics ?
- How have the individuals who have emigrated experienced their relationships with family members remaining behind ?

The experiences of both groups highlight certain commonalities and critical differences. Some of the themes identified in this study appear to support the literature on migration studies. Certainly, literature on migration is increasingly showing that international migration affects both the emigrant and the remaining family members (Baldassar, 2007a,

2014; Glick, 2010; Falicov, 2005, 2007; Berry, 2001; Ainslie, 1998; Levenbach & Lewak, 1995; Sluzki, 1992).

Significantly, the findings of this study show that both the emigrants and the family members remaining behind viewed their Black identity and its maintenance as important, "They should know that they are Blacks before they are anything else" (Mama Sally).

This, however, is more prominent in the emigrant group than in the participant group remaining behind. The discrepancy may be attributable to an innate need by the emigrant to maintain both a relational and a geographic connection to South Africa: "Ja, it's been an interesting one where I keep meeting people who are South African or linked to people that I know" (Phindile). The present study differs from that of Marchetti-Mercer (2012a; 2016) whose participants' need to maintain their racial and cultural identity was not identified as an important feature of white South African migration. To those remaining behind, the significance of the maintenance of a Black South African identity appears to be typified by the existence of close reciprocal emotional ties to kin. Most of these are multigenerational and typically include grandmothers and other extended family members who participate in parenting and caring roles (Mtshali, 2015; Chohan, 2012; Jewkes, Morrell & Christofides, 2009; Chazan, 2008). Mama Daisy as a participant remaining behind says of her octogenerian mother, with whom she shares a house: " (she) stays with her grandchildren. There were many of us here...My sister and her children…". As the results of this study thus highlight, the family is the mainstay of Black South African life as corroborated by the views of Amoateng and Richter (2003) as well as Viljoen (1994), "…and you know how white people are, they don't care for extended families!" (Ruby) in addition to "Also, they must see somebody - a family who cares" (Gogo).

The findings of this research illustrate that maintaining a Black South African identity may serve as a conduit through which emigrants can sustain their connection to family and culture, "…I want to still keep that, um, South African touch" (Angie). Though writers such as Ndlovu (2011) may have struggled with defining "blackness", Mangcu (2008) maintains that the development of a Black identity can be understood through the prism of engagement with whiteness and racism. As Aunt Doris also states: "I mean, you know, we're Blacks and everywhere we go, where there are whites involved, we don't easily fit in." However, pertaining to this study, the participants' Blackness appears to be unambiguous and is underpinned by global connection and shared emotional ties to other Black people: "That's not how **we** do things" (Phindile). This differs from Ratele (2003) who argued that the perceived shared connection gives rise to an illusory sense of community and communal history. On the other hand, a participant illustrates the presumption of Black solidarity and shared universal discrimination of Blacks by their white counterparts: "**They** are the same everywhere" (Aunt Doris).

Seemingly, maintaining close emotional ties to the emigrant's remaining family seems to have helped maintain and sustain a Black South African identity while abroad: "I mean, we try and make it as South African as possible when she's here" (Angie). Additionally, the findings suggest that maintaining a Black African identity as well as embracing one's cultural heritage while abroad may support an emigrant's sense of self. It may also engender cultural and ethnic pride, including self-affirmation: "So when we came in with our very black ...[laughing] selves…And very African and very proud of that" (Phindile). This finding resonates with Henry et al. (2010) who, in addition to mitigating against what Eisenbruch (1990) refers to as cultural bereavement, though counter-intuitive and seemingly contradictory, concluded

that by maintaining emotional ties to their countries of origin, emigrants may experience the process of adjustment and acculturation as less challenging.

This research has found that instances of cultural bereavement did not feature prominently amongst the emigrant participants. Significantly, the importance of maintaining a Black South African identity may be explicated by Hofstede's (1980) assertion that individuals from collectivist communities are inclined to exhibit a strong sense of identity: "They have never seen people who are so Black and so proud of who they are" (Phindile). This may also serve as an illustration of the participant's refusal to justify her existence in a white racialised world and may have felt her humanity under scrutiny (More, 2017).

Consistent with the literature, the findings of this study illustrate the pervasiveness of the sense of loss experienced by both the remaining participants and those who had emigrated. For the Black remaining behind family members, feelings of loss and loneliness were regularly experienced (Falicov, 1998, 2002), with Gogo lamenting: "After they moved, I found that they'd left me alone in Bophuthatswana…". Similarly, for the emigrants, being separated from and thus in a sense losing their families, friends, communities and all that is culturally familiar, brought about feelings of uprootedness and displacement (Malki, 1995): "Why am I still – why am I stuck here with no support, no nothing?" (Angie), and also "Like I am separating with all my friends and my family. I have got to start afresh and I have no idea what it's going to be like" (Phindile).

It could be argued that the sense of loss experienced by both remaining behind participants and their emigrant counterparts may sometimes be even more acute due to their Black South African collectivist roots where familial interactions are reciprocal and interdependent, with an emphasis on shared care. However, a protective factor could be the

understanding of familism by Sabogal et al. (1987). Here all family members interviewed seemed to cope with international migration through a strong connection to their Black South African cultural identity and reciprocal responsibility to the family unit by a remaining family member: "We must go, what about the children that side. It'll seem as if they're orphans" (Gogo).

Accordingly, the findings in the present study illustrate the significance of family amongst all the participants. Central to the family is the idea of shared care, interdependence, collective identity, traditions and a sense of duty towards one's family members. The following excerpt illustrates the sense of duty and interdependence of an emigrant in seeking her parents' counsel in preparing for her relocation to the Netherlands: "She was sharing with us when she had completed her auditions, done everything. She's now having a contract in her hand and she's saying, 'Review the contract and advise'" (Aunt Dudu).

Thus, consistent with the collectivist interdependent nature of these families in various Black South African cultures, tradition dictates that the uncle of the bride-to-be play a central role in the *ilobola* marriage negotiations as illustrated by Ruby: "… because when you marry, you need to meet the uncle." Seemingly, shared care, interconnectedness and interrelatedness which Neimeyer (2000) refers to as "social ecologies" (p. 267) feature quite strongly amongst the participants, emigration notwithstanding:

When there are problems she does help out and send money and we put that money to good use. I also try and help my brother in Bram Fischer. So when Neo sends me something, I call my brother to the house and I give him money so he can buy his kids something to eat. (Mama Daisy)

Key to the maintenance of a Black South African identity is the usage and consumption of certain foodstuffs reminiscent of home as corroborated by Bhugra (2004): "So when she comes, she like cooks, uh, oxtail and samp, and all those things for us" (Angie). Though not peculiar to this study's participants, food can be seen as a tangible link connecting people to their family and traditions. The findings illustrate the lengths families go to in procuring preferred South African foodstuffs for their migrant family members. In light of current literature (Cook, 2008; Weller & Turkon, 2015) the findings appear to support the correlation between the consumption of heritage food and the maintenance of a racial and cultural identity while abroad, in addition to the continuation of familial ties back home: "I miss flavours, so, when I came home one of the things that I did do was buy spices so I like made sure I stocked up on South African spices" (Phindile). Similarly, the recognition by family members of the importance of bringing foodstuffs specific to the country of origin to the emigrant during visits abroad is illustrated through the following: "…another time when flying through Dubai...those people searched me and even took away my container of achar! Achar!! What's wrong with achar?" (Mama Daisy). Thus the act of bringing ethnic foodstuff abroad highlights the importance of place attachment, and the strength of social ties. In this way, racial and cultural identities are maintained as well. Coupled with the importance of familial relationships, the significance of "home" to these relationships was also highlighted. The significance of family amongst Black South Africans as previously corroborated by Viljoen (1994) is reinforced by Gogo's comments: "They'd left me alone in Bophuthatswana and now to realise that the only family I have now is in Gauteng" This is supported by another remaining participant who added, "…and you know how white people are, they don't care for extended families!" (Ruby).

Significantly, international migration should never be seen as a singular individualistic event (Falicov, 2005). Though not restricted to Black families, its impact on the family system is significant. It is not always a positive experience for the remaining family members, nor for the emigrants. This is also in line with Bowen's family systems perspective which underpins this study, where the family is understood as an emotional, interrelated and interdependent system. Thus, for the emigrant, the distance created by their relocation highlights the importance of family in their country of origin: "The distance has made me appreciate and value her" (Angie).

Seemingly, from a family systems perspective, the prominence of family and a sense of "home" in this study is apposite. The interrelatedness and strong emotional ties within families, including transnational families, merit mention here. The significance of family togetherness and support is all the more pertinent when a family member emigrates, thus causing a rupture to the notion of family and a sense of home. In addition, there is also a suggestion of anxiety: "Um, she's never been away from home, hey" (Aunt Dudu).

Suarez-Orozco and Suarez-Orozco (2001) have argued that international migration not only disrupts a family's unity, but also impacts upon the transfer of indigenous language and culture. This was highlighted by some of the participants: "It's gibberish I can't hear with their American accents. I can't really hear their English!" (Mama Daisy). On the other hand, for an emigrant's family maintaining their language and cultural identity while abroad was a source of pride, "… so I am glad that we maintained that uh…authenticity and nobody has lost their language" (Mama Sally).

The findings of this research indicate the prevalence of restructuring and role reconfiguration within the family system of the those remaining behind once international

migration has occurred. Seemingly, the emigration of a family member and the resultant geographic separation bring about change in the entire family structure (Hugo, 2002). The inevitability of this phenomenon is supported by Falicov (2011), in addition to Pitkänen et al. (2018). This is poignantly illustrated by Aunt Doris: "You manage to, you know, you learn to get on with it". Consistent with the family systems approach, the entire family system would thus be impacted by the restructuring of roles, following one of its members' emigration. The participants in the study also seemed to experience a structural change in familial reconfigurations: "We had to review our roles" (Aunt Dudu). Accordingly, the reconfiguration of roles and responsibilities after emigration has occurred, is referred to as "relativising" by Bryceson and Vuorela (2002). Significantly, this is consistent with Bowen's family systems approach. Though the "relativising" may be a natural outcome of international migration, it appears to be borne out of necessity and may be accompanied by elements of emotional distress and or resignation: "I share everything with her, now that Neo's not here. She's my sister's daughter" (Mama Daisy). It is important to note that the absence of a specific member of the family informs what roles and responsibilities will be modified. The sense of resigned acceptance to the changed family structure is illustrated by Doris, "You know, it's okay; my helper is there, but it's not the same".

For Mama Daisy, the relocation of her daughter Neo to the United States brought about the incidence of her niece filling the gap created by Neo's emigration. This may include physically bringing in an extended member of the family to join the household: "There's a relative, um, Sandile ... He's been living with me" (Aunt Doris). However, international migration aside, multigenerational households as a consequence of segregatory policies, migrant labour and poverty are normative in the Black South African family (Seekings,

2008). They are characterised by collectivism, shared care and reciprocity which Neimeyer (2000) refers to as "social ecologies" (p. 267), including the important relationship between grandparents and their grandchildren in Black South African families (Mtshali, 2015).

The findings suggest that the emigration of a family member could be a distressing experience for the family remaining behind. This then necessitates a level of adaptability and resilience from family members. In turn, this allows them to reconfigure a different family structure. Roles and responsibilities in families are seldom static. They become modified in response to the family's objectives and events in their life course. Participants in this study seemed to be rooted in collectivism: "They should have left behind at least one child here with us. So we help them raise one" (Gogo), and, "I also try and help my brother in Bram Fischer. So when Neo sends me something, I call my brother to the house and I give him money so he can buy his kids something to eat" (Mama Daisy). Consequently, the reconfiguration brought about by geographic separation, though not entirely welcomed, may be less onerous. This is because participants are culturally interdependent and seem to prize the notion of family and togetherness. While family remaining behind may have an ambiguous experience by vacillating between feelings of misery and contentment, emigrants may experience what Doka (1989) refers to as "disenfranchised grief", where the emigrant's experiences of loss are not validated: "You think what are you doing, why – you know? Because South Africa is absolutely fantastic" (Angie).

Findings seem to suggest that migratory loss may be compounded by the vast geographic separation occasioned by a family member's emigration. Thus this may bring about feelings of displacement and uprootedness as described by Malki (1995). Furthermore, being separated from the familiarity of home, one's native language and significant

relationships appears to have brought about feelings of distress and dejection for some emigrant participants: “Now all I see is lots of white people everywhere speaking a foreign language. I don’t hear people having a conversation in isiZulu or Sesotho…I don’t have that anymore” (Phindile).

Of the five emigrants interviewed, three participants appeared to cope with the separation from family and home by forming close familial relationships with older women, “other mothers” (Collins, 2002), in their respective host countries. As a result, this mitigated against the loss and separation from their own biological mothers in their country of origin: “Like you know, I asked, uh, this lady who’s also like, you know, my second mum. Uh, she was actually my tutor” (Neo). Also: “I go over to her place for dinner once in a while, so it's like I have got a granny here as well” (Phindile). Lastly, Angie explains how she has been able to cope abroad: “So I met this Ghanaian lady, who’d been living in England for many, many years and, um, she’s a little bit, a lot older than me but she kind of took me under her wing and, um, we’ve become very close”. Significantly, despite the adoption of “other mothers” for the emigrants abroad, emotional ties with family remaining behind did not appear to suffer. On the contrary, family members remaining behind welcomed the idea and seemed content that their family member abroad was being mothered: “So she had parents that side…. But those parents were very good to her” (Mama Daisy).

Consistent with McGregor (2008) and Basu (2005), emigrants in this study appear to have a strong sense of allegiance to their country. Therefore, South Africa remains their “real” home: “The plan is to come **home,** uh, next year.” (Neo). The results of this study indicate the binary nature of home, and despite where the migrants may have relocated to, their motherland South Africa will always be home. Similarly the conflation of family and

home for Black families illustrates the concept of place attachment. It also corroborates the connections between "here" and "there" after international migration has occurred: "South Africa is home by name…but he has that connection" (Mama Sally).

Accordingly, for the emigrants, maintaining a sense of home while abroad seemed paramount. Though the use and consumption of traditional Black South African food, ingredients and recipes sustained their sense of identity, it appears to have additionally strengthened emotional ties with family remaining behind. Consistent with this are theories of transnationalism which Vertovec (2001) maintains are key to the migration phenomenon where emigrants have strong connections to their homes, families and communities in the country of origin: "Neo phones every day around 2pm" (Mama Daisy).

Supported by Baldassar (2007) and Baldassar and Baldock (2000), the study's findings highlight the importance of the act of caring for family members which is characteristic of transnationalism as well as collectivism. Thus remittances may be understood as an act of caring and this significantly, is in accordance with Bowen's family systems approach: "If I stayed home, I wasn't going to be helping them the way that I'm able to help them when I'm here" (Neo). Particularly with these participants, the notion and act of caring is analogous with the concept of "Ubuntu|" and collectivism. The study's findings also seem to suggest that participants remaining behind were fearful of their family members being harmed, or discriminated against in their respective host countries, or both. This may be attributable to South Africa's chequered race relations history as explicated by Goldin (2002). On the other hand, there was not much fear and anxiety amongst the emigrants about their migration process. As posited by Gómez de León del Río and Vicencio Guzmán (2006), international migration is a difficult, anxiety-provoking experience. However, their Mexican transnational

family therapy study revealed that emigrants may experience challenges of adjustment and safety, which may contribute to feelings of fearing the unknown. Despite the fact that fear did not feature strongly in the emigrants' experiences, there appear to have been difficulties with adjusting to their new and foreign locales: "That was really hard, uh, coming to a place that I had no idea I was coming into, a different world" (Angie). Similar research carried out by Favell (2016) highlighted emigrant concern regarding adjustment and integration into their host country. Significantly, the notion of fear and anxiety, in addition to discontinuity, is characteristic of international migration, which may engender feelings of uncertainty regarding the decision to emigrate: "I have got to start afresh and I have no idea what it's going to be like" (Phindile). Similarly: "You think what are you doing, why – you know?...Um, so you just question it" (Angie). Thus for the emigrants, fear of the unknown could also be extended to include anxiety and concern regarding the health and well-being of ageing family members in the home country. This is illustrated by Mama Daisy, who shares a home with her ailing mother and other extended family and children: "The first thing Neo says on the phone is, 'Where is Mama?' She doesn't refer to her grandmother as Koko, but it's 'Mama' ".

According to Baldassar (2007b), anxiety can be mitigated by frequent communication thus maintaining a reciprocal connection to family members back home. As transnational communication could sometimes be problematic due to the time difference and/or emigrants' work schedules, family members may not communicate as regularly once the relocation has occurred: "So I had a lot of … a lot of… a lot of missed calls. So now I'm thinking, oh my gosh, like, is there an emergency? You know what I mean?...and I'm like, I don't want to live like this, like you always think that oh, you know, What happened?" (Neo).

To compound the fear of those participants remaining behind, the international migration phenomenon appears to have caught the attention of families, albeit negatively: "You need to say what other risk do I mitigate, you know. You'll hear racial issues in Netherlands" (Aunt Dudu). For the participants remaining behind, fear of the unknown may have been additionally motivated by internalised feelings of South African prejudice and discrimination against Black people and that the world no longer enjoys peace and safety (Seekings, 2008). Corroborating this sense of fear, some of the remaining participants expressed their anxiety: "My greatest worry was…that they went to a land unknown - like from Jerusalem to Egypt" (Gogo). Similarly: "...and that really, you know, worried me and I thought, Gee. It's not safe" (Doris). Lastly, "You know when someone is that side, you think of many things. I was wondering if you were coming to tell us about problems that side. 'Maybe something has happened to Neo and she didn't want to tell us herself'" (Mama Rose).

Against the backdrop of racism, xenophobia and fear of change, family members remaining behind experienced feelings of anxiety linked to the unknown nature of the imminent relocation: "So we were very concerned, fearful, uh, very anxious, because none of us had been to Netherlands" (Dudu). It could be because many participants had not travelled overseas before - this was largely a white phenomenon in South Africa according to Marchetti-Mercer (2012a) and Crush (2000; 2011b) - and therefore they may not have been comfortable with the international migration space. This fear and anxiety experienced by the remaining behind participants may furthermore be underpinned by socio-economic factors and elements of collectivism where the study's findings have highlighted the importance of reciprocal familial relationships and obligation to family. Remaining behind family members expressed fear and anxiety with regard to the prevalence of terrorist attacks

overseas. This is corroborated by Koslowski (2004) who argued that fear of terrorist attacks has made migration and the future uncertain: "It's not safe and I mean, now it's even worse" (Aunt Doris).

Contrary to the concept of collectivism, the participants remaining behind revealed that there was little to no familial involvement and consultation in their family member's decision to emigrate, which may have contributed to feelings of anxiety and fear. One participant "lost" two of her children to international migration without being consulted. First, one adult child relocated before her husband died of cancer and second, her eldest child and son, sold the family medical practice after the father's death and relocated to the United Kingdom: "Okay, now that your dad is gone, you're just making all these decisions. You are not even consulting me before you do it?" (Aunt Doris). Though decisions to emigrate are largely individual, they do nevertheless often include consultation with family members (Crush, 2000; Falicov, 2005;) as well as push factors by the white population (Marchetti-Mercer, 2012a, 2016; Crush, 2000, 2011b). Significantly with these participants, aside from one emigrant participant, family members remaining behind felt overlooked and peripheral: "So they decide to go away. I did not know what to feel, I didn't know what I was going to experience when they leave" (Gogo).

The study's findings highlight the temporary nature of international migration amongst these participants, whereas the emigration of white South Africans tends to be a more permanent phenomenon (Marchetti-Mercer, 2012a). However, this temporal characteristic is more pronounced in the Black emigrants' experience rather than that of the remaining family members' experiences. Perhaps the notion of temporary international migration amongst the emigrant participants is linked to internal circular migration as described by

Nunez (2009) and Posel (2004): "After she finished her Masters…she wanted to see what she can get back home" (Doris). Significantly, a feature in this study is the emigrant's impermanent residence at the geographic location of employment, while permanence is back home from where one may originate and where the family resides. Thus the temporary emigration of Black South African human capital to international host countries suggests that international migration is considered a means of gaining international work experience rather than a permanent relocation of home. For the study's emigrant participants, international migration seems to be aimed at gaining career experience and/or increasing social capital to be utilised back in their countries of origin as corroborated by Massey et al. (2002): "Our plan is to be here temporarily you know…For five, six years and then go back" (Mama Sally). Also: "It's an opportunity to live abroad, it's an opportunity to break away from an office job and Corporate" (Phindile).

Pertinent to this study, this type of migration is underpinned by the maintenance of emotional ties between family members remaining behind and the emigrant, as highlighted by Fargues (2008). Additionally, it could well be that the temporal nature of international migration for these participants centres around a sense of uprootedness and displacement connoting a loss of identity, familiarity and familial interrelatedness (Malki, 1995; Stark, 2003). The following quote illustrates a participant's sense of displacement in her host country: "Now all I see is lots of white people everywhere speaking a foreign language. I don't hear people having a conversation in isiZulu or Sesotho…I don't have that anymore" (Phindile).

The notion of place attachment as explicated by Kaltenborn and Bjerke (2002), is equally pertinent to this study, as most of the emigrant participants seemed deeply connected to the notion of home and their African roots and landscape: "Kentucky has big trees like

Swaziland, so I said, well, I can just pretend if I look outside and say, Well, I can see the garden outside [laughs]" (Sally).

Signficantly, the study's participants were generally able to predict the length of their emigration, aside from the migrant participants who had married nationals from their host countries: "Um, the only reason why I moved here, was because of marriage" (Angie). This is corroborated by the following quote: "But Neo is happy there with her boys. I won't lie. If she weren't happy, then I'd tell her to come back home" (Mama Daisy). Despite the country's economic and political challenges, international migration as a temporary experience could further be attributable to the perception that South Africa remains one of the more functional countries in Africa: "We were able to come back into the country in 1990 when Madiba was released from jail" (Pulane). South Africa also offers improved living conditions (Adepoju, 2003): "South Africa is absolutely fantastic" (Angie).

Since family ties in this research project appear to be notably strong, this again may be a motivating factor for temporary emigration: "… my friends and family in South Africa… so they are still my support system. Um, ja, one thing, moving away, ja, your support system kind of dwindles down" (Phindile). Despite years of exilic migration, the strong pull and connection to family that remained behind seems to have been at the root of the emigrant returning to the country of origin: "His mom was still alive and he felt a strong call to be with her in her later years…we were able to give her a good ten years" (Pulane).

Certainly, these close relational ties may additionally sustain a sense of identity and belonging to the country of origin. It is to be noted that temporary migration may be consistent with the view that the Black individuals' identities may be tied up in mutual support and cooperation with their community. Furthermore, their sense of self shares a co-

presence with other people in their world: "I used to even miss to going to a funeral, you know, because I didn't know that many people here and then I thought, Oh, we hadn't been to that" (Mama Sally). This is supported by the work of Markus and Kitayama (1991). Furthermore, this would be consistent with the Bowen's family system framework and the participants' collectivist worldview. Moreover, this may be corroborated by an individual's cultural identity which Bhugra and Becker (2005) maintain tends to be impervious to change and thus may require some time to adjust. Though extreme for this study's scope, Eisenbruch's (1990) definition of cultural bereavement illustrates the extent to which emigrants can mourn the loss of their cultural norms during their residence in their host country: "You know, because for me, one thing that I miss, for example in South Africa is, if you pass someone on the road, 'Hello!'… You don't have to start a conversation, but you greet them" (Phindile). Evidently, mutual support and cooperation at key family events such as births, weddings and funerals in the home country cannot be overlooked. They may engender the emigrant's sense of duty and obligation in the maintenance of familial and communal connections (Holdstock, 2000). For instance, the inability to participate in an event such as a family member's funeral in the home country may lead to emotional distress for the emigrant abroad: "That was devastating for me" (Angie). Emigrant participants unable to attend family gatherings consistently expressed regret and sorrow: "There was no way I was going to come…even the planes were not like working…But I was feeling so, so sad" (Neo).

Consistent with this argument, Mbiti (1969) asserted, "I am because we are, and since we are, therefore I am" (p. 109). One can draw a parallel between this notion of Ubuntu and the interrelatedness and interconnectedness of Neimeyer's (2000) social ecologies. From this study's results, what appears to have motivated temporary emigration

was a sense of home and a strong identification with the emigrants' country and ethnicity. One of the emigrant children's emigration period was curtailed due to her father's illness and subsequent death. Moreover, temporary migration may also be fuelled by poor adjustment, a lack of integration and social support in the host country: "Ja, I missed family and then I missed the, uh, … the convenience of having some help in the house" (Sally). A study conducted by Bakırcı et al. (2017) on Turkish immigrants returning to their country of origin revealed that not being free to practise their religion and the absence of positive foreign policy between the sending and host countries, may lead to temporary migration. Though this was not a factor amongst the Black South African participants, it could be argued that the participants may have felt limited in conducting traditional rites and rituals abroad with regard to their non-attendance of certain family funerals. However, common between the Turkish migrants and their Black South African counterparts in this study, is the significance of strong familial ties (Bakırcı et al., 2017).

Migratory studies have concluded that separation due to international migration can induce mental health and emotional challenges. This is illustrated by the experience of a remaining behind participant: "You know, one time I actually went into a depression" (Doris). Another one stated: "I would have just cried the whole day" (Phindile), at the thought of spending her birthday alone without her family in a foreign country. Lastly, telecommunications have advanced greatly, resulting in the improved maintenance of familial bonds (Schmalzbauer, 2004). In spite of this, however, physical presence still remains key amongst participants. Therefore, this may then perhaps explain the temporary nature of their migration, as this study's findings illustrate.

The study's findings highlight how some remaining behind family members cope through structural changes within their particular family system once international migration has occurred. In some instances participants remaining behind described either including an extended family member of the household into their homes to live with, or themselves relocating to be nearer to other family members remaining behind, or both. Findings of this study suggest that the reconstituted family structure is underpinned by loss (Boss, 1991, 1999), which one participant referred to as a "void": "It was that kind of void when he was gone and also just missing his company" (Aunt Doris). Seemingly some of the participants remaining behind may have experienced tropes of ambiguous loss, which they could not explicitly articulate, suggestive of disenfranchised grief: "So I was telling him, you know, I actually miss that human presence. Mmm, so ja. I really went through a dark time" (Aunt Doris). Structural changes within the remaining behind family have been supported by Falicov (2011) and Hugo (2002), who established that the international migration of a family member brings about changes in the family structure back in the country of origin.

To extend this argument further, Bryceson and Vuorela (2002) refer to "relativising" where the remaining family members modify responsibilities and relationships according to their needs, the duration and geographic distance of the emigration. As in the case of these two mothers and grandmothers, Mama Daisy and Aunt Doris, their accounts seem to suggest that the extent of their unhappiness, longing and loss is attributable to their emigrant child having previously provided both social and financial support. From their accounts it does not seem likely that these responsibilities could have been filled by any other family member or a close friend. A prerequisite to coping seems to be the unintended restructuring and modifying of family systems: "You know Katlego is my right hand? I sometimes wonder

what would happen if she were to get married? So Katlego has now become my Neo" (Mama Daisy). This illustrates an adaptive coping strategy these family members adopt following the emigration of their loved one. Evidently, the restructuring of family systems is dependent on the availability of a family member to fill the gap that the emigrant has left: " … but then without her, it meant somebody needed to take it over" (Aunt Dudu). Furthermore: "Um, to be honest with you, between the time she left, we had to review our roles because, besides her being the first born…" (Aunt Dudu). Similar research carried out by Asis, Huang, and Yeoh (2004) showed that the remaining behind families of Filipino migrants residing in Singapore, adopted the same relativising and restructuring format.

The above excerpt illustrates how families respond to the transfer of intra-family responsibilities and how family members in the absence of the emigrant bolster their position in the family system's hierarchy. Thus the study's findings highlight the importance of family ties which appear to be an essential component within the family system. However, where there is a lack of assistance, or an inability by other family members to assist, the parent remaining behind found ways of coping independently by herself: "[laughs] You manage to, you know, you learn to get on with it" (Doris).

Another adaptive coping mechanism adopted by family members remaining behind is the maintenance of relational ties through transnational communication which bridges the gap between time and space. Thus Licoppe (2004) refers to the significance of "connected relationships" within transnational families. Participants reported feeling connected to their family members abroad through WhatsApp, mobile communication and in the past, through written correspondence and photographs: "You know, just talking through the phone, writing letters. Writing letters to my grandmother and her sister, you know, letters, send them pictures"

(Neo). These connected relationships are sustained through a blend of mediated and non-mediated communication which, according to Hoover, Clark, and Alters (2012), is a key feature of contemporary transnational communication technology and is referred to as "media life" (Deuze et al., 2012). The findings highlight the frequency with which participants communicated with each other as established by Falicov (2007): "Neo normally phones every day around 2pm." (Mama Daisy). Participants also seemed to rely on mobile communication, specifically the "WhatsApp" application: "We also have a family WhatsApp group as well" (Phindile). Interestingly, emotional ties between a mother remaining behind and her emigrant daughter residing in the UK may have strengthened as a result of the relocation. They communicated daily: "We speak every day, I think I've – the distance has made me appreciate and value her" (Angie). Hence, the frequent communication between the remaining family member and the emigrant abroad can be understood as "filling in absence by a sort of incantation" as posited by Licoppe and Smoreda (2005, p. 331). New forms of media do not necessarily resolve the angst brought about by familial separation. However, contemporary communication technology has developed into a significant factor in how transnational relationships are negotiated and perceived: "This is the phone that Neo sent me from America. So I can Whatsapp, save pictures of Damon and Shane. Communicate nicely with other people" (Mama Daisy). Similar to the findings of Licoppe (2004), the participants in this study seemed to rely on mobile communication to maintain emotional ties and a connection to each other while living worlds apart. The following quote illustrates a participant's adaptive coping strategy when feeling despondent with loss and longing for her family abroad: "These pictures are very special to me. When I'm really feeling down, I look at the pictures of Neo and the boys and feel a little better" (Mama Daisy). Similarly, the following quote supports the

assertion that telecommunications are said to psychologically assuage the distressing feelings caused by distance between transnational family members: “She took so long to call us. I just thought this person is gone from us - till she eventually called!” (Mama Daisy). As established by Licoppe (2004), families appear to rely on mobile communication as a type of virtual attachment and connection which may be a proxy for actual physicality. Furthermore, this seems to resonate with Clark’s (2013) assertion that constant communication engendered feelings of intimacy and affection within families.

Accordingly, transnational visits tend to be filled with a great deal of virtual communication prior to and subsequent the visit. Though family members did not necessarily know the daily movements of the emigrant, the frequency of the communication engendered a sense of closeness, knowing and intimacy (Clark, 2013; Vertovec, 2001). This was evinced by all the participants, specifically Mama Daisy, who received daily calls at a particular time from New Jersey, and Aunt Dudu, who sent daily messages to her daughter in the Netherlands upon waking. Consequently, this then facilitated the impression of being together in a communal space, albeit virtual. As welcome and necessary as these transnational calls are to family members, physical contact and physical affection remain paramount, which is supported by both Bravo (2017) and Skrbiš (2008): “I just wish they were all here. But I wish I could go and just take them and keep them forever” (Mama Daisy). Some participants experienced feelings of self-reproach, feelings of sorrow and apprehension in the absence of their loved ones continents away: “It was hard especially for my grandma because she’d be like oh, you know, ‘Something is going to happen to me’ and then I have to come home and ‘I won’t be here anymore’. So that was very hard um...” (Neo).

It is because of the above that I make reference to Baldassar (2008), who speaks of transnational ways of being, a form of presence which is shared. Pertinent to my study is the form of 'presence' which has either been virtual or physical. Key to this section is the idea of physical presence in the form of transnational visits. Despite other forms of shared co-presence having utility in transnational family systems, it is the physical presence which seems to mend issues of pining and melancholy, such as Mama Daisy's lament: "So what happens if parents want their children back? What do parents do?".

Mama Daisy, of all the participants, seemed to be the embodiment of yearning and melancholy. The above quote typifies the feelings of extreme yearning parents of migrants may have, where physical contact and being in the presence of their loved one are missed. As Baldassar (2008) has established, co-presence is attained through transnational visits. For remaining parents who have not had the opportunity to visit their emigrant children, the yearning and longing to be in their presence is acute: "I haven't gone to America to go visit Neo... I've been wishing that I go but the doctors here said I'll never go in my condition" (Koko, Mama Daisy's mother, Neo's grandmother).

As illustrated above, Neo's 84-year-old grandmother, Mama Daisy's mother, physically yearned for her grandchild, Neo, whom she raised and who refers to her grandmother as "Mama". Not having visited Neo, her eldest grandchild, in New Jersey, was a source of great sadness for Koko, who, because of her illness, has been unable to participate in the family's virtual co-presence with Neo, either.

For the emigrant participants, what stands out is that relationships with family members remaining behind could be characterised as a type of balancing act: "When someone is missing, it just goes out of balance. So ja, things change" (Phindile). Notions of

rooting, uprooting and rerooting as explicated by Egoz (2013), seem characteristic of these emigrants' experiences with familial relationships and their country of origin: "But going back home was more stressful uh … than we thought it would be" (Mama Sally). Challenges described by the emigrants include a sense of loss, the death of family members, difficulties with transnational communication and visits back to their home country. As described by various scholars, emigrants' sense of loss may include loss of the familiarity of home and relationships, loss of language and the physical loss of their country (Henry et al., 2005; Ward & Styles, 2005; Winbush & Selby, 2015): "So ja, we are a little bit isolated out here… So that makes it harder" (Angie).

Studies have established that a contemporary feature of migration is the connection emigrants have with their families and communities remaining behind in their countries of origin (Hoover, Clark, & Alters, 2012; Baldassar, 2007b, 2008). The findings in the present study corroborate with this in that the notion of family remaining behind looms large in the emigrants' lives. Consistent with the family systems perspective, family members in this study appeared to function as an interrelated system and were consistently emotionally linked. Accordingly, each of the emigrants had strong connections with family members back home, despite the geographical and cultural distance. Family separation can thus result in alienation which can be exacerbated by emigrants shielding those remaining behind from their negative migratory experiences in their host countries. There was a sense that a participant's emigrant daughter may not be forthcoming regarding her experiences in her host country: "You know when someone is that side, you think of many things. I was wondering if you were coming to tell us about problems that side…Maybe something has happened to Neo and she didn't tell us herself" (Mama Daisy). Though Falicov (2002) referred to "relational

resilience" (p. 274) in describing how family members remaining behind manage their relationships with their emigrant family members abroad, this resilience and stoicism is also evident in the experiences of the emigrant: "So we just stand it" (Mama Sally). Furthermore: "Looking back, you know when you're in the thick of things, you don't realise how hard it is but when you look back, you think, Oh my God, how did I do that on my own?" (Angie).

Accordingly, the results of this study suggest that the frequency of transnational visits amongst family members is an essential element in family unity and the livelihood of the emigrant. Thus visits seem to be a way to strengthen and rekindle reciprocal emotional ties with emigrant family members: "They came for my birthday, they came to visit! For my birthday which was amazing" (Phindile). This resonates with the assertion of Henry et al. (2010) that the maintenance of emotional ties to the countries of origin can be seen as an aid towards adjustment and acculturation in their respective host countries.

O'Flaherty et al. (2007) found that being able to visit one's home country "assumes enhanced status as a quality of life indicator with potentially major emotional benefits stemming from increased contact with family and friends" (O'Flaherty et al., 2007, p. 819). Though the first visit back to their home country is often fêted (Baldassar, 2001), for this study's participants, the sense of celebration endures for every time the emigrants visit their home country. As most of the emigrants in the study frequently visited their country of origin, Schmoll (2011) has argued that these visits could be understood as a form of self-exploration as well as a way of developing their identity. Consistent with O'Flaherty et al. (2007), visits for these participants are joyous occasions accompanied by much fanfare: "To show that GOD is funny…the day I was discharged, I just see Neo walking into the hospital" (Koko). For an emigrant's octogenarian grandmother, visits from her granddaughter are

special and appear to leave a lasting sense of pleasure in addition to sustaining the emotional connection. The visit of one of the emigrant participants, Phindile, coincided with her sister's wedding, thus increasing the level of festivities surrounding her arrival. Though visits are generally joyous occasions, for some emigrant participants they can be bittersweet: "When I came to visit - because I was there for my sister's wedding specifically - I didn't get to see a lot of people that I would have loved to see, but a lot of my friends I didn't get to see" (Phindile). Visits are thus informed by transnational relationships and events, whose impact will be determined by the emigrant's stage in life as described by Kobayashi and Preston (2007). After a rather long absence, an emigrant brought along her new husband and new baby to meet her mother, grandmother and other remaining behind family members in South Africa: "And then we came back. Yeah, because most of the family's…have met, uh, Damien my three-year old because you know, he's been there for his first birthday but they didn't meet Shane" (Neo). Seemingly, for an emigrant who has two young children, one of whom has special needs, her visits to South Africa have been infrequent: "Most of the time, it's her coming here only because it's very hard to travel with my little boy" (Angie).

Significantly, Mulder and Cooke (2009) highlight the importance of physical contact in the maintenance of relationships. Thus, in the absence of physical contact within transnational families, there is evidence of emotional distress and a sense of desperation: "Why am I still – why am I stuck here with no support, no nothing?" (Angie). Accordingly, the absence of physical contact with family remaining behind and the loss of one's culture and community may manifest themselves in a peculiar yearning: "I used to even miss to going

to a funeral, you know, because I didn't know that many people here and then I thought 'Oh, we hadn't been to that.'" (Sally).

The excerpt below encapsulates the importance of transnational visits for family members remaining behind: "Ja. That first time I went that side? I was so nervous I wanted to change my mind so many times! All I was praying for was to see Neo's face, then all would be OK" (Mama Daisy). Similarly, for the emigrant participant, being visited by family remaining behind appears to have been a momentous occasion: "It was awesome!"; "It was a highlight of our visit here and for them to… you know, to get that opportunity, uh… to come to the United States, it was great!" (Sally). The regularity of the emigrant visits appears to have been dependent on the geographic distance between the host country and home. Consequently, transnational activities between country of origin and host country will differ in concentration: "No-one went to visit. Do you actually realise how far America is?" (Gogo).

Falicov (2003) maintains that emigrants could feel extreme sorrow, misery and self-reproach for not regularly visiting their families back home. However, for these participants, these feelings were more pronounced where there was an inability to travel to their home country for family funerals. Certainly, the loss of family members through death poses various coping challenges for individuals living abroad (Bravo, 2017). This was the experience in a number of families: "During his exile, his dad had passed away and he wasn't able to come to the funeral" (Pulane), and also: "I was able to attend just two. The other two, yeah, I wasn't able to attend. My aunt passed, and I'm very close to all of them, like I'm very, very close to my family" (Neo) and lastly: "I couldn't get my passport in time. I literally – my passport. It was heart wrenching" (Angie). Baldassar et al. (2007) corroborate that the emigrants' inability to travel back to their home country for the funeral may compound feelings of sadness and guilt.

Thus the importance of attending family funerals in the country of origin cannot be overlooked: “I was like there’s no way I will stay here because I’m not going to believe it, I had to go home” (Neo). This is consistent with Nesteruk (2018) whose study investigated transnational deaths and bereavement.

Horn (2017) has illustrated that there is a direct association between the regularity of emigrant visits to their country of origin and remittances. Additionally, the attainment of citizenship by the emigrant in their host country is positively associated with the frequency of migrant transnational activity (Waldinger, 2008). Conversely, prior to her changing her legal status in America, Neo in New Jersey did not visit her mother and grandmother for four years after leaving South Africa: “Close to four years, I didn’t come home [chuckles]. Yeah, I wanted to come home so bad, but one thing about the US, like the immigration is very strict” (Neo).

With regular communication and regular physical contact, transnational families are able to sustain “mutually supportive relationships across time and space” (Baldassar, 2007b, p. 406). Though transnational families maintain a level of intimate connectedness across time and space, the actual distance can be challenging when faced with a family emergency. This was expressed by three participants, where an emigrant daughter’s relocation was suddenly interrupted due to her father’s cancer. Another emigrant was unable to attend several family funerals due to the travel costs and the distance. In the third example, another emigrant failed to attend the funeral of her uncle, who had been a father figure to her. This was as a result of her new passport still being processed after it had accidentally been damaged by her son. She was denied an emergency passport. This supports Falicov’s views

(2002; 2016) that missing out of significant family events is extremely distressing for migrants: “Like I feel they are carrying on with their lives and I am an observer” (Phindile).

The above, however, is offset by another emigrant adult child sending financial assistance to her family after the death of a family member, over and above the regular remittances sent to her mother back home. This then may counterbalance her absence and assuage a sense of powerlessness and regret (Bravo, 2017). Like Nesteruk’s (2018) study, these participants responses further verify that in instances of the transnational loss of a loved one, emigrant adult children want to be present and participate in burial processes, be it symbolically or by being physically present.

Despite international flights being costly, lengthy and sometimes anxiety-provoking for some family members remaining behind, this was reportedly not a deterrent as there were regular visits between the parents remaining behind and their emigrant children, more so when grandchildren were involved. Frequent visits between family members seem to be consistent with Mphahlele’s (1962) assertion that Black people were innately communal. This is also consistent with Bowen’s family systems perspective and collectivism which Gorodnichenko and Roland (2011) asserted are embedded in interrelatedness and interdependence within one’s family system and culture.

The participants’ responses seem to indicate that transnational visits are an essential element of maintaining connection and intimacy within families. It would seem that this was one of the many ways in which these families coped with the separation and loss. Both remaining family members and their emigrant children prized these visits, which could also be seen as providing an emotional balm. Transnational visits were frequent between the two parties and there did not seem to have been financial constraints, apart from those

experienced by Mama Daisy's family. One remaining parent had made three visits within a year as her emigrant daughter had needed assistance with childcare while recuperating from a leg injury. For this emigrant daughter, it would seem that her mother's visit from South Africa would be advantageous for both her and her young children. Angie, the participant, had expressed that it was extremely important for her that her young children were not solely steeped in a British way of life. Thus she hoped that her mother, who is Xhosa-speaking, could transfer cultural knowledge to her grandchildren and teach them isiXhosa and how to cook Black South African / Xhosa dishes during her visits to the UK: "I mean, we try and make it as South African as possible when she's here". Seemingly, the preservation of Black South African culture is important for these participants. This is emphasised by Angie, who is now a single parent in a foreign country: "And because you're in a different country and the cultures are so different…Uh, I want to still keep that, um, South African touch, um, so the only person I can go to is my mum for, you know, advice on how to do this and how to do that" (Angie).

Emigrant visits to their home country can exemplify a sense of financial success (Baldassar, 2001), as illustrated by the following quote: "Did you notice the kitchen cupboards when you came in? She came one time. Then she sent some money and we got new cupboards" (Mama Daisy). However, alongside this, there may be tensions after a long absence, instances of socio-cultura dissonance (Pollock et al., 2010): "So I came home and realised that, you know what, there's really nothing for me here, like there's no future for me here" (Neo). While there may be attachment to their geographic home, there may also be a sense of disconnect. Though, according to Baldassar (2001), these visits may result in some dissonance in the

emigrant famil system dyad: “We were adults when we came, he was eight and uh … But going back home was more stressful” (Mama Sally).

Clearly, visits to their home country can also be a source of stress for the emigrant. After the death of her uncle, a participant had to negotiate childcare with her estranged husband in the United Kingdom in order to visit her family back home. For this emigrant, the significance of coming back to her country of origin to spend time with her uncle’s immediate family and own mother cannot be ignored, especially after she had missed the funeral due to the loss of her passport. As mentioned earlier in the text, another emigrant daughter aborted her relocation abroad to return ‘home’ and spend quality time with her father who had become ill from cancer. Notably, emotional bonds between the emigrant and family members remaining behind seem strong. Thus caring across time and space in transnational families is twofold: there are certain routines and procedures, such as collaboratively deciding on the care of those remaining behind and actively participating in the ‘caring’ when back home during visits: “Ya. I was actually saying to Neo, now that Khothatso is not working, shouldn’t we try and pay her to look after Mama? Because she really does a good job with Mama” (Mama Daisy). In addition to this, there are the attendant feelings of caring such as regular visits and keeping in touch.

Consistent with elements of collectivism, Baldassar (2014) argues that the frequency of transnational activity may additionally be shaped by feelings of guilt along with a sense of duty. Neo in New Jersey appears to typify this phenomenon. Though her transnationalism is primarily expressed through the use of remittances, her frequent visits back home, regrettably occasioned by family funerals, could be understood as a form of care for her elderly grandmother, mother and extended family. Most of Neo’s visits have been to attend

significant funerals of her aunts and uncles, her grandmother's children. This type of transnational activity exemplifies the relationship between international travel to countries of origin and the life course of the family and the migrant (Baldassar et al., 2007). However, the frequency of funerals and the associated costs create a cultural tension in Neo's household in New Jersey: "I know, ja, and it's hard because, you know, I'm married to an American and they don't really get these things of, you know, you always having to help out your family" (Neo). Thus a western individualistic paradigm of funerals and bereavement seems not to cater for the Black South African experience as evinced in this study.

The findings from this study suggest that transnational family visits are an exercise in long distance connectedness and a shared co-presence, which, according to Torres et al. (2016), can either result in resilience or have adverse outcomes. The two groups of remaining participants and their emigrant family members have shown resilience, longing and loss in varying degrees. What remains clear is that the dynamics within the various family systems in the study vary. What works in one transnational family, may not necessarily be ideal for another transnational family. While Ruby is able to visit her daughter and two grandchildren several times a year, in another family case study, Neo's visits to her family have primarily been out of a sense of moral, familial and cultural duty. What has been revealed amongst the participants in the study is that long distance family relationships are underpinned by dualistic obligations across time and space.

**Summary**

The study's findings highlight the fact that the maintenance of close emotional ties between the emigrant and the remaining behind family is crucial to the well-being of family members. Migration literature as well as the study's findings in the preceding paragraphs, has established that family separation as the outcome of international migration, is fraught with mental and economic tensions and anxieties with various concomitant coping strategies (Chan, 1994). Though not explicitly described as such, Black family members remaining behind can be portrayed as often feeling out-of-alignment after the relocation of their family member. The interrelatedness and connectedness of these family members seem rooted in the family systems perspective, underpinned by place attachment, notions of collectivism and a strong sense of Black South African identity.

From the several coping strategies which were highlighted, it would seem that the repercussions from international migration on the families interviewed are multifold: They can be traumatic and complicated, and contingent on the context. Reactions from the various families will consequently vary according to the life cycle and interrelatedness of both the remaining family member and the emigrant. Therefore, who in the family relocates (in consideration of the role and responsibility, age and gender of the emigrant), as well as who remains behind, may determine the duration of the international migration. Significantly, the results of this study illustrate possible implications for Black family systems, the notion of home as well as issues of nationality and citizenship.

# CHAPTER 6

## Conclusion

This research project sought to address the current lacuna in research on the impact of international migration on Black South African families. It explored the experiences of Black South African families remaining behind after their children had migrated internationally, as well as those of the emigrant family member abroad. Based on the findings explicated in the preceding sections, the experiences of the Black participants seem to differ from other South African racial groups (Marchetti-Mercer, 2012; Crush, 2011b; Marchetti-Mercer et al., 2017) (Under review). From the various family case studies, it would seem that the findings do to some extent challenge academic consensus on the impact of international migration. Though there were instances of commonality between the experiences of Black participants and their other South African counterparts, the study into the Black lived experiences revealed thought-provoking insights and thus merit further enquiry. Additionally, it appears this study's findings may reflect the historic lack of social and economic resources amongst South Africa's Black population, which may serve as a challenge in accessing the international migration space.

The findings substantiate existing literature and research in that international migration is both a complex process and phenomenon, and remaining family members may be negatively affected. Aside from the oft-documented experiences of sending families, Black family members remaining behind described fear of racism and discrimination in the emigrants' host country. There was also fear of the destination itself, in that it was either unfamiliar or posed imminent threats of terrorist violence. Social isolation in the host

country added to the unease. Additionally, unlike that of their white counterparts, the impetus for the Black emigrants' relocation is not necessarily place utility, but seems to have been, to a certain degree, accidental. For the Black emigrant as well, relocation creates a tension with the maintenance of cultural values with those of the host countries, concomitant with tensions of national identity and personhood. Moreover, as documented in other migration literature (Favell, 2016; Baldassar, 2014), challenges with integration and adjustment do occur, though not as prominent with this study's emigrant participants.

The participants' experiences draw attention to significant insights. These pertain to the fear of racism borne out of South Africa's treacherous and violent apartheid history, its current race relations and global politics. Consistent throughout the participants' accounts is the strong attachment to their families and their country, in addition to the peculiarity of the temporariness of international migration. While migration literature maintains that a powerful connection to one's mother country and remaining behind family members is attributable to recent emigration, this is not always the case. While strong transnational kinship ties and relational bonds appear to maintain closeness and connections within the family system, this could also inform the decision for the temporary migration of some of the emigrants. Additionally, temporary migration could also be ascribable to the idealisation of home.

Lastly, the research highlighted the significance of Blackness and attachment to one's culture. It also focused attention on the importance of finding coping and endurance strategies. This could be through extending kinship ties, whether in the homeland or abroad, to alleviate the dislocation and separation caused by international migration. Notably, the

emphasis on family and reliance on communal support in Black families remains key and should not be pathologised (Robinson, 2013).

## Limitations

This research project had several limitations that ought to be recognised. First, the research project was mainly conducted in the northern suburbs of Johanneburg, aside from one family. The findings therefore may possibly not be generalisable to other Black families in rural and peri-urban areas in Johannesburg. As a qualitative exploration, it ought to be pointed out that generalisibility was not the primary goal of this research project. Rather, it was to gain insight into the lived experiences of Black South African sending families and their adult migrant children living abroad. However, some of the findings are corroborated by previous research conducted on migration studies. Nonetheless, it was noted that five out of the six families interviewed were middle class and had varying degrees of affluence. Thus access to international migration was somewhat easier and their lived experiences may have differed from the family with fewer financial resources. There is a correlation between economically vulnerable families and an asymmetrical access to migration.

Another limitation to this research project is that four of the families were known to the researcher. Thus, prior knowledge of the respondents may have shaped how the participants responded to the interview questions and how the researcher may have interpreted the corpus data. Much has been written on the relationship between participants and researcher, including the asymmetrical power balance between the two entities (Vincent & Warren, 2001). To balance the power asymmetry, the researcher regularly disclosed private

information about herself consistent with the concept of reciprocity (Oakley, 1981). In line with this limitation, the researcher often experienced the challenge of accurately decoding the participants' lived experiences, which Clifford and Marcus (1986) refer to as the crisis of representation.

Though the researcher had immersed herself in the corpus data, in terms of the insider/outsider phenomemon, she was an outsider to the lived experiences of the participants. While the researcher attempted to immerse herself in the data, it was, however, established that wholly understanding their lived experiences from their perspective was improbable. Mohammad (2001) maintains that it is imperative that researchers are cognisant of insider/outsider complexities within their research projects, which would necessitate the detection of compound inferences and alternate realities.

A third limitation in this study is the dearth of knowledge regarding Black South African international migration, with the exception of apartheid exilic movements and the nurses' brain drain (StatsSA., 2016; Crush, 2000, 2011b; Marchetti-Mercer et al. (under review)). This limitation thus presented a significant opportunity for further research. Although research on different races and nationalities had recently been conducted concerning the impact of international migration on families (Marchetti, 2012b; McGuire & Martin, 2007; Gómez de León del Río & Guzmán, 2006; Massey, 2004; Marchetti-Mercer et al.) (under review), this research project could have been influenced by the researcher foisting her understanding of the primary findings on similar research conducted in the past. This then would have cemented the asymmetrical power balance between the researcher and the participants. As this research project was a qualitative study, the researcher was constrained by self-reported data which cannot be accurately validated. One of the participants had selective memory,

which was substantiated by another family member, while a further participant may have had a penchant for exaggeration.

The fourth limitation speaks to the non-availability of some of the emigrant participants living abroad to participate in telephonic interviews. This was consistent with non-response bias where the emigrant family members from two families could not avail themselves to be interviewed telephonically. This may have been due to the personal information required regarding their experiences with international migration, or the invitation to participate in the research study not having been clearly communicated. As a result of non-response bias, the experiences of their sending family members could either not be "verified" or compared, or both. From the outset it could have been communicated to the sending families that experiences of their emigrant children would also have been beneficial to an overall understanding of the Black South African international migratory experience. Extending this limitation was the utilisation of family case studies, as contributory inferences could not be established due to the possibility of other reasons (Hamel, 1993). Attaining generality from case studies proved to be challenging, to say the least. This was due to the subjectivity and uniqueness of the semi-structured interviews. Furthermore, as illustrated by the study's participants, these findings may not necessarily represent the experiences of other Black South African families. Though several case study findings may be indicative of analogous findings in other racial groups and contexts (Erickson, 1985) there may be a need to conduct additional research on the impact of international migration on Black South African families. In conclusion, as the research interviews were semi-structured, depending on the participant's context, both face-to-face and telephonic interviews did not necessarily adhere to the interview protocol. This may have resulted in a certain measure

of bias (Barriball & White, 1994), which occurred in varying degrees during the semi-structured interviews. Additionally, as decoding non-verbal language is purely subjective, the researcher may have created some bias in her interpretation of the participants' accounts. Nonetheless, the nub of the research project - to explore the impact of international migration on Black South African families - has yielded significant findings, the above limitations notwithstanding.

**Recommendations**

This research project investigated an area with heretofore little information. Consequently, the project can then significantly contribute to the body of literature on South African international migration and its impact on the family system. In light of increased international migration in South Africa, the results of this study may shed more light on the intricacies of relocation in addition to the small incidence of international migration by Black South Africans. Moreover, it would be utilised to explore the concept of place attachment with regard to the Black population's circular international migration and questions of temporality. As reported by Marchetti-Mercer et al. (under review), a gendered perspective on South African international migration warrants further exploration. That the feminisation of international migration is on the rise is corroborated by this study in that all the participants interviewed, both the remaining family members and the emigrants, were female, albeit of various education and class structures.

In conclusion, possible future research could further explore the complexities of the Black identity when confronted with whiteness abroad, as opposed to the experiences in the local South African context.

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## Appendix A:

## The Impact of International Migration on Black South African Families

Good day. My name is Nthopele Mabandla. I'm currently doing my Masters degree in Community Counselling Psychology at the University of the Witwatersrand. I am conducting this study for the purposes of obtaining my Masters degree.
Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You should read the information below and ask questions about anything you do not understand, before deciding whether or not to participate.

**PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**
The aim of this research project is to explore the experiences of Black South African family members remaining behind and those of the emigrants after international migration has occurred. Thus I aim to understand how family members cope with the separation. I would like to invite you to participate in my study.

**PROCEDURES**
If you consent to participate in this study, the interviewer will ask you to do the following:

1. To take part in an interview regarding your experiences around your family members' decision to leave the country which will last approximately 60-90 minutes. It is necessary for the interviewer to record the interview in order to remember as much detail as possible.
2. To provide him/her with information regarding the structure of your family in the format of a family tree.

**POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS**
No risks, discomforts, or inconveniences should arise as a result of your participation in this study. If however any of the discussions cause you any discomfort, you may discontinue your participation.

**POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY**

It is not likely that you will benefit directly from participation in this study, but the research should help us learn how the phenomenon of international migration is impacting Black South African family life.

**PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION**

You will not receive any payment or other compensation for participation in this study. There is also no cost to you for participation.

**CONFIDENTIALITY**

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of a code number that will be connected to the different participants.

Only the researchers will know who you are. You and your family members' names will not be used in any of the information gathered from this study or in any of the research reports. When the study is finished the list that shows which code number goes with your name/family will be destroyed.

The interview will be recorded so that we can write down the conversation as it was spoken. All the information contained in our conversation will be held in the strictest confidence and will only be viewed by the researchers on the team.

The interviews will be audiotaped and will be transcribed by a person who will not be privy to the identity of the interviewee(s). The transcripts will however be kept in electronic form for the period of time required by the University of the Witwatersrand. The names and identifying details on the family tree will be changed to guarantee confidentiality. Information that can identify you individually will not be released to anyone outside the study. The researchers will, however, use the information collected for publishing and/or presentations in academic contexts. Availability of the report will be made to you upon request.

**PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL**

You can choose whether or not to be in this study. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any questions you do not want to answer. There is no penalty if you withdraw from the study.

If you do choose to participate please can you fill out the consent forms attached and give them back to the interviewer ; the one is consent to participate and the other is consent for the audio recording.

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *Nthopele Mabandla | *Prof Maria Marchetti-Mercer | *Ms Leonie Human |
| 082 4698894 | +27 11-717-4524 | +27 11-717-4500/2/3/4. |
| nthopele@gmail.com | Maria.Marchetti-Mercer@wits.ac.za | Leonie.Human@wits.ac.za |


**COUNSELLING SERVICES:**

We do not expect that the interview will harm you in any way but if you feel that you are having difficulties after having participated you may access the following free therapy service or the principal investigator Prof Maria Marchetti-Mercer.

| | |
|---|---|
| LIFELINE | 0861 322 322 |
| Prof Maria Marchetti-Mercer | 011 7174525 |

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## Appendix B: Participant Consent Form

In order for you to participate in this research study on the impact of international migration on Black South African families, it is necessary for you to give your consent.

By signing this consent form you are indicating that you have read and understood the attached information letter; that you are agreeing to participate; and that you are consenting to the following:

I understand that:

My name will not appear anywhere in the report; will not be linked with my data; all the information I provide will remain confidential; and all data will be password protected and securely stored by the University.

The results may include the use of direct quotes from my answers but they will remain confidential and will not linked be linked with my data. I may decline to answer any question without penalty.

Participation in this research is not mandatory, but is voluntary and that, at any time in the research process (before, during or after), I may refuse to participate further without penalty.

There are no risks or benefits attached to my participation in this research.

I _____ hereby consent to participate in this research project.

Name _____

Signature _____

Date _____

## Appendix C: Recording Consent Form

I require that our interview is recorded so it can be typed out as it was spoken. As such you will need to consent to your interview to be audio recorded.

You will not be asked to provide any personal or identifying information. For tracking purposes codes will be assigned randomly. No identifying information will be used in the transcripts of the research report.

Access to the recordings is restricted.

The recordings and transcriptions will be kept in a password protected computer throughout the research process.

The recordings and transcripts will be kept in safe storage at the university.

Direct quotes may be used in the research report.

Please sign below to give your consent:

Name _____

Signature _____

Date _____

**Appendix D: Interview Schedule** (Family/parents remaining behind in South Africa)

(Preamble: Hello, my name is Nthopele and I would like to start by thanking you for taking part in my research. I would like to discuss with you your experience of having children and/or family members who have left the country and are living overseas. I am conducting a research project exploring the impact of international migration on Black South African families. I will also explore the how the international migration of some of the children may impact upon the family dynamics.

1. Tell me a bit about your family and help me draw up a family tree of your family
2. Where do you children live? When did the ones who left go?
3. How do you keep in touch?
4. Visits in both directions?
5. How do you make use of electronic communication?
6. Can you tell me about your grandchildren and your relationship?
7. What has been the hardest thing about having children so far away?
8. What are your support systems?
9. What works well and is easy for you?
10. If you had your way, how would your family situation be in comparison to how it is now?
11. Describe your friends and your social engagements?
12. How do you spend your week?
13. What advice would you have for others in your situation?
14. Have you ever sought professional help for family/relationship/personal issues?

**Interview schedule** (Emigrants)

(Preamble: I would like to discuss with you your experience of being away from family in South Africa. I am busy with a research project exploring the experiences of international migration on the family and also how migration of some of the children may impact upon the family dynamics).

1. Tell me a bit about your family and help me draw up a family tree of your family
2. Where do you live?
3. How do you keep in touch?
4. Visits in both directions?
5. How do you make use of electronic communication?
6. Can you tell me about your children and their relationship with grandparents in SA?
7. Most difficult thing about having family far away?
8. What is your support system?
9. What works well and is easy for you?
10. If you had your way, how would your family situation be in comparison to how it is now?
11. Describe your friends and your social engagement?
12. How do you spend your week?
13. What advice would you have for others in your situation?
14. Have you ever sought professional help for family/relationship/personal issues?

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## Appendix E: Scribe Confidentiality Agreement

I _____ agree to keep all information disclosed in the audio recordings confidential.

I understand that:

Anything discussed in the audio recordings is to be used for research purposes only and therefore I will not disclose any of the information with regard to

- The personal information about participants
- The content of the audio recordings

Name:_____

Date:_____

Signed:_____