

https://dspace.org/

Belonging and family relationships: the experiences of migrants in Olievenhoutbosch

Bonnet, Alida

2021
https://hdl.handle.net/10539/33480

Downloaded from a DSpace repository. https://dspace.org/

Belonging and Family Relationships: The Experiences of Migrants in Olievenhoutbosch

Alida Bonnet

School of Human and Community Development

School of Psychology

University of the Witwatersrand



Student Number: 1558016
Supervisor: Prof. Maria Marchetti-Mercer

A research paper submitted in partial fulfilment for the degree of Master of Arts in Community Based Counselling Psychology in the Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witswatersrand, Johannesburg, May 2021.

Declaration

I, _____Alida_Bonnet_____, know and accept that plagiarism (i.e., to use another's work and to pretend that it is one's own) is wrong. Consequently, I declare that:

- The following report/proposal/assignment is my own, unaided work.
- I have correctly acknowledged all direct quotations **and** properly paraphrased ideas/content. **In addition,** I have provided a complete, alphabetized reference list, as required by the APA method of referencing.
- I have not allowed and will not allow anyone to copy my work with the intention of passing it off as his or her own work.
- I understand that the University of the Witwatersrand may take disciplinary action against me if there is a belief that this is not my own unaided work, or that I failed to appropriately acknowledge the source of the ideas or words in my writing.

Signed: A. Bonnet

Date: ___12 May 2021_____

(**N.B. Reports/proposal/assignment which do not include this cover page, with the duly signed declaration, will not be accepted**)

Acknowledgements

Before all else, I would like to praise and thank my Almighty Father for granting me the opportunity to embark on this journey, guiding my steps, and for providing me with the capacity to carry it through. Walking with Him has been the biggest reward and the memory I will delight in most as I reflect on this journey.

To my supervisor, Prof. Maria Marchetti-Mercer, thank you for your continual guidance throughout this process. It would not have been as enjoyable, informative and of the same quality without your kindness, support and meticulous feedback.

To every person who has participated in this study, thank you for playing this vital role in this study, and for your generosity in sharing your experiences with me.

To my family and friends, your support, encouragements, and prayers helped sustain me throughout this demanding process. Thank you for being my inspiration, for cheering me on, and for celebrating the small and big wins with me.

Finally, a special note of gratitude to my parents, Magriet, Ouwee and Natalie. It will take more than words to express my appreciation for all you have done. Thank you for supporting me during the most difficult days, for encouraging me when I felt discouraged, and for providing spaces of love and comfort throughout this very challenging degree. I love you.

Abstract

Many people from other African countries migrate to South Africa, leaving their families in their countries of origin in search for opportunities to support them financially. When entering this country, however, these migrants are more frequently faced with discrimination and exclusions from various social and economic opportunities. With belonging being regarded as an integral part of migrants' settlement to a country, the question is raised regarding how this is navigated, and whether a sense of belonging can be experienced. Some argue that migrants' relationships and sustained connections with their families 'back home' help them mitigate these challenging conditions. This study endeavours to contribute to the body of knowledge by using an ecosystemic perspective to explore African migrants' experiences of belonging in a South African community, and the role that their families in their countries of origin may play. The participants consisted of working-class African migrants, and the data obtained was analysed using thematic analysis. The findings of this study reveal that a general sense of belonging is not experienced by African migrants in Olievenhoutbosch, although some spaces of belonging related to their national, cultural or religious identities are evident. Relationships with their families in their countries of origin are actively maintained with the help of Information Communication Technologies through regular contact and attempts at upholding familial obligations mostly with remittances. Lastly, the study reveals that migrants long for their families and countries of origin and this contributes to their sense of not belonging to the host community.

Keywords: Belonging, family relationships, South African migration, Ecosystemic perspective

Table of Contents

Abstract 4
Chapter 1: Introduction 7
Title 7
Introduction 7
Rationale 9
Chapter 2: Literature Review 13
Migration in South Africa 14
Xenophobia 17
Belonging 20
Psychological Belonging: Social Locations 22
Psychological Belonging: Identifications and emotional attachments 24
Psychological Belonging: Ethical and political values 26
Political Belonging: Politics of belonging 27
Home and Belonging 28
Family and Migration 32
Transnationalism 34
Tactical Cosmopolitanism 37
Multidimensional Ecosystemic Comparative Approach (MECA) 41
Migration and Acculturation 43
Ecological Context 45
Family Organisation 47
Family Life Cycle 50
Conclusion 52
Chapter 3: Methodology 53
Research Aims 53
Research Questions 53
Research Design 54
Qualitative Approach 54
Theoretical Framework 55
Participants and Sampling 57
Data Collection 63
Data Analysis 69
Benchmarks for Qualitative Rigour 72
Ethical Considerations 74

Researcher Reflexivity....77
Conclusion....81
Chapter 4: Findings....82
1) The Importance of Familial Obligations....82
2) Negative Experiences Connected to Living in South Africa....90
3) Lack of a Sense of Belonging in South Africa....101
4) Longing for Country of Origin....107
5) Need to Maintain National or Cultural Identity....114
Conclusion....117
Chapter 5: Discussion....118
The Cultural-Sociopolitical Context....120
The Community Context....128
The Relational Context....138
Conclusion....149
Chapter 6: Conclusion....151
Closing remarks....151
Limitations....152
Recommendations....154
References....156
Appendices....173
Appendix A: Gatekeeper Confidentiality Form....173
Appendix B: Participation Information Sheet....174
Appendix C: Consent Form....175
Appendix D: Consent for Audio Recording....176
Appendix E: Interview Schedule....177
Appendix F: Ethics Certificate....178

Chapter 1: Introduction

Title

Belonging and Family Relationships: The Experiences of Immigrants in Olievenhoutbosch

Introduction

It is no mystery that all people desire to be connected to others and experience a sense of belonging in the place where they live (Allen & Kern, 2017; George & Selimos, 2019). Feeling a sense of belonging is regarded by many scholars and theorists as an innate need and is likened by some to be as strong as the need for food (Allen & Kern, 2017; Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Maslow, 1971; Rogers, 1951). The place where one is born as well as one's family of origin are often regarded as the first place in which this sense of belonging can be experienced as it is a space that can bring a sense of emotional connectedness and identity (Marchetti-Mercer, 2006). However, in a context of economic crisis and political instability, many people are forced to leave these spaces of belonging and embark on a pursuit to find opportunities to better their lives and the lives of those they have left behind (Belford & Lahiri-Roy, 2019; Falicov, 2016a; Mosselson, 2010; Rutherford, 2008; Saayman, 2016). This is the reality for many African migrants, who move to South Africa with the hopes that they would find opportunities to improve the economic circumstances of their families, and further, that their move is only temporary (Adepoju, 2003; Falicov, 2016a; Mosselson, 2010).

The extensive migration systems rooted in South Africa's history along with an inclusive and liberal legislation created with the new democratic state provides an understanding for why South Africa is regarded as the nation in Africa that receives the most immigrants (Gordon, 2015; Landau, 2006, 2009). Seen as the centre of South Africa's economy, Gauteng is the most prominent destination for such migrants (Landau, 2005b, 2009). Although it is practically impossible to obtain accurate data, the National Census has

estimated that almost half of the predicted 1,02 million people who will migrate to South Africa between 2016 and 2021 will reside in Gauteng (Statistics South Africa, 2018, 2019). These immigrants commonly involve refugees, asylum seekers and economic migrants from other African nations such as Lesotho, Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Malawi (Gordon, 2015; Kapindu, 2011; Landau, 2006; Mosselson, 2010).

With the abovementioned reasons for migration, it is very common among these migrants to maintain their family relationships across borders (Ehrkamp & Leitner, 2006; Falicov, 2005; Palmary, 2018). Whilst maintaining ties with their families back 'home' and endeavouring to support them, migrants in South Africa are often faced with anti-immigration attitudes at the public and civilian levels (Crush, 2001; Gordon, 2015; Landau, 2010). These attitudes are said to be the source of the many xenophobic acts committed against African migrants, including police harassment, public violence, as well as exclusions from healthcare, education, social services and so forth (Alfaro-Velcamp & Shaw, 2016; Gordon, 2015; Mosselson, 2010).

Olievenhoutbosch, an informal settlement situated on the border of Centurion and Midrand, is one such space where this may be a reality. Home to approximately 62 970 people, of which 81% are South African citizens, this community hosts more than double the rate of foreign nationals than in Gauteng (*Wazimap,* 2011). Although there is a shortage of academic literature on this community, many newspaper articles and reports have shown that Olievenhoutbosch is an area where negative attitudes towards foreigners, as well as xenophobic attacks are highly prevalent (Brkic, 2010; du Plooy et al., 2006; International Organization for Migration, 2009). This is evident in the recent disputes in this community regarding illegal occupation, as many residents were said to illegally occupy the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) houses (Moatshe, 2018; Tlhabye, 2017). Premier David Makhura strongly reprimanded those living there illegally, calling them *tsotsis*

(crooks), threatening to forcefully remove them, and calling for the deportation of illegal immigrants (Moatshe, 2018; Tlhabye, 2017). The housing riots in this community have led many immigrants to fear the possibility of xenophobic fury and their victimisation (Brkic, 2010). During these riots, many immigrants were demanded to provide proof that they legally owned their houses (Hiropoulos, 2017). These riots included chants against foreign nationals as the homes of these immigrants were damaged and their windows broken (Hiropoulos, 2017). Much like many other communities in South Africa, Olievenhoutbosch is an informal settlement that is currently faced with unrest and disapproval towards immigrants.

It is thus no surprise that many migrants find it hard to experience a sense of belonging in their new country and often choose not to include themselves in the host communities (Crush, 2001; Landau & Freemantle, 2010). A sense of belonging is a crucial component in migrants' settlement in their host country, and consequently a lack of belonging therein may have negative implications in their settlement and ability to adapt to the losses involved in migration (Falicov, 2016a; George & Selimos, 2019). This is where their relationships with their families in their countries of origin may come into play, as the literature suggests that maintaining contact with those left behind may provide a sense of security whilst settling in their host country (Vaquera et al., 2017). These family relationships may further provide a space where they can experience a sense of belonging that the host country does not provide (Falicov, 2017; van Oudenhoven & Ward, 2013). This also highlights the importance of a systemic view which acknowledges that individual experiences are influenced by their families and other contexts (Bowen, 1978; Falicov, 2016b; Marchetti-Mercer, 2006).

Rationale

There is a considerable body of research and seminal work that has investigated the effects of immigration on a sense of belonging. A substantial proportion of this has been

conducted outside the realms of South Africa (Anderson et al., 2011; Mustasaari, 2015; Nelson & Hiemstra, 2008; Nordberg, 2006; Skrbiš, 2008). Studies with South Africa in mind are mostly based on the perceptions, experiences, or attitudes of South Africans on immigrants, often with specific interest in xenophobia (Alfaro-Velcamp & Shaw, 2016; Gordon, 2015, 2017b; Landau, 2005b, 2010; Saayman, 2016). Those that have investigate the immigrants' experiences mostly looked at the effects of these attitudes and perceptions on their cultural identity and sense of belonging (Crush, 2001; Landau, 2009; Landau & Freemantle, 2010; Rutherford, 2008).

More often than not, these studies have been outside the realm of psychology. Palmary (2018) has argued that psychological research can greatly contribute to the understanding of transnational family relationships and belonging. This, along with the evident underrepresentation of psychology in migration studies, specifically on transnational families, is a topic of great concern (Palmary, 2018). In this era of increasing globalisation, this research is very important not only to understand human nature, but also to assist in family interventions (Falicov, 2005; Palmary, 2018). They further argue that it is time for psychology as a discipline to contribute to this field by yielding psychologically comprehensive research and theoretical literature (Palmary, 2018). Furthermore, 'belonging' which in itself is described as indefinite and in a constant process of change (Yuval-Davis, 2006), has not been researched to a great extent in South Africa. Therefore, whilst acknowledging its limited scope, this study aims to contribute to these gaps in the field of psychological research and provide a better understanding of the experiences of belonging among African immigrants in Olievenhoutbosch and the role that their families of origin play.

The structure of this thesis is as follows:

Chapter One: Introduction

This chapter aims to introduce the reader to the study by providing an orientation to the topic under investigation and the community in which the study was conducted. It further endeavours to highlight the need for research in the field of migration and family relationships from a psychological perspective.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

This chapter strives to provide a comprehensive overview of the literature surrounding migration in South Africa. Using Yuval Davis's (2006) conceptualisation on psychological and political belonging, and Antonsich's (2010) place-belongingness, this chapter aims to provide an in-detailed account of the theories surrounding a sense of belonging and its application to the South African context of migration. The literature review additionally explores the relevant literature surrounding this topic, using Falicov's (1995) Multidimensional Ecosystemic Comparative Approach (MECA) to provide the framework through which the role of family relationships is explored.

Chapter Three: Methodology

This chapter provides a step-by-step account of the decisions made and procedures followed to answer the research questions posed at the beginning of this study. This includes an outline of the research aims and research design that underpins the methods followed during the execution of this study. It further entails an outline of the processes followed to ensure that ethical and rigorous requirements were upheld.

Chapter Four: Findings

This chapter provides the main themes that emerged during the analysis of the data that was collected for this study as guided by Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis. It begins by providing the themes and relevant quotes from the interviews surrounding the reasons for migration and associated familial obligations. Thereafter, the findings pertaining to migrants' experiences in their host community, Olievenhoutbosch, is outlined. This is followed by themes related to their sense of longing to their countries of origin and their desire to maintain their national or cultural identity.

Chapter Five: Discussion

This chapter endeavours to answer the research questions posed at the beginning of this research project by interpreting the results and comparing said results to the literature outlined in Chapter Two. The dominant themes were discussed according to the sociopolitical/cultural, community and relational contexts described by Falicov (2007).

Chapter Six: Conclusion

This chapter aims to conclude this study by summarising the relevant findings, acknowledging the shortcomings of this study, and providing a few recommendations for further research in this field.

Appendices:

This section hosts the relevant documentation used in this study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

South Africa is known to receive the largest amount of immigrants in Africa (Gordon, 2015). In an attempt to find better political and economic opportunities, many low-skilled individuals from other nations immigrate to South Africa, leaving family members behind (Adepoju, 2003). Despite having one of the most inclusive and liberal constitutions, South Africa is also known to have anti-immigration attitudes in both the constitution and among public opinion (Crush, 2001). Informal settlements, such as Olievenhoutbosch, have become places in which xenophobic attacks are common and the housing of foreigners are threatened by local members and governmental authorities (du Plooy et al., 2006; Hiropoulos, 2017). Although migrants may be excluded from belonging in various social spaces, they may be included and experience a sense of belonging in others, such as their transnational family relationships, ultimately impacting their experiences of migration (Falicov, 2017). It is thus important to view individual matters, such as belonging, contextually so as to gain a more comprehensive understanding thereof (Marchetti-Mercer, 2006).

There are many studies exploring migrants' sense of belonging in their host countries, however, not many studies have explored the role of family relationships in migrants' sense of belonging. Outlining the academic literature surrounding this topic, this literature review will discuss how the maintenance of family relationships, along with the attempted development of new relationships in the host society, may have an impact on the immigrants' sense of belonging. It will further provide a brief overview of how a sense of belonging among immigrants may be impacted by transnational family relationships with those left behind in the country of origin and the host society. It will begin by providing a brief discussion on the history and current affairs related to migration in the South African context. This, along with an overview of xenophobia in South Africa, will provide a contextual background upon which the theories and literature surrounding a sense of

belonging will be introduced and applied. This will lead onto the connection between home and belonging, as well as family relationships. Here, transnational family relationships will be discussed which will be followed by an overview of the theoretical framework that will be used to guide this study.

Migration in South Africa

Migration is deeply rooted in the history of South Africa. The country's colonial foundations, generated by white elites in pursuit of political agendas, formed and integral part in its racist citizenship policies and territorial boundaries (Klotz, 2016). In a self-proclaimed attempt to develop governing bodies for different groupings of cultures and identities, and for these groups to reach harmony and co-existence, the colonialist project, known as the apartheid, was developed (Kaarsholm, 2019). The apartheid system capitalised on the deeply rooted understandings of tradition, culture and community belonging to ethnicise politics and governance (Kaarsholm, 2019). From this era, the country inherited a "strong subcultural pluralism where racial (as well as intraracial or ethnic) divisions were central to politics" (Gordon, 2015, p. 199). To uphold order, the movements of populations and residential spaces were controlled through extensive identification, registration, monitoring and classification technologies (Kaarsholm, 2019). This colonial state created extensive migration systems to supply the workforce of the agricultural and mining sectors (Gordon, 2015). Employment agencies often recruited migrants from South Africa's neighbouring countries to work as inexpensive labourers (Gordon, 2015). Immigrants from Malawi, Lesotho, Botswana, Swaziland, and Mozambique were commonly recruited for these tasks (Adepoju, 2003). Migrant labourers were also housed and segregated through the apartheid system, and were thus prevented from bringing their families along across the border (Adepoju, 2003; Kaarsholm, 2019).

Furthermore, following the exclusionary patterns of the apartheid, the neighbouring countries of South Africa were excluded from capitalising on the wealth that they had helped to build for this country (Landau, 2006). The African National Congress (ANC) successfully fought against racial segregation, and an important objective for this party was also to transform the migrant labour system (Gordon, 2016). When democracy was attained in 1994, the new post-apartheid South Africa attracted an increasing amount of immigrants from other regions in Africa (Gordon, 2015; Rutherford, 2008). This was in part due to the removal of barriers to residence and free movement toward cities that were once forbidden (Landau, 2006). In his 1996 speech entitled "I am an African", the Deputy President of that time, Thabo Mbeki, outlined new policies that envisioned South Africa as a country that would not exclude any person on the basis of their class, race, religion or origin (Landau, 2005b, 2006). It proudly promised that "South Africa belongs to all who live in it" irrespective of immigration status or ancestry (Landau, 2005b, 2006, p. 129). This new government welcomed the international human rights laws, signing a significant amount of international conventions, including "the 1951 Refugee Convention, and later the African Union (1969) Refugee Convention and the International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights" as well as the Convention on the Rights of the Child (Gordon, 2016, p. 3; Landau, 2005b). As a result and still to this day, South Africa has a liberal legislation that protects the rights of refugees and stipulates that they have freedom of movement, the right to access to basic social services and that they can enter the labour market, enabling them to settle in this country (Gordon, 2016). Furthermore, regardless of their legal status, foreign nationals in South Africa are provided with significant, although minimal, protections by the current legislations (Landau, 2005b).

Today, South Africa is known as one of the African nations that receives the largest amount of immigrants and is a key destination for asylum seekers (Gordon, 2015). Those

who migrate to this country include asylum seekers, undocumented immigrants, or people who migrate for temporary work or other economic reasons (Mosselson, 2010). Landau (2005b) noted that the increased movement of non-nationals into South Africa is not only related to the long-standing patterns of migrant labourers, but also a result of the shifting patterns of investment, cultural exchange and migration as the post-apartheid country strives to become integrated into the global community. It has been argued that factors that 'push' people from other parts of Africa often involve their home country's economic challenges and political instability, whereas South Africa's economic opportunities and political stability are factors that 'pull' people to this country (Mosselson, 2010).

Furthermore, with the economic instability and violence in neighbouring countries, and former homelands facing a production decline, nationals and non-nationals alike have increasingly moved to the inner cities of this country (Landau, 2005b). Gauteng is the most prominent site for migration as it is considered to be the centre of South Africa's economy (Landau, 2005b, 2009). Although the statistics are practically impossible to obtain, it has been estimated by the National Census that the foreign immigrant population consists of approximately 2.2 million individuals, as of 2012 (Gordon, 2015). Using the 2011 Census, Statistics South Africa estimate that 1,02 million people will immigrate to South Africa between 2016 and 2021, where 47,5% of these international migrants are expected to settle in Gauteng (Statistics South Africa, 2018, 2019). This continual influx of people into South Africa's urban cities has created a collusion between black South Africans who are claiming "space in the cities from which they were previously excluded" and foreign nationals who enter these spaces in search of livelihoods and safety (Landau, 2005b, p. 1119).

With the urbanisation of South Africa, Johannesburg has become a city where no person can claim to be indigenous, and where strangers are "living together in a place that is no-one's 'home'" (Landau, 2006, p. 130). Yet, with the increased competition for limited

resources, along with the reality that the country is still in economic and political transition, the rights to social services (such as healthcare and education), employment, and residence have become dependent on the person's national lineage (Landau, 2005b). This is because the pressure to ensure the rights of its citizens has led the state to "declare a state of exception" whereby the state has sanctioned efforts to 'rid' the cities of foreign nationals (Landau, 2005b, p. 1119). Evidently, whilst trying to recreate their belonging in a country filled with homelessness, unemployment and crime, South Africans have rendered nationality as the focal point in exclusions, conflict and identity (Landau, 2006). Therefore, despite the view of South Africans as universal and inclusive, the nation state and its citizens have continued to create distinct boundaries of inclusion and exclusion, particularly focused on immigrants (Mosselson, 2010).

Xenophobia

The country's attempts at addressing the exclusionary patterns of the past have failed to prevent everyday practices and policies that exclude and discriminate against foreign nationals (Landau & Freemantle, 2010). Native South Africans have used violent means to exclude foreign nationals from various opportunities. In fact, studies have shown that majority of South Africans have negative attitudes towards immigration, believing that migrants are the primary source of crime, HIV, and threats to their culture and work (Crush, 2001; Gordon, 2015; Landau, 2010). These negative attitudes evoked the notorious xenophobic attacks in the informal settlements of May 2008, where South African citizens "murdered more than 60 people, raped dozens, wounded close to 700, and displaced over a hundred thousand" (Landau, 2010, p. 214). This was accompanied by the destroying and taking of houses and goods owned by foreigners, amounting up to millions of Rands (Landau, 2010). More recently in March 2019, Malawian immigrants residing in the Burnwood informal settlement were victimised, leaving 249 displaced from their houses and many left

to consider returning to Malawi (Singh, 2019). These are merely two of many reported incidents that have occurred in South Africa over the past decade. With these mass riots in mind, the government promised to fight against xenophobic attitudes and promote the full acceptance of all foreign individuals (Gordon, 2015). The Immigration Act of 2002 (No. 13) clearly stipulates that xenophobia will be countered and prevented from the Government and society at large (Republic of South Africa, 2002). Chapter two, section nine, of the South African constitution further stipulates that "everyone" has the right to equal protection, with equality including "the full and equal enjoyment of all rights and freedoms" (South Africa Constitution, 2021, p. 7). Additionally, it states that "the state may not fairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone" on grounds such as race, ethnic or social origin, culture and language, among others (South Africa Constitution, 2021, p. 7). This South African constitution has been praised for being one of the most inclusive and liberal in the world (Crush, 2001)

Yet again, despite this liberal constitution, the government and political elite have been accused of being the catalyst for South Africa's anti-immigration attitudes (Landau, 2010; Landau & Freemantle, 2010). The former South African Minister of Home Affairs (1994-2004), Mangosuthu Buthelezi, is famously known for their xenophobic comments where they stated that the free movement of people is detrimental to this country (Landau, 2005a; Landau & Freemantle, 2010). In addition to this, the Executive Mayor of Johannesburg stated that migrancy places severe strain on the housing, public services and employment levels of South Africa (Landau, 2005b; Landau & Freemantle, 2010). This extends to the law, as Palmary (2002) argues that the Immigration Act's emphasis on reducing illegal immigration through repressive means fuels xenophobia and hinders the provision of basic services (such as health care and housing) to immigrant communities. Through this, the state has invested significant effort into the exclusion of immigrants

through “legal status and documentation; arrest, detention, and deportation: and a general lack of access to constitutional protections through the court and political processes” (Landau, 2010, p. 222).

Furthermore, the police has been accused for not protecting the rights of foreigners from Africa, frequently identifying these immigrants by the fact that they ‘look foreign’ as they have darker skin-pigmentation (Gordon, 2015). Immigrants have been victimised by the corruption of the South African Police Force (SAPS) through general abuse, the destroying of identity documents, as well as a convenient failure to intervene when there are anti-immigration riots (Gordon, 2015). The healthcare system has also been accused of turning immigrants away from hospitals (Alfaro-Velcamp, 2017; Mathope, 2017). The Minister of Health, Aaron Motsoaledi and the Gauteng Premier stated that immigrants are putting a strain on South Africa’s healthcare system, blaming them for the over-expended operational budgets at Gauteng hospitals (Cox, 2019; Mathope, 2017). Undocumented immigrants are further denied access to courts of law, social services and education, leaving them vulnerable to exploitative employers and the abuse of the SAPS (Mosselson, 2010). The flow of immigrants across the borders have also been discouraged by actively deporting hundreds of thousands of people and making temporary residence permits extremely difficult to acquire (Crush, 2001; Landau, 2010; Madsen & van Naerssen, 2003). Foreign nationals are often met with unofficial ‘fees’, violence, extortion and exploitation when applying for documentation, such as asylum claims, at the Department of Home Affairs (Landau, 2005b). Non-nationals who have been detained by the SAPS, and unable to pay the bribes, are commonly held at a privately-owned detention and deportation facility known as Lindela Repatriation Centre in Krugersdorp where reports of violence and sexual abuse are widespread (Landau, 2005b). Evidently, the liberal constitution is not translated to reality as almost all forms of rights are denied to illegal immigrants (Mosselson, 2010).

Belonging

Due to the abovementioned exclusionary patterns in South Africa, many non-nationals have adopted certain behaviours and patterns to prevent themselves from becoming full members of these communities (Landau & Freemantle, 2010). In countries such as South Africa, where the flow of immigrants across the borders are discouraged and negative attitudes toward immigrants prevail, migration is said to "remain partly or completely hidden from certain sectors of society" and involve mainly lower-wage earners (Crush, 2001; Madsen & van Naerssen, 2003, p. 61). It has been noted that belonging is an integral component of immigrants' settlement (George & Selimos, 2019). Yet, migrants may feel that they are permanently dislocated due to acts of violence, discrimination and abuse experienced in their new communities (Landau, 2005). Various studies have shown that immigrants in South Africa intentionally avoid developing close relationships with South Africans and intend to eventually move elsewhere (Adepoju, 2003; Amisi & Ballard, 2005; Araia, 2005; Landau, 2005a). Considering this, the question of immigrants' sense of belonging in South Africa is raised to which requires a deeper exploration on the concept of belonging itself.

Belonging is a concept that has been taken for granted and perceived as self-explanatory which led it to be criticised for being under-theorised and vaguely defined (Antonsich, 2010). A theory that encompasses belonging is that of McMillan (1996) where he stated that a sense of community is dependent on four elements, namely Spirit, Trust, Trade and Art. A sense of community involved "a spirit of belonging" (spirit), the recognition of a trustworthy authority figure (trust), a "mutual benefit from being together" (trade), as well as a sense that the community involves the maintenance of shared experiences (art) (McMillan, 1996, p. 315). Boundaries that separate those within the community from those who are not members create a sense of emotional safety for the members where they can feel safe to speak honestly and vulnerably (McMillan, 1996, 2011). This sense of safety and emotional

relation to the group determines whether an individual is attracted to the community (McMillan, 1996). This first element is dependent on the people's sense of belonging as well as the confidence they have that they are members and have been accepted and welcomed by the group (McMillan, 1996). Some have, however, critiqued this theory for being purely a needs-based theory, stating that its conceptualisation of community as meeting primitive human needs does not consider behaviours that are based on values (Nowell & Boyd, 2010). McMillan (2011) strongly opposed this comment as they explicitly stated that the first element further involves certain responsibilities and expectations to make sacrifices for the community, such as taxes (McMillan, 1996). Thus, responsibilities such as protection of boundaries, honesty, and acceptance of other members is a crucial component of belonging (McMillan, 2011).

Closely related to this is the definition suggested by Hagerty et al. (1992) where a sense of belonging is the feeling that one is personally involved in a certain system which, in turn, leads this individual feeling like they are an important part of that system (Hagerty et al., 1996). They proposed that a sense of belonging involves two attributes that defines it (Hagerty et al., 1996). Firstly, it involves an experience that one is needed, important and valued by others, and secondly, it involves a sense of being compatible with others (Hagerty et al., 1996). Christiansen and Hedetoft, (2004) argued that belonging is a mutual process as the persons should be able to relate to the community while the community should deem itself able to welcome and accommodate the persons' concrete and psychological needs. More recent studies on belonging often define it either by considering it as a consequence of integrating successfully, or through the unpacking of its various components (George & Selimos, 2019). Some theorists state that belonging is multidimensional and involves an "endless variety of attachment to places, groups, cultures, etc." and different ways in which these attachments are performed (Antonsich, 2010, p. 645). In light of these various

definitions, as well as those not mentioned, one common factor is that belonging involves a need for interpersonal connection or relatedness to one another and to groups (Allen & Kern, 2017; George & Selimos, 2019; Hagerty et al., 1996).

Taking it further, Yuval-Davis (2006) argues that one should distinguish between psychological belonging and political belonging (Lähdesmäki et al., 2016). Where psychological belonging involves the emotional attachments that are related to feeling at home and feeling safe, political belonging involves the boundaries and participation in a political community, including "citizenship, entitlement, and status" (Lähdesmäki et al., 2016, p. 19; Yuval-Davis, 2006). The feeling of home or sense of ease associated with psychological belonging is said to be a crucial component of our psychosocial well-being (George & Selimos, 2019). Yuval-Davis (2006) distinguished between three major levels at which psychological belonging could be analysed, namely social locations, identifications and emotional attachments, as well as ethical and political values, which will be used in this study to conceptualise belonging and discussed in more detail below.

Psychological Belonging: Social Locations

In the first analytical level, known as *social locations*, Yuval-Davis (2006, 2016) draws on the theory of intersectionality to describe categories that intersect and place people in certain positionalities of power relative to other categories (Yuval-Davis, 2006). Intersectionality theory emphasises the importance of considering the interconnection of people's social positions and how this affects peoples social relations and lives (Anthias, 2009; Yuval-Davis, 2016). A person's race, class, gender, age-group, profession, nation and so forth intersect so that, within a particular historical context, a person is positioned at a certain location along an axis of power (Yuval-Davis, 2006). Power and inequality is connected with a sense of belonging as it involves social inclusions or exclusions (George & Selimos, 2019; May, 2013).

For example, in their study that investigated the effects of stigmatisation on students' sense of belonging and resulting motivation and achievement, Walton and Cohen (2007) noted that Black students were frequently stigmatised, leading to a phenomenon they called *belonging uncertainty*. This study showed that students with a historically excluded ethnicity were more likely to doubt their sense of belonging in the academic and professional social settings (Walton & Cohen, 2007). Similarly, in the context of immigration, it has been noted that the host society influences the experience of social and emotional rejection or acceptance by the immigrants as they have the power to grant this belonging (Antonsich, 2010). Often, immigrants are required to assimilate to the host society's values, culture, language, behaviours and religion before they are 'allowed' to belong (Antonsich, 2010; Yuval-Davis, 2006). George and Selimos (2019) noted that immigrants who enter Canada often build a partial or ambivalent sense of belonging that is "informed by exclusions such as race and gender, by the way they work, skills and experience are defined, and by changing definitions that view citizenship as a privilege" (p. 128). As seen in these studies, it is evident that the social locations of people and the related position of power has an influence on a sense of belonging.

In South Africa, this is also evident as foreign nationals from other regions of Africa are frequently called the *makwerekwere* due to the supposedly unintelligent sounds that their languages make, often resulting in daily harassment and victimisation (Crush, 2001; Gordon, 2015; Saayman, 2016). Even for citizens of African descent, there are more favourable attitudes towards North American and European immigrants, and a distinct aversion towards immigrants from other parts of Africa (Crush, 2001; Gordon, 2015). The popular explanation for these 'Afrophobic' attitudes against African immigrants specifically is that a low socioeconomic status and poverty is a driving factor (Gordon, 2015). A study conducted by Gordon (2015) showed, however, that it is more complicated than economic self-interest.

They noted that possible reasons could be the influence of those in power, as outlined by Landau (2010), as well as the influences of colonialism that have resulted in the attachment of 'otherness' to foreign nationals from Africa (Gordon, 2015). Here, it is evident that language, race, class and nationality intersect in the sociohistorical context of post-apartheid South Africa, influencing the exclusion of African immigrants from being acknowledged as a part of society.

Psychological Belonging: Identifications and emotional attachments

It is not only the intersection of social locations where belonging can be analysed, but it can also be analysed through a second ontological level, proposed by Yuval-Davis (2006) as *identifications and emotional attachments*. A sense of connectedness to others involves persons' self-identification and how they are identified by others (George & Selimos, 2019; Yuval-Davis, 2006). Here, the narratives that individuals or collectives tell about who they are do not only place them in certain groupings, but also involve a desire for attachments (Yuval-Davis, 2006). Baumeister and Leary (1995), as cited by Antonsich (2010), noted that interpersonal relations, a fundamental constituent of the self, need to be "long lasting, positive, stable and significant" and should occur on a frequent basis for it to produce a sense of belonging (p. 647). Repetitive shared social practices play a crucial role in the creation and reproduction of attachment and identity as it is the means through which individuals are connected to the collective (Yuval-Davis, 2006). This ability to experience a sense of connectedness and participate in social settings is fundamental to gaining a sense of self (George & Selimos, 2019). Consequently, belonging and identity are intertwined, since identity is "always producing itself through the combined process of being and becoming, belonging and longing to belong" (Yuval-Davis, 2006, p. 202). Through this process, identity is either in transition, construction or being reproduced (Fortier, 2000; Yuval-Davis, 2006). Therefore, merely seeing it as a component of attachment may seem one-dimensional as it

also involves a dynamic process whereby membership, recognition, attachment and participation has an influence on the self and on becoming (Antonsich, 2010; Yuval-Davis, 2006).

The abovementioned argument, however, leads many to equate a sense of belonging to identity and citizenship without any attempt to state how these concepts may be different (Antonsich, 2010). Belonging does involve a deep emotional desire, but it cannot merely be reduced to membership, identity, duties, and rights in isolation (Nordberg, 2006). Nevertheless, a sense of belonging can include a desire to attach to a larger group for the purpose of negotiating one's identity (Huizinga & van Hoven, 2018). Cultural identity in particular is a factor that shapes a person's sense of belonging, as it emphasises the individual's belonging in a culture or group (Phinney et al., 2001). Cultural factors such as values, norms, shared language and traditions helps facilitate boundaries as well as a sense of emotional attachment (Huizinga & van Hoven, 2018). Thus, although identity and belonging are two different constructs, they cannot be separated from one another (Antonsich, 2010).

Language and religion are often considered to be very important factors that have an impact on belonging (Antonsich, 2010). The ability to speak the language of the host society increases the contact that the individual is able to have with members of the dominant group, thereby increasing participation in this group (Hernandez, 2009). This may further lead to an increased social support and a reduction in the difficulties that the individual may face, which increases a sense of belonging (Antonsich, 2010; Hernandez, 2009). The opposite may also be true, as seen in the exclusionary use of the term *makwerekwere* to refer to immigrants who speak the 'unintelligent' languages of their society of origin (Gordon, 2015). For many foreign nationals, speaking the language of the host country can induce a sense of intimacy which increases a sense of community thereby helping an individual to feel that they are 'at home' (Antonsich, 2010). The feeling of being 'at home' in a foreign country can also be

generated through the habits, traditions and expressions that are related to religion (Antonsich, 2010). Furthermore, religion is a means through which communities can be stabilised, bounded, and defined as it provides opportunities for inclusion or can act as a mechanism of exclusion (Landau, 2009). For immigrants, religious institutions and ideals are drawn on to position themselves relative to South Africa and its members (Landau, 2009). Language and religion thus have a considerable impact on how a sense of belonging is experienced.

Psychological Belonging: Ethical and political values

Lastly, Yuval-Davis (2006) noted that *ethical and political values* is another important component of belonging as it includes the ways in which the previous two components are judged and valued. This involves the beliefs and attitudes concerning the boundaries of inclusion and exclusion in a specific collective identity (Yuval-Davis, 2006, 2016). It includes the level of importance placed on the social locations, and identifications and attachments, as well as whether this value is perceived as good or bad (Yuval-Davis, 2016). Studies within this level commonly focus on the ethical obligations of citizens and the welcoming of immigrants (Lähdesmäki et al., 2016). As such, it includes the policies related to who is allowed into the national community along with the informal attitudes of the host nation towards immigrants, as well as problems related to belonging and citizenship (Simonsen, 2016).

Studies in Canada revealed the political values that inform exclusion and belonging were influenced by the changing "immigration and citizenship policies that favour the demands of Canadian nation building" (George & Selimos, 2019, p. 127). Where those workers who are temporary and low-skilled are rejected from gaining citizenship, students and skilled workers are encouraged to immigrate (George & Selimos, 2019). As such, people's belonging is frequently limited by exclusions related to their education and skills

(George & Selimos, 2019; Wilson-Forsberg, 2015). Simonsen (2016) noted that non-nationals frequently experience the necessity for meeting certain requirements before being included into the national community as a barrier to a sense of belonging. This study, which included 19 Western democratic countries, showed that the host population's informal boundaries and criteria for belonging had a greater influence on immigrants' sense of belonging than that of the elite-formulated definitions (Simonsen, 2016). In the United States of America and United Kingdom, it has been noted that those who are deported are often viewed in a negative light and therefore not in possession of the qualities that the state deems 'suitable' to be a citizen (Anderson et al., 2011).

This is connected to the abovementioned argument by Gordon (2015) where South Africa's 'Afrophobic' attitudes are related to the 'othering' of Africans through the influence of colonialism. Since South Africa is still recovering from the racially segregated system of the apartheid, where politics were highly focused on racial divisions, many citizens still hold a strong social distrust that translates into a society that holds anti-immigration sentiments (Gordon & Maharaj, 2015). South Africa's approach to deportations at Lindela, which often occur without court hearings and the requirements of the Human Rights Commission, is evidence of this as it is a reflection of the state's "compulsion to rid the territory of its 'surplus people'" (Landau, 2005b, p. 1129). Palmary (2002) highlighted that 10% of those arrested for allegedly being undocumented immigrants are released before being taken to Lindela because they were documented South African residents. Deportation is thus one means to show that citizens are not merely seen as a community based on law, but also based on values (Anderson et al., 2011).

Political Belonging: Politics of belonging

In addition to psychological belonging, Yuval-Davis (2006) emphasised the importance of acknowledging political belonging. The exclusion or inclusion associated with

belonging, known as the ‘politics of belonging’ is concerned with “boundaries that separate the world population into ‘us’ and ‘them’”(Yuval-Davis, 2006, p. 204). The members of a particular place can perhaps influence a sense of belonging by either rejecting or welcoming that individual (Antonsich, 2010). Nations have been identified as imagined communities by Benedict Anderson (1991) as its members will never know, meet or hear of most of their fellow members, yet they are imagined as being a collective. Yuval-Davis (2006) elaborated on this by stating that any form of inclusion or exclusion involves the act of imagination. Becoming a citizen serves as a symbol of inclusion into a country whereby others, who are not citizens, are excluded from this national identity (Gilmartin, 2008). Antonsich (2010) claimed that receiving resident permits or citizenship (political belonging) legally allows the immigrant to participate in the local economy (economic belonging), everyday social interactions and events (social belonging), and to demand basic human rights (universal belonging). Citizenship, therefore, not only involves experiences of recognition and belonging, but also includes certain rights and responsibilities, which aligns with McMillan’s (1996) conceptualisation (Nordberg, 2006). Here, citizenship is a manifestation of belonging as it is a formal, public and imagined membership into a nation (Antonsich, 2010; Yuval-Davis, 2006).

Home and Belonging

Closely related and often equated to a sense of belonging is the notion of feeling ‘at home’. Antonsich (2010) argued that Yuval-Davis’ (2006) construction of belonging overlooks the importance of place, and thereby places more emphasis on the politics of belonging than on the emotions associated with a place. Antonsich’s (2010) explanation of belonging emphasised that belonging to a place, whether politically or emotionally, is intricately tied to belonging in a social group. They argued that a ‘place’ links communities and identities and is for this reason intimately tied to belonging (Nelson & Hiemstra, 2008).

In this regard, belonging to a group of people becomes one and the same with belonging to a place (Antonsich, 2010). Place-belongingness, as termed by Antonsich (2010), involves notions of place identity, place attachment and a feeling of being rooted. It is thus an emotional attachment to a particular geographic space and evokes a feeling of being 'safe' and 'at home' (Antonsich, 2010). This connects to the common notion where 'home' is often used synonymously for one's place of origin, which is important for self-identification as much as it is for how one is categorised by others (Boccagni, 2020). Ultimately, Antonsich's (2010) 'place-belongingness' has implications for identity, as they noted that one cannot separate the development of a sense of self from feelings of belonging in a particular place and is also connected to Yuval-Davis' (2006) abovementioned ontological level of belonging known as *Identifications and Emotional Attachments*. Furthermore, they argue that a sense of belonging may not necessarily involve the place where one resides, but could include the national homeland, a neighbourhood, or a certain community (Antonsich, 2010).

However, Yuval-Davis (2006) points to the performative dimension of belonging, and argues that it is not necessarily particular social spaces that are associated with belonging, but rather identity constructions and narratives that were created and reproduced through specific repetitive practices. It is thus likely that she did not leave the emotions associated with place belongingness to be unaddressed, as she acknowledged that the emotions associated therewith were attached onto the place though certain social practices (Antonsich, 2010; Yuval-Davis, 2006). Home is thus not fixed, but can constantly be reshaped through "processes of adjustment, renegotiation, transformation and redefinition as we work towards joining 'imagined communities' based on notions such as race, nation, religion, etc." (Belford & Lahiri-Roy, 2019, p. 2). The meaning of home further differs in various cultures, contexts or among different people (Dupuis & Thorns, 1998; Marchetti-Mercer, 2006). Regardless, Yuval-Davis' (2006) paper does place more emphasis on the politics of belonging than on the

crucial role of emotions, as Antonsich (2010) noted. As such, 'home' is not merely a geographical space, suburb, house or a refuge for cultural, imaginative or spiritual practices, but is instead an amalgamation of emotions and memory and the experiences associated with space, place and structure (Belford & Lahiri-Roy, 2019). Home can include complex and diverse ideas about socio-cultural relationships with others such as one's family of origin, culture, community or other social phenomena (Mallett, 2004; Marchetti-Mercer, 2006, 2017). Attachments to family and a sense of belonging is thus frequently related to emotions, memories and nostalgia (Belford & Lahiri-Roy, 2019).

In considering emotions to be an important component in place belongingness, it is also important to consider the emotions or associations that are more frequently related to home and a sense of belonging. Antonsich (2010) regarded 'home' as a "symbolic space of familiarity, comfort, security, and emotional attachment" and argued that these are vital components of a sense of belonging (p. 646; Ignatieff, 1994). Ndlovu (2010) stated that 'home' can be seen as a nurturing place that is associated with refuge and security. Boccagni (2017) noted that 'home' is a space where one attempts to create a sense of control, familiarity and security in a social or material setting. Dupuis and Thorns (1998) also expressed that a precondition to feeling 'at home' was the safety associated with the space. In fact, Boccagni (2020) argues that, in cases where the migration to that country is associated with marginalisation, 'home' *is* the space a person originates from as long as that space is not also associated with non-belonging.

This leads to the concept of 'ontological security' as termed by Giddens (1984), which refers to the sense of confidence that individuals have towards the "continuity of their self-identity and the constancy in their social and material environments" (Dupuis & Thorns, 1998, p. 27; Giddens, 1990). It involves a sense of security in the world and assurance that people and things are as they appear to be (Giddens, 1990; Kinnvall, 2004). Giddens (1989)

argued that ontological security was maintained in the pre-modern world through routine interactions with the family in person. They further noted that this has been threatened in the modern world and that it has to be actively brought back through relationships with others (Dupuis & Thorns, 1998; Giddens, 1989). 'Home' can provide ontological security when it is a space of dependability in the physical and social world, as it can be associated with a sense of control and escape from the world's expectations and surveillance (Kinnvall, 2004; Mallett, 2004). 'Home' creates this sense of safety as it has the ability to connect the physical environment with deeply emotional connotations that is associated with permanence (Kinnvall, 2004). Ndlovu (2010) argued that, cases such as in Zimbabwe where 'home' can be a source of disappointment, danger or even death explain why so many people are leaving despite their deep connections to the space.

Vaquera et al. (2017) argue that migration can decrease ontological security as they are in some way removed from and forced to restructure their local and regular spaces of social interaction (Giddens, 1990). Kinnvall (2004) further noted that the insecurity associated with migration often leads to a sense of powerlessness accompanied by "acute anxiety about their new circumstances and strong feelings of homelessness" (p. 747). In addition, their sense of belonging will likely be affected and they may seek or create new spaces to regain this sense of security (Boccagni, 2014; Kinnvall, 2004). Endeavouring to feel 'at home' in their host societies, Boccagni (2014) noted that migrants' houses show signs of their attempts to recreate their 'homes' to be similar to their places in their country of origin. However, this may be quite challenging for economic migrants who do not have the financial means to do so. Contributing to place-belongingness, Njwambe et al. (2019) acknowledged the importance of economic factors in the creation of material conditions that are stable and safe. By being involved in economic activity, ranging from unemployment to being in a professional career, they noted that it not only assists materially, but further aids in a sense of

investing in the future of the place (Njwambe et al., 2019). Severe financial restrictions may thus limit migrants' abilities to create physical spaces of belonging or participate in the economy of their host society.

Additionally, a cross-country study on the factors that influence Ecuadorian migrants' sense of feeling 'at home', conducted by Boccagni and Vargas-Silva (2021), revealed that factors such as time spent in that place and the perceived safety thereof contributed significantly to feeling 'at home' in a new place. Although they took relational achievements into account, the study does not provide insights in how social rejection or discrimination, such as the exclusionary patterns mentioned above, would affect this sense of feeling 'at home'. For example, Landau (2005a) noted that migrants in South Africa consciously choose not to assimilate or form close relationships with South Africans due the permanent sense of dislocation they feel from experiences of discrimination and violence. Many scholars argue that immigrants' sense of feel 'at home' in the new country is a complex question to consider as belonging cannot merely be identified as an individual or fixed matter (Antonsich, 2010; Madsen & van Naerssen, 2003; Yuval-Davis, 2016). Whether a person belongs is not the sole choice of the person, but depends on whether the host community recognises them as being a part thereof (Njwambe et al., 2019). This again highlights the bilateral nature of belonging and feeling at home as it is both dependent on the immigrants and the receiving community (Christiansen & Hedetoft, 2004).

Family and Migration

Although home is not necessarily only associated with one's family of origin, it is commonly the first space that provides a sense of 'home' and from where one learns what it means to belong or not belong (Marchetti-Mercer, 2006). The term 'home' and 'family' are so closely connected that they are practically interchangeable (Mallett, 2004). Mallet (2004) further elaborated that, if these terms are regarded as interconnected, 'home' can be seen as

the house associated with their childhood whilst also symbolising the "family relationships and the life courses enacted within those spaces" (p. 74). The family thus turns the house into a 'home', a space where one belongs (Antonsich, 2010; Mallett, 2004). This connects with Antonsich's (2010) *place belongingness* and Yuval-Davis's (2006) *Identifications and Emotional Attachments* which also stipulated that the connectedness with the family, identifications with them, and the resulting associations with the space of residence has important implications for belonging. Furthermore, Marchetti-Mercer (2006) noted that the family is the first space in which one's personal identity is developed, also connecting to the abovementioned literature on the implications of belonging and identity.

As such, when moving from the family of origin, one steps away from the familiar into a foreign 'culture' (Marchetti-Mercer, 2006). Migration also creates a shift in how family members maintain emotional connections, as it may now have to be across borders, and may consequently expand their understanding of belonging and 'home' (Marchetti-Mercer, 2017). This connects to Bowen's (1978) systemic perspective which stipulated that the family is an emotional as well as a relational system whereby "family members influence and are influenced by one another at individual, dyadic, systemic, and intergenerational levels" (Erdem & Safi, 2018, p. 2). It has been noted before that belonging cannot ever be viewed as a matter pertaining only to the individual (Marchetti-Mercer, 2006). Migration not only affects the persons who have left, but also those family members left behind (Falicov, 2007). Since one's family of origin is often associated with 'home' and a sense of belonging, it is important to take the family context into account when exploring a migrant's sense of belonging (Marchetti-Mercer, 2006). At the same time, given the receiving country or community's role in this person's sense of belonging, this can also not be ignored (Christiansen & Hedetoft, 2004; Yuval-Davis, 2006). An individual's belonging cannot be isolated from social factors and vice versa (Njwambe et al., 2019). In fact, at a macrosystemic

level, Bowen (1978) stipulated that the processes of society, just as all natural systems, operates identically to the family (Erdem & Safi, 2018). Individual problems should thus be viewed contextually so as to generate a richer explanation for their behaviours (Marchetti-Mercer, 2006).

Transnationalism

Whilst belonging is influenced by multiple factors, it is also commonly known that many immigrants imagine 'home', and therefore their sense of belonging, to be tied to multiple spaces (Falicov, 2005). Although 'home' is a word that is commonly used for their country of origin, many immigrants acquire another 'home' in their host country when they have children, find work, acquire land and develop new communities (Falicov, 2005). Though they may have built a 'home' in their new host country, many immigrants are still obligated to support those loved ones and families that have been left behind in their country of origin (Belford & Lahiri-Roy, 2019). Many studies have shown that immigrants are not necessarily fixed to a single national collective, but can be rooted in, participate in, and identify with, and thus influenced by, multiple communities (Ehrkamp & Leitner, 2006). As a result, many immigrants create and maintain cultural, economic, political and familial ties in both their 'home' and host societies (Ehrkamp & Leitner, 2006). These cross-border relational patterns between people and societies is known as transnationalism (Erol, 2012; van Oudenhoven & Ward, 2013). Immigrants are transnational migrants when they maintain several relationships and involvements in both host and 'home' society, which includes familial, social, religious, organisational or political spaces (Schiller et al., 1992). Through transnationalism, immigrants are faced with an "attractive, and at times deceiving, imagined possibility of living with two hearts rather than one divided heart" (Falicov, 2005, p. 399).

Transnationalism does not only facilitate a sense of belonging in more than one country, but can also connect these two countries through certain activities and behaviours

(Madsen & van Naerssen, 2003). Transnational belonging can be facilitated through the development of 'new places' by the immigrants in the host society (Huizinga & van Hoven, 2018). According to Boccagni (2014), Ecuadorian migrants' new 'homes' in Italy often exhibit signs of their attempts to recreate their original 'homes' and feel 'at home' in this new space, thereby creating physical transnational links between the two 'homes'. Kinnvall (2004) further noted that those who face structural inequality and a rapid change in their 'homes' may attempt to regain a sense of ontological security and stability by becoming a member of a local identity-based group. Such places can also include, for example, halal butchers, Islamic supermarkets, or mosques that represent the values, norms and traditions of their country of origin (Huizinga & van Hoven, 2018). These spaces can offer an environment that seems familiar to the immigrants and provide a place in which people from the same country can "remain connected to their country of origin by sharing memories and stories" (Huizinga & van Hoven, 2018, p. 311). Therefore, since transnational migrants are often expected and obligated to keep in contact with the families that they have left behind, they maintain a connection both in the host society and in their country of origin (Bayor, 2016; Belford & Lahiri-Roy, 2019).

These connections are often maintained through the use of frequent visits, or more commonly, Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) such as the internet, Skype, social media, and smartphones (Baldassar et al., 2016; Ehrkamp & Leitner, 2006; Falicov, 2005; Marchetti-Mercer, 2017). ICTs have proven to be a more cost-effective means of staying in contact with loved ones as it enables an instant form of communication (Bacigalupe & Lambe, 2011; Marchetti-Mercer, 2017). Baldassar (2008) uses the term 'virtual co-presence' to account for the sense that one can feel the presence of another through ICTs. The presence of ICTs has thus challenged the notion that proximity is required to maintain strong relationships (Baldassar, 2016; Baldassar et al., 2016). Arguably, the

maintenance of emotional attachments and aspects of their identities associated with their families in their country of origin, along with the participation in their families through the provision of resources aligns with the above literature regarding belonging and perhaps implies that through the maintenance of transnational relationships, immigrants can maintain their sense of belonging in those social spaces (Antonsich, 2010; Falicov, 2007; Marchetti-Mercer, 2017; Yuval-Davis, 2006).

These statements have, however, been challenged as many state that physical proximity and contact cannot be replaced by ICTs (Marchetti-Mercer, 2012, 2016, 2017). Baldassar (2008) noted that "longing, missing and nostalgia are best resolved through physical co-presence" which is the actual physical presence with the person longed for. Additionally, certain situations such as bad news, are best delivered and responded by being physically *there* for the person (Baldassar, 2008). A study conducted by Marchetti-Mercer (2017) showed that the South African participants were not completely satisfied with the use of ICTs as it did not provide the sense of intimacy that physical presence could have fostered. Furthermore, it was noted that these participants felt an increased sense of loss when faced with the reality that they were not able to afford physical visits and were not a part of the daily lives of their family members (Marchetti-Mercer, 2017). The digital divide is another factor that comes into play here, as those in developing countries may have fewer opportunities to gain access to ICTs and the internet, thereby making the maintenance of transnational family relationships considerably more challenging (van Dijk, 2005). However , Falicov (2016) does not deny the severe relational costs associated with transnational family life, but also notes that some form of presence may mitigate the pain of being physically absent (Falicov, 2007).

Furthermore, in transnational migration, 'home' and a sense of belonging should not only be related to a geographical space, but also to an emotional attachment and a symbolic

space where one's identity is located (Falicov, 2005; Marchetti-Mercer, 2017). Migration does not merely result in the severing of kinship ties, since families can still have an active influence in the lives of those who have migrated elsewhere (Marchetti-Mercer, 2017; Silver, 2014). When the focus is shifted to relationships, transnational families are able to find creative ways in which 'home' and a 'sense of belonging' is maintained (Marchetti-Mercer, 2017). To this regard, family relationships are important means through which a sense of belonging can be experienced (Falicov, 2005; Marchetti-Mercer, 2017). Transnationalism may moderate a sense of longing and pain due to the separation, by allowing the creation and maintenance of connections with those left behind (Falicov, 2005). Transnational families are thus imagined communities where membership is dependent on negotiation and choice that is constantly renewed through contact and exchanges (Bryceson & Vuorela, 2003). Therefore, since relationships are fundamental to a sense of belonging, one can deduce that a sense of belonging is influenced by the host society, as well as the families 'back home' (Falicov, 2005; Madsen & van Naerssen, 2003; Marchetti-Mercer, 2017). Transnational family relationships may form an integral part in the maintenance of a sense of belonging in the face of migration (Marchetti-Mercer, 2017).

Tactical Cosmopolitanism

Transnationalism, especially pertaining to the dominant migration literature within the South African context, does not come without contestation. Rather than belonging transnationally, Landau and Freemantle (2010) noted that immigrants draw on a mode of belonging that is variegated as they position themselves in a temporary, unrooted, yet superior condition, escaping political and social obligations, whilst still making claims to the city in which they reside. They noted that this is different to transnationalism, as migrants in South Africa do not belong in multiple spaces, but rather employ tactics that enable them to be more 'decentered' where they can participate in multiple spaces whilst not becoming a

part thereof (Landau & Freemantle, 2010). This way of being, known as tactical cosmopolitanism, is argued to provide migrants with a vantage point from which they can achieve their goals whilst mitigating the hostility of South Africans (Landau & Freemantle, 2010).

Landau and Freemantle (2010) observed four signs of cosmopolitanism, three of which represent tactical cosmopolitanism. Firstly, a form which is easily mistaken as transnationalism, is known as *de facto* cosmopolitanism (Landau & Freemantle, 2010). This emerges as a result of living transnationally, thereby increasing exposure to a variety of different cultural views and the ability to adjust to them (Vertovec & Cohen, 2002). The second sign involves their self-exclusion whereby foreign nationals distance themselves from the commitments and connections with the host nation (Landau & Freemantle, 2010). Landau (2006) claimed that such foreign nationals do not aspire to permanently reside in South Africa, even if they had the opportunity, but rather capitalise on their status as socially marginalized to "assume an identity of difference and superiority" (p. 127). Thirdly, it was noted foreign nationals use a rhetoric that claims inclusion without membership (Landau & Freemantle, 2010). Thereby, this distinctly non-transnational rhetoric does not involve the maintenance of ties in the city, but rather uses it for tactical purposes (Landau & Freemantle, 2010). Lastly, and most critically, tactical cosmopolitanism involves the avoidance of ethical obligations toward their home communities and other immigrant groupings (Landau & Freemantle, 2010). Evidently, it is proposed that these foreign nationals avoid developing connections with their spaces of residence and create a deficit of belonging through this permanent dislocation (Landau, 2006, 2009).

They are thus both included and excluded in the host society, with their self-exclusion often being a response to ascribed alienation (Landau, 2009). Their inclusion in the host society often occurs in networks that serve as meeting places for people who have moved to

these African cities with the hopes of gaining protection, profit and a means to travel elsewhere (Landau, 2014). Shaped by co-nationals, co-ethnics, co-religionists and kin members, these networks enable foreign nationals to participate in a city where inclusion or integration is not welcomed or possible (Landau, 2009). These networks, that constantly change with the in- and out flow of people, become spaces that facilitate the economic and social exchange between geographic locations and are thus created for their practical value rather than for a social or political purpose (Landau, 2014). In this way, migrants become the channels that connect their home villages to their country of residence as these networks aim to transfer values, money and information (Landau, 2009). Tactical cosmopolitanism is therefore not an alternative means to belong to the host city, but rather a way in which migrants can seize the benefits of belonging without actually doing so (Landau & Freemantle, 2010).

However, Landau and Freemantle (2010) explicitly stipulated that they do not claim that "all migrants are inherently cosmopolitan" (Landau, 2014, p. 377). Nevertheless, Landau and Freemantle (2010) noted that, to these foreign nationals, maintaining ties to a certain place is not in their vocabulary. Their notion of tactical cosmopolitanism seems to neglect the fact that, although foreign nationals may employ decentred tactics of belonging to this society, there are still likely strong emotional ties to their country of origin and the communities in which they are rooted, particularly their families, regardless of the length of stay (Falicov, 2005; Landau & Freemantle, 2010; Marchetti-Mercer, 2017). They are thus not necessarily "uprooted" from their families or home communities, as Landau (2006) suggests, but may rather be a rooted people who maintain these connections and their social and cultural norms across borders (Belford & Lahiri-Roy, 2018, p. 138). The networks of co-nationals, co-religionists and so forth in which they participate may further be spaces, and perhaps transnational spaces, in which they do gain a sense of belonging in the host society,

as they may maintain economic or religious ties in the host society through their participation and repetitive social practices in these spaces (Ehrkamp & Leitner, 2006; Yuval-Davis, 2006).

Landau's (2006, 2014) observations further seems to limit migrants' motives to personal gain rather than including the deep emotional connections and the desire to aid their family's survival that likely motivated this difficult migration (Belford & Lahiri-Roy, 2019; Falicov, 2005; Vertovec, 2001). These strong ties, along with the creation of networks in the host country, and the flow of emotional and physical resources, implies that transnationalism may still be a common factor among migrants in South Africa despite the exclusionary practices faced or decentred tactics employed (Falicov, 2007; Madsen & van Naerssen, 2003). If migrants are still actively involved in their families' lives, albeit across borders, which is often a reality in the Southern African context, one cannot isolate the migrants' experiences from the influence of their families.

Furthermore, given the comprehensive overview of belonging outlined above, it is interesting that these writings on tactical cosmopolitanism describe a form of belonging without outlining what they believe belonging entails. It may therefore be an example of how the concept of belonging is often taken for granted, vaguely defined, and under-theorised (Antonsich, 2010). It further seems to neglect a systemic view of these migrants' sense of belonging, therefore neglecting the role of cultural, environmental and psychological factors such as familial obligations and the emotional impact of migration. As noted previously, a contextual analysis of the individual challenges facing migrants is crucial in generating a richer understanding of these challenges (Marchetti-Mercer, 2006). It was therefore deemed important to use a theoretical framework for this study that emphasises an ecosystemic view of migration. As such, Falicov's (1995) multidimensional ecosystemic comparative approach was used which will be discussed next.

Multidimensional Ecosystemic Comparative Approach (MECA)

Falicov (2007) noted that transnationalism brings the need for new analytic frameworks to understand and intervene in family relationships. Traditional approaches to family therapy, such as Bowen's (1978) family systems theory, has been critiqued for mostly relying on studies that include predominantly white, highly educated and middle to upper class people in the United States, and therefore has questionable applicability in other contexts (Erdem & Safi, 2018). Falicov (2007) elaborated that new frameworks require a more enhanced integration of foundational family therapy with sociopolitical and cultural approaches. Falicov's (1995) Multidimensional Ecosystemic Comparative Approach (MECA) was offered as one such integrative therapeutic approach (Falicov, 2007). As a postmodern framework that is systemically oriented, MECA aims to "provide a culturally attuned and socially empowering approach in family therapy theory, research, clinical practice, and training" (Falicov, 2017, p. 1). This approach aims to provide and understanding for the changes that migration bring on immigrants' life cycle as it inevitably brings new ecological contexts and creates changes in how the family is organised (Falicov, 2016).

This approach uses four comparative domains, namely "migration/acculturation, ecological context, family life cycle, and family organization" to help look at migrants and their families ecosystemically (Falicov, 1995, 2007, p. 158). These four domains are used to summarise issues surrounding sociopolitical and cultural similarities, differences, inclusions or exclusions (Falicov, 2007). It postulates that, while each person identifies with, participates and belongs to various contextual and cultural groups, they can also be excluded from others which influences their sociocultural experiences (Falicov, 2017). As such, Falicov (2013) defines culture as "those sets of shared world views, meanings and adaptive behaviours derived from simultaneous membership and participation in a variety of contexts" which this study has also adopted (p. 23). The multiple contexts into which people find

themselves and the associated groups into which people identify, participate and belong form what Falicov (2013) calls an 'ecological niche' (Falicov, 2016b). Every individual's ecological niche has spaces of difference or similarity in terms of their socioeconomic status, class, race, gender, religion, ethnicity or occupation, known as their 'cultural borderlands' (Falicov, 1995, 2013). These borderlands may involve 'officially' recognised boundaries, such as citizenship or religion, whereas others may be less so, such as gender, values or education (Falicov, 2013). Whilst this may allude to intersectionality, Falicov (2013) takes it further than merely naming these social locations, explicating that an ecological niche pays attention to the interactions between a person's cultural borderlands and the creation of multiple identities that is aligned with a systems family-oriented approach. MECA is therefore a tool through which practitioners can holistically assess the contexts to which individuals belong and ascertain the influences of these contexts on their difficulties (Falicov, 2013).

Placing emphasis on a fair appraisal of diversity, MECA is said to be applicable to a variety of cultures across the world, as it emphasises the taking into account of each person's characteristics specific to their culture, their idiosyncratic histories, as well as their ecological niche in order to refrain from reducing the person's experiences and culture to a stereotyped description (Falicov, 2013, 2017). Whilst acknowledging the diversity within collective identities, it also provides space for useful generalisations in individuals' cultures (Falicov, 2013). Given the complexity of the cultural and sociopolitical reality of Southern Africa, this framework was deemed appropriate for assisting the systemic exploration of migrants' sense of belonging in relation to the contexts in which they find themselves, such as the host community and their families in their countries of origin. Next, each domain will be outlined in more detail.

Migration and Acculturation

This first parameter focuses on the experiences of migration and acculturative stress, and the psychosocial issues associated with these (Falicov, 2017). It involves an understanding of the diversity in "when, why and how the family migrated" along with their current immigration status (Falicov, 2017, p. 2). Falicov (2016) stipulated that migration is filled with ambiguous loss and disorder, as those involved are separated from their loved ones, community, and language and migrants are left isolated and vulnerable. This loss is ambiguous not only because of the uncertainty about whether they would return home, but also due to the gains or losses that are either balanced or imbalanced in their immigrant lives (Falicov, 2016). Perhaps the most pertinent disruption is the reality that migration involves being uprooted or dislocated from the cultural, social and physical meanings that their national contexts provided (Falicov, 1995, 2013, 2016b). At a physical level, migrants are dislocated from the familiar people and spaces that create feelings of safety, identity and rootedness (Falicov, 2013). Connecting this to Antonsich's, (2010) place belongingness, migrants are uprooted from the spaces of safety and rootedness they call 'home'. Falicov (2013) notes that social uprooting can create a sense of social alienation which can result in numerous psychological consequences (Falicov, 1995, 2013). Cultural uprooting involves the dislocation from familiar ways of doing and thinking, and the sudden exposure to new values, customs, lifestyles and so forth (Falicov, 2013). Falicov (1995) believes that many migrants face disorienting anxieties as they are confronted with the new. This seems related to Giddens' (1990) and Kinnvall's (2004) claims that migration can result in a decrease in ontological security and an increase in anxiety. Of course, Falicov (2016a) also acknowledges that it can provide opportunities for adventure and a better life, as well as the development of the belief that one is resilient. Migrants may form new relationships, gain better employment or education and reinvent parts of themselves (Falicov, 2016a). Marschall (2017) argues that

many of those who apply for Asylum in South Africa are in principle economic migrants, suggesting a hope for better opportunities.

Related to this level, Falicov (2005) notes that assimilation and transnationalism are completely opposed to one another. They is rather interested in the diverse ways in which migrants construct flexible hyphenated identities through the combination of both assimilative and transnational practices. As such, rather than gradually losing connections with their families in their country of origin, or being "uprooted" as Landau (2006) argues, transnational migrants may live with their hearts both in the host society and with their families (Falicov, 2016a). Landau's (2006) 'uprooting' should not be confused with Falicov's (2013) notion of experiencing an uprooting of meaning as mentioned above, as they have different implications. Where tactical cosmopolitanism involves 'decentred' and individualist ways of being and not belonging, transnationalism involves a sense of belonging in multiple spaces (Falicov, 2005; Landau & Freemantle, 2010). In Falicov's (2013) view, migrants more increasingly "have two homes or live connected to two countries" creating bidirectional flows between the country of origin and the host country (p. 152).

Falicov (2016a) further noted that the composition of the family, such as who migrated and how they have migrated, influences the connections and disconnections in the family system, which ultimately has an effect on the migrants' ability to cope with the "stresses of separation, reunifications, or adaptation to the host culture" (p. 225). Despite a physical separation, transnational families can remain connected and maintain a sense of belonging through shared social practices, memories, resources and flows of communication, thereby facilitating the creation and reproduction of 'familyhood' (Mustasaari, 2015). Regularly sending money for resources is one ritual of connection through which migrants communicate that they are still participating despite the distance (Falicov, 2007). Staying in contact with the imagined communities abroad enables immigrants to preserve traits

associated with those communities (Madsen & van Naerssen, 2003). Through the maintenance of these relationships, immigrants may maintain their constructed identities while "other potential selves are constructed through new emerging relationships" (Falicov, 2007).

By maintaining emotional and cultural ties to their families in their countries of origin, whilst also constructing new identities as they acculturate to the host society, migrants may not only be creating "hyphenated identities", as Falicov (2005) notes, but may also maintain and develop a sense of belonging in both spaces (p. 400). This may be different in the South African experience as highlighted by Palmary (2018) who brings to light the challenges with migration studies in the Southern African context, as the movements here are generally more transitory and circular. Assuming migrants' sense of rootedness and place-based identity, and associated belonging, may be problematic as they may likely have no desire to acculturate in the host society

Ecological Context

The second domain involves the diverse ways in which the family or migrant is situated in the broader sociopolitical environment (Falicov, 2017). As such, the interactions between the family and their religious, ethnic, class, educational and racial communities are explored (Falicov, 1995, 2017). It further explores the relationship between cultural or socioeconomic burdens and personal challenges (Falicov, 1995). Ehrkamp and Leitner (2006) note that migrants' transnational practices and mobility are greatly affected by their class and residency status, as migrants of a lower socioeconomic status may need to "expand significant energy, with limited resources, to maintain transnational ties" (p. 1595). Here, the differences in language and culture experienced when migrating may lead them to feel that they do not fit in with the host society's expectations (Falicov, 2016).

However, Falicov's (2017) abovementioned term ‘ecological niche’ is preferred to describe the fluid and dynamic interaction between the person’s various sociopolitical and cultural contexts and that of others, creating cultural borderlands. For example, whilst migrants may be included in and experience a sense of belonging in certain social or religious communities, irrespective of their immigration status, their documentation may lead to a sense of exclusion in other social, economic or political spaces (Antonsich, 2010; Landau, 2009). It is thus able to acknowledge the consistencies as well as the conflicts and contradictions between individuals and groups thereby not reducing them to a stereotyped description (Falicov, 2017). This connects with Maluleke' (2018) study on women and their negotiated forms of belonging in South Africa, as it emphasised that the various ways in which people belong and not belong are not as straightforward as one may be led to believe. Where people from certain countries may be included in some spaces, they may be excluded in others (Maluleke, 2018).

These cultural borderlands may, to some extent, influence the politics of belonging that stipulate whether someone is excluded or included (Yuval-Davis, 2006). In the event that they are negatively received and face discrimination, and thus excluded from belonging based on immigrant status, race, socioeconomic status, or gender, their ability to successfully adapt to the losses of migration may be radically altered (Falicov, 1995, 2016). Without their familiar contexts and language, and whilst having a marginalized status, migrants are frequently isolated from both their countries of origin and their host societies (Falicov, 2013). Falicov (2013, 2016a) noted that this can frequently contribute to biopsychosocial challenges. Consequently, a sense of belonging can be affected by experiences of not being congruent with the host community (Stewart et al., 2009).

Vaquera et al. (2017) argue that as migrants settle in their new country, they may attempt to regain a sense of ontological security by maintaining contact with their family in

their country of origin and engaging in "place-making strategies" in an endeavour to recreate the physical space of 'home' (p. 301). Religion and language comes into play here, as it may provide social networks and other contextual protections in their host society (Falicov, 2013). Often, immigrants may re-create ethnic communities or social networks in order to manage the cultural and social losses, and help cushion experiences of discrimination in their host societies (Falicov, 2007). Reiterating the literature on a sense of belonging mentioned previously, Falicov (2013) noted that religion provides spaces of community involvement and support, thereby helping migrants adapt to their host society. In fact, Levitt and Jaworsky (2007) argue that religious belonging do not only connect migrants to fellow believers in their host and home communities, but also connects them to other fellow believers irrespective of where they live.

Transnational family ties may also provide a sense of belonging in the spheres of political and social inclusion or exclusion that the host country may not provide (Falicov, 2017; van Oudenhoven & Ward, 2013). Although not involving transnational families, it is interesting to note that in their study exploring the safety perceptions among African migrants in China, Song et al. (2020) found that migrants' family members living in their country of origin play a role in migrants sense of safety and wellbeing. They further noted that the support these migrants receive from their families can be especially helpful when their businesses are facing challenges (Song et al., 2020). This may connect to the sense of ontological security that families could provide.

Family Organisation

This third generic domain takes into account the differences in the structure of the family group as well as the values, customs, rituals and beliefs that are associated with these structures (Falicov, 1995, 2017). It takes into account the collectivistic and at times hierarchical arrangements that most ethnic and disadvantaged families live by (Falicov,

2017). These cultural arrangements have a considerable influence in the hierarchical boundaries (involving power balances that are gendered and generational), whether others are included or excluded, emotional expressivity, styles of communication, as well as the standards of family connectedness or personal individuation (Falicov, 1995). As others, migrants undergo changes in their life cycles and other transitions, but in order to manage the change in their environments, they are faced with additional reorganisations imposed by this migration and acculturation (Falicov, 2016a). This may include the reorganization of the family as those who have migrated may assume new roles in order to compensate for their absence and contribute to the family (Falicov, 2007, 2016a).

Values will be upheld and reorganisations may occur differently among collectivistic ethnic groups in rural spaces than among those in urban settings and who value individualism (Falicov, 2016a). In terms of family systems, more collectivistic cultures typically involve obligations to support extended families (Falicov, 2013). Falicov (2013) asserted that these tendencies "seem to withstand migration and persist in some form for at least one or two more generations" (Falicov, 2013, p. 285). Such families may share responsibilities related to children, finances, support to those in the family who are isolated, and problem solving (Falicov, 2016b). As such, a person's dedication to their families, obligations, and their consequent self-sacrifices should be seen in light of these values (Falicov, 2013, 2016b).

Baldassar (2007) also highlighted the exchange in forms of support within transnational families, including financial, emotional, personal and practical support. When the motivation for migration involves seeking financial opportunities, migrant parents may need to leave their children with their extended families in an attempt to find opportunities to alleviate their financial challenges (Falicov, 2016a; Palmary, 2018). Often, these migrants send remittances to their families in their countries of origin to help ensure their care (Singh et al., 2010). Remittances consists of different forms of funds that are regularly or

occasionally sent to families in the home countries for various reasons such as housekeeping and so forth (Singh et al., 2010). Falicov (2013) noted that remittances not only significantly contribute to their families' economic sustenance, but also helps to maintain their presence across borders. Authors, such as Peter (2010) and Singh et al. (2010) note that the sending of these remittances can further foster or maintain a sense of belonging with their transnational families. In these events, migrants may adopt the role of providing financial support to their families back home, whilst their families may provide personal support through the caregiving of their children (Baldassar, 2007). As such, the family in their country of origin may further provide a sense of emotional support and security as they face the challenges associated with migration (Baldassar, 2007; Belford & Lahiri-Roy, 2019). It is thus evident that families continue to actively influence the lives of migrants and vice versa (Marchetti-Mercer, 2017).

Despite the continual support, migration can induce significant stressors on transnational families. This also includes the expectations to send remittances as it may become a burden due to the extreme sacrifices it requires on the migrants' part, and involve a sense of social pressure from their families in their origin countries (Bacigalupe & Lambe, 2011; Falicov, 2013; Peter, 2010). Migration further brings with it an inevitable separation from their families and communities, of which the most substantive rupture is between children and parents (Falicov, 2016a). In addition to separation, transnational families may experience stressors which includes the abovementioned change in responsibilities and roles of members, as well as the potential loss of support networks (Marchetti-Mercer, 2017). Migration can also involve an adjustment of their values, thereby bringing the potential for demands and loyalties between those who have migrated and those left behind to be contradictory (Falicov, 1995). This may induce confusion or conflict regarding obligations, sending of remittances, visitations and so forth (Falicov, 2017). For example, Palmary (2018)

noted that in many Southern African areas, ICTs are often inadequate or too expensive, thereby influencing the way in which transnational relationships such as parenting play out. In addition, Falicov (2016) noted that family members can withhold or alter the truth of incidents that they may be facing with the hopes of protecting them from the emotional burden of not being able to assist, increasing the sense of emotional distance between migrants and their families back home.

In addition, migration often brings with it significant emotional challenges for the migrant as well as their families (Belford & Lahiri-Roy, 2019). This includes intense feelings of longing, which Baldassar (2008) claims is manifested through words, the body, actions and imagination and is a crucial component in the maintenance of these transnational family ties. This experience of loved ones being physically absent is often mediated by creating forms of 'co-presence' which includes the use of ICTs to maintain contact and the sending of remittances, as noted previously (Baldassar, 2008). It additionally involves the extensive emotional investments required to maintain relationships with the family and friends in their country of origin (Skrbiš, 2008). Included here, are the financial and emotional support that migrants are often obligated to provide (Belford & Lahiri-Roy, 2019). Connected to the literature on belonging and transnational families, it is possible that as migrants and families renegotiate their roles in their families as well as in their host societies, their sense of belonging may also need to be renegotiated (Marchetti-Mercer, 2017).

Family Life Cycle

This last dimension involves the diverse ways in which the family or person's transitions and developmental stages are influenced over time by sociopolitical and cultural factors (Falicov, 2017). Cultural values alongside the ecological niche of the individual or family impacts how this life cycle is lived and interpreted (Falicov, 2016b). For example, Falicov (2013) noted that in collectivistic cultures, it is often preferred that young adults stay

at home until they form their own families, as opposed to mainstream culture that expects young people to leave home to gain autonomy and self-sufficiency. To an extent, this may be due to financial or emotional limitations in accessing other avenues for leaving home at that stage, such as finding employment or going to university (Falicov, 2013). Losses or additions in the family, or a change in the standing of a family member, may also precipitate renegotiations in the family system or crisis points, thereby influencing transitions in the family or individual's life cycle (Falicov, 1995). When some family members undergo transitions that influence other members in another country, or when they are unable to share certain events related to these transitions, stressors may pile up and the ambiguous losses and gains may be intensified (Falicov, 2016a).

Furthermore, it has been noted that the external and internal lives of immigrants are dominated by cultural changes and they are challenged by the requirement to undergo life cycle transitions "in a different language and with different cultural ideals and norms than those acquired in the culture of origin" (Falicov, 2016a, p. 234). When the cultural changes that migrants undergo contradict the expectations of their families, migrants may attempt to force or combine these contrasting cultural codes, increasing the potential for the development of problems or of resilience (Falicov, 1995). Falicov (2016a) further noted that spirituality and religion are powerful therapeutic resources through which migrants can navigate life cycle transitions as belonging and continuity is enhanced through these practices whilst their lives move forward.

Consistent with an ecosystemic framework, this approach also acknowledges the reciprocal interactions in the cultural-sociopolitical, relational and community contexts alongside these four MECA domains to assist in the exploration and navigation through complex problems of migrant families in the therapeutic process (Falicov, 2007). Where the cultural context involves religious, ethnic, political, and professional systems that vary in

their beliefs, meanings and values, the sociopolitical context involves contesting those power differentials and subsequent acts of oppression based on social positionalities (Falicov, 2007). The community context involves attempts made at building or restoring their social capital or community connections over time either virtually or physically (Falicov, 2007). The relational context involves the way in which these connections and relationships change in these new settings (Falicov, 1995). The MECA framework highlights the need for culturally competent systems perspective to explore the multidimensional impact that the migration, ecological contexts, the way in which their families' are organised, as well as their families' life cycles have on their presenting concerns or resilience (Falicov, 2016b, 2016a). In the case of this study, the MECA framework will be used to better explore migrants' sense of belonging within their cultural/sociopolitical, community and relational contexts of living.

Conclusion

In this chapter an overview of the relevant literature has been provided where an ecosystemic view of individual challenges, such as a lack of belonging, is emphasised to facilitate a more comprehensive understanding thereof. In light of this, the literature review has endeavored to highlight that the literature does not confidently bring to light the role of transnational families on immigrants and their sense of belonging. The following chapter will outline the research questions and aims of this study whilst also systematically discussing the methodology used in this study.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter describes the methodological considerations followed throughout the research process. It begins by outlining the research aims and reiterating the research questions posed at the beginning of this project. Thereafter, it will outline the reasoning behind the chosen research design and theoretical framework. This will be followed by an outline of the sample and sampling used along with the data collection and procedure for this study. The participants' stories along with the data analysis process will be described subsequently. This chapter will conclude with a consecutive description of the processes followed to ensure qualitative rigor, ethical considerations, as well as reflexivity.

Research Aims

The research study endeavoured to explore the experiences of belonging among African immigrants in Olievenhoutbosch and the role their families in their country of origin played therein. It aimed to do so by firstly exploring the factors that affected their sense of belonging in Olievenhoutbosch and South Africa in general. It further aimed to explore the maintenance of their relationships with their families in their country of origin as well as the roles of these relationships in their sense of belonging.

Research Questions

The following questions were asked at the beginning of the project

1. How do immigrants experience a sense of belonging in Olievenhoutbosch?
2. How do immigrants in Olievenhoutbosch maintain family relationships?
3. What role, if any, do family relationships play in a sense of belonging among immigrants in Olievenhoutbosch?

Research Design

This exploratory study followed a qualitative approach. This research study was exploratory as it endeavoured to gain more information on a relatively new, vaguely defined, and understudied area of research (Palmary, 2018; Stebbins, 2001; Yuval-Davis, 2006). It was thus deemed specifically useful for this study as it enabled experiences in this understudied area of research to be clarified and further developed from a psychological perspective (van Rensburg, 2010).

Qualitative Approach

Broadly, qualitative research involves various research methodologies that focus on gaining a deeper understanding of social phenomena through the exploration of participants' experiences and beliefs (Fossey et al., 2002; Isaacs, 2014). Fundamental to this approach is the view that social life is "complex, contingent, and mediated by individual interpretations and meanings of events and phenomena" (Morrow & Smith, 2000, p. 200). Emphasis is placed on gaining meaning from people's lived experiences or perceptions in a particular context, and so the researcher's aim is to reveal the participants' accounts and report on it as the participants have verbalised it (Mohajan, 2018; Morrow & Smith, 2000; Ponterotto, 2005). The findings in qualitative research should bring to light the subjective reality of the phenomena under investigation, and in so doing, place it within the relevant context, as the lived experiences of the participants are intricately tied to the world in which they find themselves (Fossey et al., 2002). Qualitative researchers are thus not concerned with "cause-effect relationships", but rather with "the quality and texture of experience" (Willig, 2001, p. 9). Naturally, this implies that qualitative research does not quantify the data or use statistical methods, but rather derives the findings from the interpretation of data that is largely text-based (Bowen, 2005; Fossey et al., 2002). The findings move beyond a mere description of

the phenomena under investigation and become a coherent account of its meaning and significance (Fossey et al., 2002).

Morrow and Smith (2000) argue that qualitative research's focus on complex human phenomena, and the subjective accounts of participants' experiences enables it to address questions that would not be answered through the sole use of quantitative methods. Qualitative research was considered suitable for this study, as belonging is described as indefinite and in a constant process of change, and therefore complex (Yuval-Davis, 2006). A qualitative approach was further deemed an ideal approach as the study emphasized subjective experiences of belonging (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006; Morrow & Smith, 2000). Through this approach, richer and more detailed information can be revealed which may expose new insights or unanticipated phenomena (Mohajan, 2018). It is important to note, however, that in qualitative research, the findings are bound to that particular context and inseparable from the participants and their experiences (Morrow & Smith, 2000). It is therefore largely not generalisable, and requires the audience's discretion on how the findings could be transferred to other contexts (Morrow & Smith, 2000). In light of this, Thomas and Magilvy's (2011) model was utilised to guide the application of the qualitative methods to increase its rigour, which will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

Theoretical Framework

The interpretation of the data yielded is largely dependent on the theoretical framework utilised (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006). It is not only important in establishing the motivation or intent of the research, but also determines the expectations for the study (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006). As outlined in the literature review, this study utilised Falicov's (1995) Multidimensional Ecosystemic Comparative Approach (MECA).

Falicov (2016) argues that this framework is aligned with a social constructionist view of the family life cycle. Social constructionism is a term used for an array of theoretical paradigms that "emphasize both the constructive powers of human minds and their origins in conversations, conventions, and cultural traditions" (Durreim, 1997; Hosking & Morley, 2004, p. 1). It proposes that history, culture and language facilitates human experience and perception (Willig, 2001). A person's experiences and perceptions should be seen as an interpretation of environmental conditions, rather than a direct result thereof (Willig, 2001). Sharing the perspective of interpretivism, it additionally suggests that knowledge and meaning is created and shared intersubjectively and socially (Gelderblom, 2010; Schwandt, 1998). Knowledge, according to social constructionism, is fleeting and negotiated among people in a certain time and context (Raskin, 2002). Social constructionism therefore rejects the idea of an isolated knower, and proposes that there are 'knowledges' as opposed to 'knowledge' (Raskin, 2002; Willig, 2001).

The focus of research, from this perspective, is on the meaning that is created and shared collectively through social practices or language conventions (Schwandt, 1998). Valuing relationships, it is in opposition to psychology's previous focus on the individual, and emphasizes an interest in cultural and contextual factors (Raskin, 2002). As such, researchers should be aware of the social contexts in which people create meaning (Gelderblom, 2010). The MECA framework is thus aligned with a social constructionist view, as it acknowledges "the impact of age and stage, cultural variation, social inequities, and individual uniqueness within a complex reality of multiple family forms" (Falicov, 2016a, p. 223).

Sample and Sampling

The sample for the study consists of eight working-class African immigrants residing in the Olievenhoutbosch community, and who have families still residing in their country of origin. The participants were all over the age of eighteen years old and consisted of four males and four females. In terms of their country of origin, one participant migrated from Tanzania, two participants migrated from Malawi, and five migrated from Zimbabwe. The years that the participants have lived in South Africa ranges from one and a half years to seventeen years. The participants have resided in Olievenhoutbosch between five months and six years.

Due to theoretical and practical considerations, this was deemed an appropriate sample size as an in-depth analysis of each individual case was possible (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014; Robinson, 2014). It has been noted that in qualitative research the number of participants is not as important as the depth of the information covered (Fossey et al., 2002). The data collected by each participant was in-depth which was confirmed when the last participants did not seem to yield many new significant insights in relation to the research questions (Marshall, 1996; Oppong, 2013). Furthermore, new data, codes and themes applicable to the research study were not emerging with the latter participants during the data analysis process (Fusch & Ness, 2015; Saunders et al., 2018). As such, it appeared that an appropriate level of saturation had been reached (Fusch & Ness, 2015; Oppong, 2013; Saunders et al., 2018). It is important to acknowledge, however, that prior to the commencement of the study a target sample size of between eight and twelve participants had been envisaged. Although more participants would have been ideal, and many people had expressed their interest in participating, unexpected challenges arose on the days that the interviews were scheduled. Often, the interviews would be scheduled and confirmed, but not attended. On other occasions, participants would cancel at the time of the meeting and

reschedule for another day, only to do cancel again on the rescheduled day. Factors that could have influenced this may include no longer being interested, possible inconvenience, concerns for safety, lack of incentives, not trusting me as an outsider to the community, as well as other commitments. During these instances, a decision had to be made regarding whether contacting them to reschedule after each no-show or cancellation would become indirectly coercive. As such, it was reiterated that participation is entirely voluntary and if they were not interested or able to meet that the interview could be cancelled. Furthermore, potential participants who still showed interest were not contacted again to reschedule after the second no-show. The data collection process therefore took much longer with considerably more effort than anticipated. Robinson (2014) noted that the sample size may have to be reduced if the recruitment of participants proves to be more challenging than anticipated, as the challenges cannot ever be entirely predicted at the beginning of the process.

In the case of this study, the recruitment of more participants was further halted by the COVID-19 pandemic and the associated national lockdowns. With the implementation of social distancing and the halting of nonessential activities ordered by governments across the globe, including South Africa, recruiting participants and conducting interviews was not only unfeasible, but illegal (Department of Health, 2020; South African Government, 2021; Weissman et al., 2020). When the lockdown was eased, recruiting and meeting with participants still did not seem appropriate or ethical, as the possibility of placing each other at risk was not eliminated. As the nature of data collection involved meeting on a face-to-face basis, thereby eliminating social distancing, the participants and myself would be exposed to infection (Sy et al., 2020; Vindrola-Padros et al., 2020). Unlike many other research studies that could commence with the data collection online, it did not seem possible to do with a sample population that lacked access to the necessary resources (Weissman et al., 2020).

Additionally, in alignment with a social constructionist viewpoint, given the considerable social and economic impact this pandemic has had on this country and the world at large, it was also likely that the experiences and contexts of people, and therefore the data gathered, would not be comparable or relevant to those interviews already conducted. It was thus decided that the eight participants with whom the interviews had already been conducted was sufficient especially in the light of the saturation already reached.

In terms of the sample population, Morrow and Smith (2000) iterated that a site for research should be selected based on its ability to create an increased understanding of the phenomenon under investigation, to "illustrate the social interactions in which human meanings are constructed, and whether it can complement other data" (p. 209). In Olievenhoutbosch, the homes of some migrants have frequently been under threat by the community and government, rendering it a very relevant group to conduct this research on (Brkic, 2010; du Plooy et al., 2006; Hiropoulos, 2017; IOM, 2009; Moatshe, 2018; Tlhabye, 2017). Their sense of belonging in Olievenhoutbosch may be under threat due to these events, and it was valuable to find out whether a sense of belonging with their families in their countries of origin to remediate this potential reality.

An element of convenience sampling was used as this community was accessible to me as the researcher and this did play a role in the selection of the community. It has been noted that convenience sampling is the most economical sampling technique in terms of time, cost and effort, but holds the highest risk for yielding poor quality data (Marshall, 1996; Oppong, 2013). However, for successful research, Spradley (1980), as cited by Morrow and Smith (2000), identified six approaches to keep in consideration when selecting a social situation, namely "simplicity, accessibility, unobtrusiveness, permissibleness, frequently recurring activities, and participation" (p. 209). The increased accessibility of Olievenhoutbosch to me as the researcher and my relative familiarity with this community

should therefore not be used to label the sampling strategy as purely convenience as it rather enhanced the purposive nature of the study. Since I am acquainted with many people who interact or live in this community, I was able to gain more insight into the social context of the community and therefore evaluate whether this would be a suitable sample population for my study. It further enabled me to assess whether the study would be ethically appropriate to conduct in this community. Isaacs (2014) recommended that the study should be discussed with community leaders before the research begins so as to increase a sense of trust and support whilst also ensuring that the research would not include harm on the community. For this study, it was done through various informal conversations with people who resided in Olievenhoutbosch prior to the designing of this research study.

Furthermore, all research studies have an element of convenience involved, and should not be disregarded for just that reason (Marshall, 1996; Oppong, 2013). Nevertheless, a research study's sampling procedure is more justifiable when the selection criteria is given more consideration (Oppong, 2013). Here, participants were selected based on certain criteria that are relevant to the research questions (Oppong, 2013). Since the main criteria for being participants in the present study was that they are working-class immigrants in Olievenhoutbosch with families still in their country of origin, one can deduce that specificity was involved. As such, purposive sampling, the most commonly used sampling technique in qualitative research, was used to provide more consideration to the sample being used (Oppong, 2013). The participants were also able to speak English to eliminate the complications that may have arisen if a translator was used. Isaacs (2014) noted that qualitative sampling involves the recruitment of participants who would be able to provide in-depth accounts to the topic being studied and is therefore purposeful. The purpose of this study was not to generalise to the whole immigrant community, but rather to provide a rich and in-depth account of this group of people. Choosing individuals at random was not

appropriate for this qualitative study as it may not have been productive (Marshall, 1996). Purposeful sampling, with an element of convenience, was thus an appropriate sampling technique for this specific study.

Many participants were recruited with the help of a gatekeeper. Since the means through which data is collected in qualitative research involves interaction, it is dependent on whether "researchers can position themselves in such a way that participants in the world they seek to will interact with them" (Morrow & Smith, 2000, p. 209). The gatekeeper played a key element in this process as it increased the sense of trust and rapport required to obtain data that is of high-quality (Morrow & Smith, 2000). The person who assisted me as a gatekeeper is actively involved in the Olievenhoutbosch community and is an immigrant himself. He is further a trusted member of the community and has insights into the realities of many people who reside there. As such, he was able to introduce me to people who met the sample criteria. At the same time, he is not a formal leader in this community, thereby reducing the level of power imbalances and feelings of obligation at play during the recruitment process (Isaacs, 2014). Other participants were recruited through the snowball technique, which is a form of purposive sampling, as the participants distributed my details to those who may be interested (Oppong, 2013). After ethics approval was obtained, the sampling procedure proceeded as follows:

1. The gatekeeper was given a comprehensive overview of the proposed research so that he would be aware of the target sample and ethical recruitment procedures. He was informed that participation was entirely voluntary, and that no incentives were given in compensation.

2. The gatekeeper signed a confidentiality form to ensure the safety of the participants (see **Appendix A**).

3. I then went with him to the Olievenhoutbosch community and the Olievenhout Plaza where he introduced me to people who met the criteria for participation. Some of these people were acquaintances of him. These acquaintances further introduced me to people who may be interested.
4. After introducing myself, I explained the purpose of the study, emphasised voluntary participation and confidentiality, and discussed the logistics of the interview. Thereafter I handed them the participation information sheet (see **Appendix B**). The potential participants were encouraged to take these forms home and think about whether they would like to participate.
5. Those who wanted to participate either gave me their numbers or contacted me through WhatsApp. Communication with all participants was done through WhatsApp as this seemed to be the preferred by all participants and was most cost effective. Here again I emphasised that participation is voluntary, explained that their identities will be kept confidential, and asked them if they had any questions related to the research or logistics of the interview.
6. Those who were still comfortable and willing notified me of their availability and we arranged to meet accordingly.

It is crucial to note that the use of a gatekeeper may have held a few complexities. Gatekeeper bias may have arisen if the potential participants themselves influenced the choice of who would eventually participate in the research (Oppong, 2013). The gatekeeper himself may also have had his own opinions regarding who should be included in the study (Oppong, 2013). This could, unfortunately, not be avoided completely. I did, however, ensure that participants were chosen (by me) based on the research criteria by assessing whether they

met the criteria for the study upon recruitment. I further confirmed their suitability to participate at the beginning of the interview to ensure that they met the criteria.

Data Collection

To increase the level of safety and privacy during the data collection process, the interviews were conducted on an individual and face-to-face basis. The venue for the interviews was in a space that was separate from the Olievenhoutbosch community, whilst also being easily accessible to, and agreed upon, by the participants. Before the interview began with each participant, a discussion was again initiated to remind participants that the interview and questions were entirely voluntary, and that they were welcome to terminate the process immediately should they have any discomfort with any of the questions or the process in general. Participants were further provided with the consent form for the study and for audio recording (see **Appendix C** and **Appendix D** respectively), and a discussion regarding the research study, interview questions, and audio recording ensued to ensure that each participant understood and was comfortable with this process. Furthermore, participants were informed that the interviews would be transcribed, but that their identities would remain confidential and that pseudonyms would be assigned to each. After these discussions, when participants verbalised their agreement to the process, they were encouraged to sign the consent forms.

To collect the data, semi-structured interviews were conducted which ranged between approximately one hour and two hours. The variability in these times was dependent on each participant's engagement with the questions as well as their availability on that day. As one of the most common means of collecting data, semi-structured interviews enable the topics related to the research question to be answered, through the guidance of a list of open-ended questions, whilst also allowing the participant to deviate to some extent from the questions to provide more unanticipated or contextual information (Isaacs, 2014). As such, this means of

collecting data also favours the participants' knowledge and ensures a sensitive approach to their language (Fossey et al., 2002). Semi-structured interviews was thus appropriate for this study as it enabled a conversational and in-depth discussion that was focused on the research question whilst also being responsive to each participant (Fossey et al., 2002; Morrow & Smith, 2000). An interview schedule (see **Appendix E**) was used to ensure that guided and focused interview were conducted that covered all of the necessary topics (Fossey et al., 2002). The interview schedule was developed by myself and my supervisor and was pre-piloted with one individual who fit the sampling description. This was done on an informal basis to determine whether the questions were clear and understandable, to identify possible ambiguities and responses, and to determine whether the layout is appropriate (Williams, 2003). During the interview, special attention was placed on asking clarifying questions rather than making my own assumptions or interpretations, which provided the participants with more opportunity to express their own thoughts and beliefs.

In order to accurately transcribe the data, audio recordings were done with my cellular device. This commenced after written consent was provided. After the interview imported these audio recordings on to my laptop in a password-protected folder. My cellular device is also password protected to ensure that only I have access to these recordings. These recordings were transcribed and kept in a password-protected folder on my laptop, and subsequently deleted from my cellular device. During the transcription, pseudonyms were assigned to each participant according to their gender and the country from which they have migrated. The recordings were transcribed verbatim to ensure that an accurate as possible analysis is conducted whilst also ensuring that details were not omitted from the participants' accounts.

Background Information of Participants

- **Participant one: Emma**

Emma is a black woman who was 29 years old at the time of the interview. She identifies as Shona. She migrated alone from Zimbabwe in 2008 when she was 18 years old and thus has approximately been in South Africa for 11 years. Emma noted that she migrated after she feared her father's reaction upon receiving her Form IV results. She stated that, after finding out she had failed, she stole his money and ran away to South Africa. Upon arrival in South Africa, Emma took advantage of her small physique and pretended to be 16 years old. This enabled her to stay at an orphanage where she was taken care of. Emma is currently unemployed and earns a living through piece jobs. She is residing in a rented room with her husband. Emma noted that she has many family members who reside in South Africa, but stated that her elders, including her mother and father, live in Zimbabwe. Emma has two children who live with her parents in Zimbabwe. Emma describes her children as the main reason why she will return to Zimbabwe in the future, as she would like them to be educated there, remain connected to their roots, and not be influenced by the violence in South Africa. She further does not want to burden her parents who are looking after her late sister's children. Emma describes her experiences in South Africa as pleasant and welcoming, as she finds support and a sense of familial care here. She did, however, acknowledge that the name calling xenophobic acts do frustrate her and make her want to return home at times. She describes these acts as minimal and further believes that she would feel the same if she was in a similar position as the local inhabitants.

- **Participant two: George**

George is a black male who was 47 years old at the time of the interview. He had been living in South Africa between 4 and 5 years and has migrated with his wife from Bulawayo in Zimbabwe. He describes himself and his wife as the breadwinners for their family in

Zimbabwe, who consists of his three children, his mother and father, as well as his brothers. He noted that this is the reason why they have had to migrate. George was an electronic engineer by profession and is now fixing phones in the Olievenhoutbosch community for a living. He describes his experience in Olievenhoutbosch as very challenging as he struggles to buy product for his business and has experienced xenophobic acts. He believes that much of the violence in this community is directed towards foreign nationals and is thus afraid to reside there. However, he sees no other option but to stay as his family do not have another source of income. George's home language is Ndebele but noted that it is similar to the isiZulu spoken in South Arica.

- **Participant three: Pamela**

Pamela is a black female who was 30 years old at the time of the interview. Although Pamela had migrated from Zimbabwe to South Africa in 2014, she noted that she only started residing in Olievenhoutbosch in 2016. Pamela migrated alone in order to find work and provide for her family, taking the role of the provider after the passing of her father. Although she had formerly lived by herself in a room, she has recently started sharing this room with her brother who has also moved to Olievenhoutbosch in search for work. Pamela formerly sold vegetables in Olievenhoutbosch as a source of income but has since pursued her career as a musician performing live events and selling her CDs. She noted that her music is on her home language, Shona, but that the genre and dance routines are South African. Pamela noted that her family consists of her mother, her little brothers, her sister as well as her two children. Her children are being taken care of by their father in Zimbabwe. Since residing in Olievenhoutbosch, Pamela stated that she has not experienced any problems. Despite this, she does not trust anyone and prefers to refrain from making close attachments. She further described Olievenhoutbosch as unpredictable and is fearful when there are protests in the community as foreign nationals are often targeted.

- **Participant four: Aneni**

Aneni is a black Shona speaking female who has migrated from Zimbabwe and was 43 years old on the day of the interview. She initially migrated to South Africa in 2010 after her husband, who migrated to South Africa in 2006 began to send remittances and money less and less frequently. Aneni was guaranteed a job as a domestic worker but was laid off after one day's work. Having no other prospects in South Africa, she returned to Zimbabwe. Aneni describes this period in Zimbabwe as incredibly difficult as, although her children had lived with her younger sister and was provided for, she was starving and unsupported by her family due to the reputation that her husband had developed for not supporting his family. Aneni thus decided again to migrate to South Africa in 2014 and has been in Olievenhoutbosch since. Aneni worked as a domestic worker for approximately four years but describes that period as challenging as she worked incredibly hard and received a small salary. At the time of the interview, Aneni was buying and selling clothes as a means to support herself and her children but noted that her profit is not enough to support herself and her family. Aneni expressed a strong desire to return home as she believes that she is living in poverty in South Africa as well, and so would rather be with her family. She further noted that she does not feel safe nor comfortable in Olievenhoutbosch.

- **Participant five: Ronald**

Ronald is a 37-year-old male who has migrated alone from Zimbabwe in 2013 and speaks Shona as his home language. He has been living in Olievenhoutbosch since then. He noted that he migrated in order to provide for his wife and children. Ronald has been employed for five years on the time of the interview at a company called Mukuru and earning commission. Despite having a relatively stable employment, Ronald expressed his challenges with providing for his family, himself as well as his extended family. He stated that, after the passing of his father and as the firstborn in his family, he is often the person his sisters turn to

when they experience financial challenges. Ronald described the crime and his lack of a sense of safety as his biggest challenge in Olievenhoutbosch, but further noted that he is persevering for the sake of his family.

- **Participant six: Stanley**

Stanley is a 35-year-old male who has migrated alone in 2018 from Malawi at the time of the interview. His wife subsequently joined him in 2019, leaving his two children with his father and mother in Malawi. Stanley noted that he has migrated with the hopes of finding a better source of income, as he desires to be independent from his parents. Stanley noted that this has not yet come into realisation, but that he is hopeful that his time will come. In the meantime, his father is providing the funds for Stanley's children's school fees, their food and so forth whilst Stanley is providing the finances necessary for their clothing. Stanley speaks Chichewa as his home language. Stanley noted that he has some relatives near Olievenhoutbosch and friends from Malawi with whom he socialises. Stanley believes that he would feel more at home in Olievenhoutbosch if he had a more comfortable space to call his own. He believes that his living conditions do not provide him with the adequate comfort to feel a sense of belonging as he is continually concerned about the bills and his landlord. He describe his living conditions as of a low standard and lacking freedom. He further expressed his frustrations with being labelled a "foreigner" and being excluded from the community.

- **Participant seven: Lina**

Lina is a 23-year-old single female who has migrated alone from Tanzania in 2014. She stayed in Groenkloof for approximately two years before she moved to Olievenhoutbosch and has stayed there up to the date of the interview. Lina noted that her family consists of her mother and three siblings who live in Tanzania. Although she did not state that she had migrated to provide for them, she did note that she migrated with the hopes of finding work and does at times send money and gifts to them. Lina's home language is Swahili. At the time

of the interview Lina was working at an electronic store in Olievenhoutbosch and noted that her sense of belonging is often subject to the state of the business. She further noted that she often feels uncomfortable and anxious when there is violence and xenophobia in the community, or when the cultural practices are significantly different to hers. Other than that, Lina has expressed her involvement in a Tanzanian church community in Pretoria where she can speak her home language, Swahili, and socialise with people from various nationalities.

- **Participant eight: Victor**

Victor is a 60-year-old male who has migrated to South Africa alone from Malawi in the year 2000. He migrated in order to provide for his family, who consists of his wife and adult children. Victor's approximate 19 years in South Africa have been spent in many towns and provinces doing various jobs. However, in 2005 he decided to start a business transporting goods on a monthly basis from South Africa to Malawi so that he can see his family more regularly. Victor has only been in Olievenhoutbosch for five months during the time of the interview and noted that he has moved here as it is a central space for his business. Although his long stay in South Africa has left him often feeling unfamiliar with Malawi, he still calls it home as it is where his family is residing. Victor has learnt to adapt to South Africa by learning various languages and acceptable behaviours, but still expressed his challenges with xenophobic acts and being excluded from the community. Victor's home language is Chichewa.

Data Analysis

The data was analysed using thematic analysis as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). This method involves the identification, analysis and reporting of patterns in data through a step-by-step process (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This research study followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step-process which is outlined as follows (p. 87):

1. **Familiarising yourself with your data**

   This phase involves immersing oneself with the data by transcribing and actively reading the transcripts repeatedly in order to gain a wider and deeper comprehension of the content.

2. **Generating initial codes**

   In this step, preliminary codes are created as the data is systematically worked through.

3. **Searching for themes**

   Here, the codes are grouped according to potential themes, ensuring that all data associated with that theme is collated.

4. **Reviewing themes**

   This involved the creation a thematic ‘map’ by reviewing whether the themes correspond to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2).

5. **Defining and naming themes**

   Continuing the analysis by refining each theme’s specifics and the story told by the analysis, generating clear definitions and names for each theme.

6. **Producing the report**

   Selecting comprehensive and engaging extracts from the data, concluding the final analysis of these extracts, and relating this information to the research question and literature to produce an academic report.

Braun and Clarke (2006) noted that the collection of data through interactive means, such as interviews, as well as the transcribing process, begins to create an element of familiarity with the data and can play a part in the immersion process. The transcribing of the data can further be included as an interpretative act, thereby facilitating the analysis of the

data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The interviews were conducted and transcribed by me to facilitate this process and enabled a more engaged understanding of the information before the initial codes were actively generated from the dataset. Initially, each transcript was coded separately and extensively, in an inductive manner, in order to let the meaning and themes emerge from the data (Morrow & Smith, 2000). The coding process was done through research software known as ATLAS.ti, which assists the systematic arranging and managing of qualitative data (ATLAS.ti, 2021). After the initial coding of the transcripts, emerging patterns or codes that shared similar meanings were collapsed into a unified code. These were then further grouped with other codes that were closely related into candidate themes and subthemes that addressed the research questions. The themes were then reviewed by firstly ensuring that data extracts within each candidate theme created a coherent pattern, moving extracts or adjusting themes as necessary. Secondly, each interview was then compared to the rest of the data set to ascertain which themes were relevant across all participants. During this stage, additional data was coded as patterns became evident across the entire data set. After the thematic map became clearer, the information of each interview was tabulated into a Microsoft Word document, grouping each code and its associated responses with its subthemes and themes. When this was completed for each participant's account, a master list was created whereby all codes and subthemes of all the participants were grouped according to the relevant themes. Here, a register was kept to identify which themes where most prevalent across the entire data set, whilst not ignoring those codes that were only prevalent in one or two participants or that contradicted the rest of the data. Braun and Clarke (2006) noted that an analysis without contradictions is suspicious if it does not involve an in-depth explanation. Throughout this process, the themes were further defined, collapsed, and refined as similarities and patterns became more evident. This frequently involved returning to the

data extracts and the original transcripts to ensure that the information and context of each extract was still relevant to the theme in which it was grouped.

Benchmarks for Qualitative Rigour

In ensuring that the thematic analysis conducted is of appropriate quality, Braun and Clarke (2006) emphasise the rigorous application of both theory and method. Yet, rigour should not only apply to data analysis, but should be applied across the research study including the sampling process and data collection (Bowen, 2005; Robinson, 2014; Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). Rigour is said to build confidence and trust in the findings, the accuracy in how this study represents the population being studied, and aids in the development of consistency in the research methods (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). Thomas and Magilvy (2011) provided a model that addressed four components of trustworthiness, which will be applied in this study. These components include *1)* credibility, *2)* transferability, *3)* dependability, and *4)* confirmability (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). Lincoln and Guba (1985), as cited by Morrow and Smith (2000), provided this similar list of criteria, arguing that it corresponds with the traditional criteria of validity and reliability. These components were applied as follows:

1) Credibility

For a research study to be credible, the findings and communication thereof should represent the true experiences of the participants and be relatable to those who have similar experiences (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). Reflexivity, peer debriefing and member checking are methods used to achieve this (Bowen, 2005; Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). In addition to emphasizing self-reflexivity as mentioned above, it was also attained by refraining from making premature assumptions and rather asking participants what they meant by certain words, phrases or narratives during the interview process. During data analysis, the codes, themes and interpretations were made by not taking the interview excerpts in isolation but

keeping the context of their narratives in mind. When further clarification was needed, the participants were contacted. Furthermore, direct quotes from these interviews were used in the interpretation and discussion of the findings (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011; Weiss, 1994).

2) Transferability

In essence, transferability involves the extent to which the findings of this study are applicable to other studies, participants or contexts (Bowen, 2005; Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). Thomas and Magilvy (2011) advise that this can be achieved through a comprehensive description of the population being studied, including their demographics and geographical boundaries. This was endeavored by providing a comprehensive overview of the reality of migration in South Africa, providing specific context-related content regarding Olievenhoutbosch, and detailing the sample population, as well as the sampling and data collection processes.

3) Dependability

Dependability involves the ability of other researchers to follow the decisions made for this study, including the study's purpose, sample, data collection, analysis, interpretation, representation of the findings as well as how credibility was upheld (Bowen, 2005; Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). This was attempted in this study through a detailed outline of the research process, including my rationale for the decisions made. These were further brought to supervision to ensure that the necessary information was provided.

4) Confirmability

When the abovementioned factors have been established, confirmability is attained (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). As in the other factors, reflexivity should be visible in this process to ensure that others can trust the "conduct credibility of findings and applicability of the study" (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011, p. 154). In addition to the continual aspiration toward

deeper self-reflexivity throughout this process, as outlined above, semi-structured interviews were used to ensure that participants would play a bigger role in leading the direction of the interviews whilst still staying relevant to the research topic. Participants were asked to clarify certain phrases or slang words, placing emphasis on ensuring that their interpretations and meanings were clearly understood rather than my own.

Ethical Considerations

It is critical to follow ethical guidelines in all aspects related to the research process such as determining the purpose of the study, research methods, the researcher's personal motives, as well as the effects that the research may have on participants and the broader body of knowledge (du Plooy, 2010). Ponterotto (2010) argues that vigilant ethical practice is not only a function of the research design, but more importantly of "the researcher's own self-awareness, multicultural competence, and collaborative commitment" (p. 587). Ethics in research is organised in two branches, one which considers the participants' protection, and the other ensuring research standards that are professional, scientific and accountable (Pietilä et al., 2020).

First and foremost, the research proposal was sent prior to the commencement of the study to the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC Non-Medical) at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg. The submission to the ethics committee included a copy of the participant information sheet, the consent form to participate, the consent form for the interview to be audio recorded, as well as the interview schedule. The ethics review board evaluated the ways in which data was planned to be collected and analysed. It was approved on the 16th of May 2019, with ethics clearance number MACC/19/001 IH, after they ascertained that it would not pose a threat to the participants or the university (see ethical clearance certificate in **Appendix F**) and is valid until the 31st of December 2021.

- **Do no harm**

It was a significant priority to ensure that the research caused no harm to the participants (du Plooy, 2010). Given the prominence of xenophobic violence in South Africa and Olievenhoutbosch, and the fact that all participants were migrants, special attention had to be paid before the commencement of the study to ensure that their safety would not be compromised (Crush, 2001; Hiropoulos, 2017; Landau, 2009). The research procedure was therefore outlined in detail before the commencement of the study and clearance from the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC Non-Medical) was attained. The process of recruiting the sample population, as well as the interview process, had the potential to expose their foreign nationality and provoke xenophobic acts. In an attempt to eliminate this risk, a gatekeeper was used as he was able to lead me directly to people who may be interested in participating, thereby reducing the attention drawn by the wider population of Olievenhoutbosch. Snowball sampling further reduced this risk, as participants could refer their peers and contact me in private. The interviews were also conducted at a space outside of the community, thereby further reducing the possibility of participants being exposed.

The topic under investigation, and therefore the questions asked during the interview, had the potential to cause emotional distress as these participants may have gone through certain forms of discrimination or violence, and trauma, because they are immigrants. They may also have been reminded of their sense of longing and isolation from their families, thereby further inducing emotional pain. In preparation for the possibility that a participant may need to be referred for counseling, a psychologist who provides their services to nearby communities was contacted and gave permission that they could be referred to them for debriefing if needed. Participants were informed of this possibility and made aware that it would not incur a cost to them. Referrals to the SADAG Counselling department in Diepsloot was provided as another option.

- **Informed consent**

In ensuring informed consent, participants were provided with information regarding this project through an information leaflet, and consent forms, as well as a discussion with me regarding the study upon recruitment and before the interview commenced. Although the participants were potentially vulnerable to being inaccurately informed about the study, due to the possibility of language barriers, it was mitigated by ensuring that participants indicated their understanding of the consent given in the form (Kyngas et al., 2020). To ensure autonomous decision-making, opportunities for translation was offered to provide them with the possibility of reading the form in their own language, although this did not turn out to be necessary, and clarification was given when requested (Kyngas et al., 2020). Ponterotto (2010) highlights that informed consent can be difficult to obtain in qualitative research as the participant is not able to predict the details of what will be discussed during the interview. This was accommodated for by showing them the interview schedule during the discussion regarding informed consent. The participants were also informed that they had the right to refuse to answer any question asked and only provide information that they were comfortable with. The participants were further made aware of their right to withdraw their voluntary consent at any time prior to the submission of the research report, which they were reminded of once the interview had adjourned (du Plooy, 2010; Kyngas et al., 2020). To ensure fairness, every person who fit the sampling description and who wished to participate was given the opportunity to do so (Pietilä et al., 2020).

- **Confidentiality**

Unfortunately, anonymity could not be ensured as they were known by the gatekeeper, interviewed by me, and have signed a consent form. However, the participants' identities are kept confidential, and pseudonyms have been provided to ensure that their responses cannot be connected to their identities (du Plooy, 2010). Although the interviews were conducted at

a restaurant, special effort was made to ensure that each interview was conducted in a secluded area in order to ensure confidentiality. The participants' recordings only started once they had signed their consent forms, and participants were encouraged to refrain from using their names during the interview to further facilitate their confidentiality. The recordings were transcribed and where some did state their names, their pseudonyms were inserted instead.

- **Upholding ethical research standards**

In upholding ethical research standards various measures were implemented. Before the commencement of the study, the aims and procedures were in constant review and refinement through presentations and supervision. This served to ensure that the topic, sampling procedure, methods and data analysis was ethically appropriate. The integrity of this study is upheld through the transparent disclosure of all relevant steps and decisions that were taken in this study (Pietilä et al., 2020). These processes were further supervised by a psychologist who is experienced in research in the field of migration and family relationships (Marchetti-Mercer, 2009, 2012a, 2012b 2016, 2017). Measures were also taken to ensure that the study was conducted with rigor, as was discussed above as *benchmarks for qualitative rigour*.

Researcher Reflexivity

In its very nature, qualitative research, including its data collection and analytic process, is grounded in subjectivity (Morrow, 2005). Since this subjectivity stems from the researcher's life experiences or interactions with participants, and can be emotion-laden, is important to remain reflexive throughout the process to minimise the possibility for automatic assumptions and research bias (Morrow, 2005). Reflexivity thus involves an awareness of the self and of the relationship between the self and the research environment (Popoveniuc, 2014). It is valuable to the researcher in many ways, for instance, Finlay (2002) noted that it enables the researcher to ***1)*** continually gain insight into their positionality, perspective and

responses, and its effects on others and their interpersonal dynamics, ***2)*** reveal hidden biases or unconscious motivations in the approach of the researcher, and ***3)*** encourage the continual evaluation of the "research process, method and outcomes", among others (p. 225). Whilst keeping this in mind, it is important to acknowledge that reflexivity is not important purely to improve epistemological rigour, but should also practically highlight spaces that have the potential for transformation (Popoveniuc, 2014).

Luttrell (2000) shared the value of reflexivity in expanding the analytic field and noted that 'good enough' researchers "name the tensions, contradictions, and power imbalances that they encounter in their work, rather than attempting to eliminate them" (p. 499). They argue that reflexivity should not strive for consensus, but rather compatibility (Luttrell, 2000). Finlay (2002) stated that one can begin to manage the power imbalances between the participant and researcher by acknowledging the difference in social positions and the tensions that may arise from this. As the researcher, I endeavoured to remain reflexive in all aspects of this study, and actively tried to increase my awareness of the effects that I may have on the study. Although I endeavored to increase my awareness throughout this process, I also attempted to mitigate the shortcomings in my own awareness in various ways. A strategy to ensure reflexivity includes "consulting with a research team or peer debriefers who serve as a mirror, reflecting the investigator's responses to the research process" (Morrow, 2005, p. 254). This was implemented in this research study through frequent meetings with my research supervisor and critical discussions with my colleagues.

Throughout this process, I attempted to expand my awareness of the differences in class, education, race and experiences between myself and my participants, and the effects that this may have. I am an educated, white female who, as a researcher and student, is affiliated with an academic institution. These positionalities of power and privilege were disproportionate to the participants, and has the potential to disadvantage or reproduce

inequality (Muhammad et al., 2015). During the interviews I became increasingly aware of the barriers that our differences in class, race, and sometimes gender had created, as things that had seemed normal to me may have created discomfort to the participants. This was especially evident in choosing a restaurant as the interview venue, as it inadvertently highlighted the class differences, and by me paying the power imbalance was perpetuated. As such, a tension arose between the need to find a different venue and the reality that another safe and ethically approved venue was not available. Connected to this, it had been brought to my awareness, during some of the interviews, that associating with me as a white person brought with it an association of wealth, which could have detrimental effects on some participants who faced challenges with their landlords as they would then be expected to have the means to pay higher rental fees. Here, the importance of conducting the interview outside of the community, despite its challenges, became tangible as participants expressed the unlikeliness that they would be recognised at the interview venue.

As an outsider to the Olievenhoutbosch community, it became apparent that some potential participants may have had difficulty trusting me, and therefore attending the scheduled meetings (Morrow & Smith, 2000). The lack of trust may have contributed to the low turnout of participants for their interviews. This was also apparent at the beginning of a few of the interviews, as establishing rapport was often difficult with these participants and the openness of their sharing was limited. The nature of the information shared was also highly personal, which may have been difficult for some participants to share with someone they do not know and possibly cannot relate to. Conducting the interviews in a public space may have further reduced the participants' sense of comfort with narrating this personal informaton. The challenges with rapport may have affected the data collected, as some participants may have provided information that they believe to be socially desirable or withheld information they did not feel comfortable sharing. Some participants may have been

resistant to expressing their negative attitudes or experiences in fear that I, as a South African, may become offended. Our difference in class seems to have further affected the expectations the participants had regarding the research interview. Although it had been mentioned on numerous occasions that remuneration would not be offered for participation in this study, some participants covertly expressed an expectation that their favour would be returned by me in the future. This may have further affected the data yielded as they may have withheld or provided information that they believed would hinder or facilitate this possibility.

Whilst taking this into account, Morrow and Smith (2000) highlighted that the outsider perspective can be beneficial in some respect as the lack of shared assumptions may encourage the researcher to enquire about meanings or events that may go unnoticed or taken for granted. Throughout the data collection process, I attempted to maintain an attitude of curiosity for the participants unique understanding of the phenomena under investigation which enabled me to achieve a rich dataset. As an outsider, my distanced perspective could also have increased the sense of safety in participants to express their true thoughts and experiences as I and my reactions may not be associated with the Olievenhoutbosch community. It is thus possible that our differences may actually have contributed to the rich data yielded among those participants with whom rapport was developed easily. I acknowledge that my particular interest and curiosity in migrants experiences of xenophobia may have impacted the data yeilded, particularly with the first two interviews. Although I had paid attention to not bring this topic to the conversation unless the participants did so first, I became aware that my curiosity, biased assumptions, and increased questioning may have probed the participants to speak more on this matter than was necessary. After awareness of this was attained, I increased my attempts to let the participants lead the conversation on that matter, whilst trying to keep it within the scope of this study. Our differences in power and

positionality further brought with it an ethical responsibility on my part to ensure that the voices of the participants are more vocal than mine. This is done to ensure that this study is not a means to appropriate their knowledge and experiences, but rather to co-construct knowledge with them (Muhammad et al., 2015). Challenges to this in this study may have included the fact that English was not their primary language, and although they were proficient therein, some phrases and meanings may have been lost in translation. Special attention is therefore paid to use direct quotes from the participants to validate the analysis, and to confirm the meanings with them rather than making my own assumptions. Although reflexivity is crucial in qualitative research, attention was also paid to ensure that reflexivity did not cause attention to be moved from the research topic or enable the researcher's experiences to overshadow the participants' (Finlay, 2002).

Conclusion

This chapter outlined the methodological processes followed during this research project, including a description of the study's theoretical underpinning. The findings obtained from process outlined in this section will be explored and expanded upon in the following chapter.

Chapter 4: Findings

This section presents the findings obtained from the interview data for this study, and includes the analysis of this data as guided by Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis. Themes and subthemes relevant to the research topic were identified in this way and will be supported through the use of quotes from the interviews conducted with the participants of this study. This is done to increase the credibility and transparency of this study as it will show how the themes have emerged from the interviews (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011; Weiss, 1994). The main themes identified from the data collected were as follows: **1)** The Importance of Familial Obligations, **2)** Negative Experiences in South Africa, **3)** Lack of a Sense of Belonging in South Africa, **4)** Longing for Country of Origin, and **5)** Need to Maintain National Identity. These themes, along with their associated subthemes, will be discussed below.

1) The Importance of Familial Obligations

This theme broadly represents the responsibilities participants experienced with respect to the expectations related to their families in their countries of origin. The majority of participants noted the importance of being able to provide for their families financially whilst also providing and receiving emotional support. The challenges associated with these obligations were also highlighted along with the emotional burden this seemed to create for the participants. This will be discussed in the subthemes below.

1.1) Financial Obligations

1.1.1) Economic Motivation for Migration

The majority of participants described their country's economy, and the challenges this creates for the survival of their families, as the main motivating factor for migrating to South Africa. George described the economic challenges in Zimbabwe to be the main push

factor behind their move to South Africa: “It’s because of the economic situation in Zimbabwe. Things are not good.” Stanley described a similar reason for migrating to South Africa and further alluded to the hopes he had for migrating to South Africa: “The Malawian economy is different to South Africa…. That’s why I came to South Africa. To fetch for a better living.” This closely relates to Lina’s intentions: “I come here just to look for a job because you can see there that side economic is down.”

1.1.2) Sense of Financial Responsibility for Family Back Home

For many of these participants, these motivations were connected to their responsibilities to their families in their countries of origin. George described his responsibilities as the provider for his household:

> That’s why I have decided to move to South Africa so that maybe I can earn a better living for my kids, cause I have got about 3 kids and they need to go to school, they need to eat, you see, they need clothes, all those things.

Pamela shared similar responsibilities: “Like now, my father is dead, so I am the one who is taking care of my mother, my little brothers, my sister, and also my kids although they are staying with their father, yeah”.

1.1.3) Emotional Burden Associated with Responsibility to Provide

For many participants, the above reason for migrating seems to be accompanied by an element of pressure to provide for their families in their countries of origin, and an emotional burden when they are unable to meet these expectations. George alluded to the expectations created by his family to provide as a member of his community: “if the elders are saying ‘no, we need the money for this’ then as a kid, or as a child I have to provide, you see.” He further pointed to the consequences if he is unable to provide: “They will say ‘no, he doesn’t want to work with other people, he doesn’t want to help.’” The responsibility to provide for their

families seem to further create significant challenges when it is not possible. As the eldest in his family, Ronald expressed his challenges with being expected to provide for his entire family: “Sometimes you look like you don’t want to help, but you don’t have, but they don’t understand.” To Emma, it is difficult to tell her parents when she is unable to send provisions to them: “I can’t say, ah, I don’t have I will just give them hope cause month end I will make a plan.” For Pamela, the pressure to provide for her family comes through their frequent communication with her, expressing their physical needs, and the emotional challenges she experiences when she is unable to do so: “I can blame myself because I didn’t help them whilst they need money, you see... Sometimes you don’t have, then [they] want something, then I will [not] feel useful.”

1.1.4) Sacrificing Themselves for the Sake of the Family

The need to provide for their families in their country of origin often required grave sacrifices on the participants’ part. Aneni provided an example of requests made by her family, alluding to the pressure to provide, whilst also acknowledging the sacrifice it takes for her to meet these requests:

Right now there’s a problem of electricity [back home]. So, I have to starve myself again to buy a solar, to buy a battery, so that they will continue and not sit at home, because if they sit at home they will look at me. Me, I have nothing to help... So it’s difficult to me to help.

Pamela shared her challenges surviving in South Africa whilst also assisting the survival of her family:

> It’s a lot and you see like now there is no work, there is no money, so I have to say this little I have I have to share because here I am paying rent, electricity, food, clothes... And then there at home they have to eat also.

Often, the family back home seemed to be unaware of the extent of these sacrifices, leading to a sense of increased pressure on the participants to provide. George commented on this disconnection between his family's knowledge and his reality:

> But sometimes they don't know what is happening here in South Africa because they don't see what is happening in reality, you understand, but of course they will keep on saying; "Just try harder, try harder, try harder to work. It's gonna be fine".

Despite this increased sense of obligation, it seems as if most participants still tended to keep the truth of their circumstances from their families, whether this be challenges financially, emotionally or physically, so as to relieve them from the emotional burden it may create. Ronald provided an explanation for this, expressing his concern for their feelings: "No I can't tell them this because I can stress them." Victor, on the other hand, expressed his tendency to withhold information related to his health from them in order to maintain the sense of assurance in his ability to provide for them: "I know family is problem if maybe they depend on you they complain too much. And if they came to see you, when they go they say [to others]; 'No, I don't know if today he will be alive.'"

1.1.5) Sense of Fulfilment Arising from Providing for One's Family

Despite the difficulties experienced the prospects of providing for their families brought with it an element of fulfilment for some participants. Aneni described the sense of purpose that being able to provide for her family entails:

> You know why I find it good, whenever I hear that they are safe, they have food, they have paid rent, I am fine with that. Even me here I feel free… Because I know that they are eating, they have a place to sleep, so I will be fine with that.

George shared similar sentiments:

> I cannot come all the way from Zimbabwe just to come here and sit, or to come here and start stealing, no… Whatever I get as long as my family can… I can put food on the table for my family. It's better for me.

George further shared his thoughts on the support he receives from his family, conveying how they encourage him to pursue their common goal:

> They really support me cause they know if I move there to Zimbabwe there is no food on the table, so they keep on encouraging me that no, just keep on trying. Keep on working hard there, everything will be fine one day…

1.1.6) Family in Country of Origin Having to Provide Financial Support

However due to the lack of employment opportunities in South Africa, and the financial challenges associated therewith, there were a couple of instances where the families of the participants were required to provide financial support. In these cases, participants were not comfortable with this and created a self-driven sense of pressure to support themselves and their immediate families. This is true for Stanley, as he is motivated to provide for his family independently despite his parents offering to assist them: "I don't like to depend on my parents because its long time my father start caring about me, giving me food, from the time I was young…Now I have to stand on my own." Aneni shared similar sentiments about her sister wanting to support her financially: "You know, most of the time, when someone is just giving you every day and you, you don't give anything, you feel touched. And you, you feel like you are stressing people."

1.2) Relational Obligations

1.2.1) Migration Contributing to Relationship Challenges with Family

Some participants expressed the challenges they experience in their relationships with their families in their country of origin. Emma expressed how her migration and the way in

which she has migrated has affected her relationship with her father: “To me [moving to] South Africa just broke that relationship with my daddy… you know mum will be always mum, she forgives, but [with] my daddy [I] can see that she got somewhere somehow she got still that anger.” Aneni expressed the uncertainty that her husband’s migration created in her marriage: “You know mostly when our husbands are here, they get married.” Connected to this, Victor provided his observations on the effects of migration on families: “Other people, the foreigners, let’s say my countrymen. Like those who come from Malawi, some people they lose their families just because they are staying here.”

1.2.2) The Importance of Maintaining Family Attachments

In order to maintain their relationships with their family in their country of origin, participants expressed the importance of maintaining contact with them. Five participants expressed their wish for regular contact with their family, for example Ronald expressed how this affected his experience in South Africa: “What make me to not like to stay it’s far. To see my family. I like to see my family every day.” To George, this includes just being able to contact them: “if we had cash otherwise we would be talking to them almost on a daily basis.” Emma expressed how telephonic communication does not suffice for her, and that even her visitations are too short:

> It won’t be enough. Even when I go home… The first day we sleep in a… got forum downstairs, neh, we will sleep in dining hall so there to talk and talk and talk. And it can’t be enough until the following day cause they got a lot to tell and myself I have a lot to tell again…

To many participants, such as Lina, staying in contact seems to provide a means to connect and gain emotional support despite the long distance between her and her family

back home: “I am far and they are far so they have to know how I am doing here.” George expressed his intention and the importance of maintaining regular contact with his family:

> It makes the… relationship with our parents and with our kids very strong. Very, you see. Because the more you, you stay for a long period without talking to them… eish, it’s a terrible thing. The relationship won’t be that strong and that bond won’t be that strong. So it is very important every now and again to talk, every now and again to visit, just to maintain that relationship. Keep it intact.

Pamela shared similar reasons: “It helps a lot, because they won’t forget you… Sometimes you end up like your kids won’t recognise, like realise you are mom because you are not contacting with them. So you see, you have to contact with them.”

Staying in contact extended beyond providing emotional support, and also importantly enabled their material needs being communicated. Stanley expressed his reasons for maintaining contact, noting the importance of being aware of their material and emotional needs:

> Each and every weekend I have to take time to chat with them there in Malawi. They have to tell me about their problems there, about my children. I have to send something small to help my children in Malawi. Yeah. Always I am keeping in touch. I know everything about my family in Malawi.

As Stanley had alluded to, staying in contact also provides a means to touch base in terms of their family’s needs for provision. Similarly, Victor mentioned the importance in being available for his family: “If they call now ‘there is a problem here’, you can fetch money then you send the same time.”

1.2.3) ICTs as an Integral Component in Maintaining Contact

All participants expressed the usefulness of using Information Communication Technology (ICTs) in order to stay in contact with their families. As seen above, the reasons included the use of ICTs as a means to maintain emotional attachments and to request provisions from the participants. Ronald alluded to the convenience that modern technology provides:

> So, now what makes me easiest is like when… we are sending money it can quickly get in my country within minutes. It's different like long time back. Things are easier now. It's what is make me comfortable because of I send now she quickly reply "I receive it."

However, maintaining contact through ICTs does not come without significant challenges. This involves either the financial costs of being in contact, having a mobile device, or is related to connectivity issues back home. Aneni expressed her significant financial challenges with maintaining contact:

> It's like, my children, mostly I talk them once a month, because I can't afford to call them. For me to call my children I must buy airtime for R50 and that money I can't afford it and I don't have cash…

These challenges do seem to create an emotional burden on the participants and their families back home. This is evident in Lina's recollection of an incident where her phone had stopped working, and she was unable to inform her family:

> I was not on WhatsApp, my phone just… just… it was not working and I did not have money to buy another phone, so they was looking for me too much… so when [I later opened] WhatsApp [there were] too much messages [saying]: "Yoh, are you die? … Ah we thought… people were burned you already, they kill you already."

Despite these challenges, modern technology seems to have created more cost-effective avenues for participants to communicate with their families across the border. Stanley expressed the benefits of using mobile data to call his family as opposed to direct calls:

> In Malawi there is no challenges or difficulties. Everything is fine, as long as you have data… because direct call is expensive… its R5 a minute but if I have got R10, 200 megabytes, ah you can't finish it for an hour.

Lina expressed the financial burden that cross-border mobile calls hold, and the cost effectiveness of WhatsApp communication: "me I can't call them normal [mobile] call because it's very expensive. But through WhatsApp its easy. You can talk until you are tired." With it being more cost-efficient to use WhatsApp, participants such as Lina are able to communicate for longer or more frequently, thereby maintaining contact with their families and enabling them to know when provisions are needed.

2) Negative Experiences Connected to Living in South Africa

This theme broadly represents the experiences shared by most participants whilst residing in South Africa and specifically Olievenhoutbosch, that negatively affected their sense of safety and security. This theme came across quite predominantly to all participants, dominating their experiences.

2.1) Lack of a Sense of Safety

All participants expressed a sense of feeling unsafe in South Africa. Victor voiced how the crime in Olievenhoutbosch increases his tendency to physically isolate himself:

> [Olievenhoutbosch] is not so safe because most of the time you can hear other people they killed with the guns, yeah… so, stabbed with the knives… so…

> actually must go at, at home earlier, yeah, so must stay indoor most of the time.

Similarly, Pamela placed special emphasis on her concerns for safety during the evening:

> Yeah, you can't go out during the night. Either they will rob you, either they will kidnap you or they will do something bad to you, you see. So I can't say I am feeling at home in Olieven. You can't because you are always scared... Because one day they will start these fighting things and they will start burning things like what's going to happen? Tomorrow it will be you. So you can't say I'm feeling at home".

Stanley expressed his feelings related to the unpredictable nature of South Africa and the lack of feeling safe:

> South Africa is like a sea because a see sometimes can be fine, there is no waves or what, but if the waves comes the sea is dangerous. Yeah, if you are staying there in the location, that side is like the sea, if those people they start fighting you can't go to work, you have to hide in your room.

To Emma, the frequent crime is the main source of her emotional distress, elaborating on how this makes her long for home:

> Myself especially when it about to go to sunset and I am thinking of crying, "Eish, am I going to make my mom alive, when I am still alive? Eish, these gunshots. Am I going to meet my daddy when I am still alive? My kids, am I going to meet them?" Cause, crime makes me think of them every day.

George reflected on his wishes for a sense of safety, noting that all people share these desires:

> Everyone wants to live in an environment whereby, even if you want to do your business you are not afraid of anything. Even if you want to maybe you say you want to move you want to go somewhere else, you just comfortable you can walk any time you can do whatever you want to do anytime.

2.2) Experiences of Xenophobia

In addition to the crime in general, seven participants expressed that they felt targeted as foreign nationals due to xenophobia and that this affected their sense of belonging in South Africa. Aneni's comment expressed this clearly: "[In] Olieven, when it comes to xenophobia, you don't even feel free. If you feel that they, they cut a leg off someone there, and they burnt someone there, you don't feel comfortable. And they will be threatening you." George voiced his fears in relation to the punishment that people in Olievenhoutbosch receive after committing a crime: "Sometimes they just punish they beat and they leave but as long as it's a foreigner they kill… that is the thing, as long as it's a foreigner they kill…" Stanley expressed his aversion to the labels South Africans ascribe to him for being a foreign national and how this affects him emotionally:

> They are calling us the "foreigners." Yeah its really true we are foreigners, but it's not our name. I have got my name, my name is Stanley, but they can use the name of foreigner. "You are foreigner", there is another word 'makwerekwere', something like that makes me not to feel free.

Additionally, some participants complained about the stereotypes that local South Africans used to depict them. For example, Emma expressed that her values and moral code are not aligned to the stereotypes attached to the people of her country of origin:

> They will select us and say "Ah Zimbabwean, Zimbabwean"… we are not the same. We are not raised the same, cause to me I think stealing we are taught… Myself I wasn't raised with thief parents and my grandma taught us, taught me to ask.

George shared similar thoughts, reflecting on how his actions are not aligned with these stereotypes: "They've got the belief that only foreigners are dirty... They've got the belief that only foreigners are doing these crimes and whatsoever and so forth… I believe in working for myself, not stealing…" This constant stereotyping seemed to prove to be emotionally taxing to George, adding to the challenges of living in South Africa: "Eish, it's very difficult, but no choice. It's very difficult, to be honest it is very difficult." He further expressed the pain he feels for being apart from his family under such circumstances:

> It's very painful, because you know you spend almost the whole year here, you go there you visit them maybe for two, three weeks. When you coming back, ey, its very painful, you just feel like maybe, eish, I should just stay for good here [at home].

2.3) The Impact of Financial Difficulties

The majority of participants expressed the limitations that financial constraints place on their experiences in South Africa. Stanley noted how financial constraints affected his sense of belonging in South Africa:

> For us who are living here as… people from other countries, foreigners. We are not getting more money to make a home, we are just working to pay rent and other things. While if you are a rich guy it doesn't matter if you are Malawian you can make a home in South Africa.

Stanley also noted how the financial challenges are not experienced the same when he is at home: "Most of the times I am struggling. After something like a month-end you have to think about rentals worry about this and that… ah I'm not belonging to this side because the

way it is like this." Pamela expressed how these financial challenges increased her desire to go back home:

> It's easy for me to say I'll go home, I'll rather go home than to stay here, because… if I want to eat, I have to buy. If I want to bath, I have to buy. If I have to sleep, I have to buy.

To Aneni, as an undocumented migrant, the challenges extend to her sense of security from the police: "Even those police, if they take me outside there, like now, I don't have even R1… If I don't have R50 to give them they will take me to Lindela." Stanley later expressed the sense of comfort that financial freedom, and the ability to have a place in South Africa to call his own would create for him:

> If I can have a home in South Africa, I think I can feel free because I'll have the rights to do on my home. While in the place where I am staying I don't have the rights. There is no rights what I can do there it's just like always you are just following the rules of the owner of the house.

2.4) Feelings of Exploitation

Majority of participants expressed their challenges with being exploited by their South African landlords or employers in South Africa. Stanley noted how this affected his sense of belonging: "Sometimes the owners of the rooms are not behaving well, that can give me stress to separate I myself from that, ah I'm not belonging to this side because the way it is like this." Aneni elaborated on how her landlord's actions contribute to her feeling that she does not belong in South Africa:

> Even where I stay, my own landlord, when she sees me, she can come past here and she can see me sitting here [with you]. Then I arrive there, rent goes up... And she will tell electricity is finished, she will switch off… Or water is finished, even when you

> are carrying plastic bags, a small plastic bag with little food, she will follow behind me. So, you don't feel at home. Because if you don't hide [your groceries] they will think you have money and every month the rent will go up.

Victor shared his observations around the exploitation of foreign nationals by South Africans:

> Then… people now, especially the white people, they know most foreigner flocking in here. If I work for you… you set… how much you will give me. Not me I have said, you ask me how much can I pay you, because there are so many foreigners are in here. If you lost me today, you find another one after one hour, you see.

What also seemed to contribute to participants' negative experiences in South Africa was the sense that they were being treated unjustly/unfairly. Two participants, George and Victor, commented on dehumanising experiences and their wish to be treated as human. George observed how the value of human life in this country is similar to an animal's: "you know people are dying here, almost on a daily basis. People are being butchered like animals here. Have you ever seen a human being being burnt like, like, eish…?" He further stated his wish for this to end: "people should just unite. Irregardless of where you come from, we are all human beings, we are created by one God". Emma noted similar observations: "They stab people as if they stab some chickens, so it's scary". Victor shared similar sentiments, also alluding to how humans are dehumanised in this country: "sometimes I feel very bad about it because a human being doesn't slaughter like a chicken… Because those people will make orphans. They are bad…"

Stanley reflected on the sense of disempowerment he felt regarding his living circumstances: "the problem is you can't do something with your power. Our own power, you can't do it." He later also reflected on a sense of being devalued by the Olievenhoutbosch

community: “we are not useful to the people around the place where we are staying… so we don’t have any value…” Similarly, Aneni reflected on how foreign nationals are valued: “we are just like street kid. You know street kids? We are not even valued.” Some participants also experience challenges with accessing basic affordable healthcare, further increasing a feeling of injustice, as seen in Aneni’s comment: *“*when I get sick, I get sick inside the house. If you don’t have permit you don’t go to clinic, you go to a private doctor only, and I can’t afford to pay a private doctor.” Lina shared similar experiences: “the other day I went there hospital… I was sick that day so I went there, there is a clinic somewhere there. They say they can’t help you because you don’t have permit and you are a foreigner.”

2.5) Feelings of Vulnerability Due to Inadequate Documentation

Moreover, four participants explicitly mentioned the role that the lack of adequate documentation has on their sense of security in South Africa. Stanley noted how this placed many limitations on what he has access to in South Africa:

> I can’t express my identity there because I don’t have rights to do like that... It doesn’t matter you can have some complaints but there is no place where you can express your complaints, just because of you are in the country illegally.

He later mentioned how important the necessary documentation is to his sense of freedom in South Africa:

If you can have good papers, visas, something like that I think we can live free… that’s why this thing living in the foreign land without recommended papers it makes you to be… to be in captive not to be free. You are in captive... That’s why we are just… living in order just to get something at month end to help our families but for many things we are not safe and free and there is no value for us because of this.

Lina expressed how her lack of documentation has limited her ability to receive adequate medical assistance: “I was sick that day so I went there there is a clinic somewhere there. They say they can’t help you because you don’t have permit and you are a foreigner.” Aneni shared how the lack of documentation leads her to have a deep sense of fear for the police: “you don’t walk with a passport… you are not safe. Then when you are passing the police… they can stop you, they will take me. They will arrest me, and they will take me to Lindela.” Ronald shared his frustrations with not being able to find adequate employment due to this documentation: “I do they demanding a lot of different things, you see, that they know you don’t have... Even like foreigners ‘we want ID for getting this nice job’, you see, but they know that you can’t give that ID.” He later further expressed how it is not easy for foreign nationals such as himself to gain the appropriate documentation:

> And other people like that, they give us Asylums for the refugees but at the end when you go to that home affair they treat you very rough… They reject it. Too much asylums rejected so how can people survive? …when you are go there they treat you, they catch you and deport you to that country. Yeah. We have that people who come for renewal, take you arrest you at home affair. Deporting to your country, spending one month in Lindela, you see. That’s why I say this country, ey!

2.6) Lack of Social and Emotional Support in South Africa

Overall, most participants expressed experiencing a lack of social and emotional support in South Africa. Ronald noted this by mentioning how he constantly has to be on guard due to negative perceptions of foreign nationals: “So they [South Africans] are not happy. That’s why I say I will always, always on your marks **_laughs_** at any time, hey, supposed to be alert.” To Lina, the fear for her safety is what causes discomfort: “Like now I don’t feel comfortable… because of people beating what what can see even you see it how

it's going on now, yeah. Now I can say yeah, maybe they gonna come here start beating people*."* Stanley expressed why he associated South Africa with a lack of comfort: "the way we are staying is something like struggling, struggling, fighting, fighting."

As such, participants experienced a sense of being alienated and feeling lonely in South Africa. George commented on his beliefs regarding their being alienated from South African communities: "They've got the belief that only foreigners are doing these crimes and whatsoever and so forth, you understand, so I think that is the reason why they are not involving us." Pamela expressed her sense of loneliness in Olievenhoutbosch and contrasted this to her experiences with her family: "If you talk to someone [here in Olievenhout] they will laugh at you, but when you are talking to your family they won't laugh at you but they will come up with a solution to solve the problem." She further noted how the lack of support here supported this sense of loneliness:

> Because they are going to say; 'no we don't know you, but we were playing ball together, we were doing this together, but we don't know you', you see. So, you can't just say no I am related to those people, huh-uh, you are not. You come here alone you go back alone.

2.7) Ambivalent Feelings Towards South Africans

The abovementioned themes seemed to contribute to a sense of general distrust towards South African nationals. Pamela expressed her beliefs regarding this: "let's be friends but its finish here. We can laugh the whole day, but I don't trust you." Ronald shared these sentiments, expressing his reasons for not feeling comfortable in Olievenhoutbosch: "at any time the one who is next to you is the one who is going to kill you… So I'm not feeling welcome." Most participants seemed to express how this limited the possibility of forming friendships with local South Africans such as Lina: "No I don't trust anyone I just trust God

only… because the end you can trust a friend, neh, the end of the day… they can make you something bad to you." Whilst holding this sense of distrust, many participants also held ambivalent attitudes towards South African nationals. Aneni expressed this: "not all of them. Some, they are welcoming, but some they are hard. They are hard-hearted." As with most other participants, Victor shared Aneni's views: "While other people they are [bad], some of them they are honest. They are good, you see."

However, there was some sense of ambivalence as a few participants indicated a more positive experience, such as acts of support and assistance from the South African community. Emma recalled a time where her landlord provided support though an act of kindness:

> 5 to 6 months back my husband lost job we are five years where I am staying but the landlord just came to my room and [said], "You don't have to bother yourself with rent, I can see that you are not working so just try to stuff for food and buy food and the electricity for the rent just stop."

Pamela recalls instances where people supported her in her career: "sometimes them South Africans they support me, they buy my CDs, they support it." In one instance George noted his sense of feeling protected when reflecting on the neighbourhood watch in the community: "during the night, they move around patrolling in the night... So, it shows that there are these people they love us, and they want to protect us." Aneni's ambivalence was expressed as follows: "Not all of them… not all of them. Some, they are welcoming, but some they are hard. They are hard-hearted."

One participant in particular seemed to have had a more significantly positive experiences than the rest. To Emma, South Africa has become a home:

> As for now to me home is South Africa cause if I visit home I will spend two weeks and three weeks so it's not my home. My home is where I live mostly cause I will spend the whole year here in South Africa but when I go home its only two… sometimes less than two weeks.

This does not solely seem to be due to the time spent in South Africa but is further attributed to her feeling included in the community: "I belong in Olieven. In South Africa- myself I can say in South Africa because everywhere the South African people they are welcome. They welcome us, especially myself everywhere I go I get welcomed. They welcome us, you know?" She also had a sense of family: "the experiences we share, the troubles we are facing we share together, you see. So, they are like fam- more than like family".

Yet, despite some positive experiences, the overwhelming negative experiences seemed to translate to negative perceptions towards South Africans or this country in general. Victor shared this through narrating his observations and how this contradicts with his values: "sometimes I feel very bad about it because a human being doesn't slaughter like a chicken, you see… myself I cannot stand I can even call the police and show them. It's this one is doing nonsense." Emma's perceptions led her to a desire for her children to be raised in her country of origin:

> I don't want my kids to be schooling in South Africa. I want them back home cause even right now when they come even their minds if you buy car toy they don't want it 'I want a gun' so that thing grows in their mind…

George further noted his frustrations with South Africans and their work ethic: "What I've realised, if you check most of the South Africans they don't want to work... Everything

is done by the government so if they see people who are hardworking most of them they are very jealous of that."

3) Lack of a Sense of Belonging in South Africa

This theme reveals how the abovementioned factors negatively impacted upon the participants' sense of belonging in South Africa.

3.1) Lack of Safety Impacting a Sense of Belonging

The overall lack of safety described above seemed to have a considerable impact on the sense of belonging of most participants, for example, George explicitly stated: "I don't feel safe I don't even belong there. I don't feel that to be honest." Aneni expressed similar feelings: "I don't feel like I belong there, because I, I am not comfortable. I am not safe." The lack of physical safety in South Africa not only seemed to decrease their sense of belonging, as many participants mentioned how it also increased their sense of no longer wanting to live in this country. This is the case for George: "when these attacks starts or these shootings starts that's when I feel like maybe I should go back home. Cause you know to see people just dying like that or to be killed like that, eish, it's something else." Victor also noted this desire, and specifically mentioned how acts of xenophobia affected him: "They can say 'You kwerekwere', you see. But you are… you didn't do anything wrong to them. So, in so doing you feel, ah, it's not good. In fact, we feel to stay at home... Our own country." Aneni shared these views, further alluding to the belief that safety is not attainable in South Africa: "So for you to be safe, you just feel that if there was a bus today or if I have bus fare today I must go."

The lack of safety and belonging may also have led to a sense of resignation as expressed by Stanley:

> the way the people of the land who is staying with us sometimes it's painful the thing I am explaining that's why most of the times we are thinking to, we are thinking about our home country because the way we are staying is something like struggling, struggling, fighting, fighting.

George expressed his aversion to being in a country where he witnesses violent crimes and suggested how thinking about his home country reminds him of these hardships: "cause there are too many many things which are happening here in SA. Even if it's not every day, you know people are dying here, almost on a daily basis. People are being butchered like animals here." Referring to the many murders that he has witnessed, George later expressed how he perceives this: "It's terrible, terrible. Some of the things we experience here is terrible."

The lack of safety further seems to create a sense of concern in their families back home, as very frequently, participants noted that their families expressed this, encouraging them to return to regain some safety. This is evident in Victor's comment: "They, they are always saying 'come back home'… If they can hear people are fighting, they calling same time. Because the TVs are everywhere." Pamela shared similar experiences, further noting how her family then discounts their financial challenges for the sake of her safety:

> They call "Are you safe? Please don't go where they are doing violence. If it's not safe there can you please take a bus now and come back? We didn't even say you mustn't come back, even if you don't have money"

Aneni also noted this: "They can't help me with anything. What they can help me they just say 'come back home, if you have money. Even if you come empty handed, just come back home. We understand the situation.'" To Ronald it is slightly different, as his

family does not encourage him to return due to their dependence on him. However, their concern is evident in their congratulating him when returning to visit safely:

> When I'm back home, they will be happy saying: "eish congratulations we know that country". Eish, they hate always each and every day someone is being killed, someone is doing like this, something have been happened…. They hear lot of stories so when you are going back to there, they always prayed: "eish, let that person being survived in a good way."

3.2) The Impact of Financial Insecurity on Their Sense of Belonging

Most participants expressed how financial constraints also affect their sense of belonging in South Africa. For example, Stanley explained: "Most of the times I am struggling. After something like a month-end you have to think about rentals worry about this and that… ah I'm not belonging to this side because the way it is like this." He further expressed his beliefs on the significant impact financial freedom has on his sense of belonging in any country:

> If, for instance if you are a rich guy it is just the same to be in your country and to be here. You are going to be free for everything, yeah, but if you are poor, life will be… tough and you are going to face a lot of challenges.

George shared these views, suggesting that his experiences in South Africa would be different if he did have adequate finances: "But it's only that we don't have money to go and live maybe in the suburbs or so." Yet, as Ronald mentioned, this is not the reality for many people who immigrate to South Africa: "You can take long [to find a job]… because we are many people here… who is looking for a job, you see. So, those things is making a lot of things [challenging] in our lives." Despite it being so difficult, Pamela expressed the importance of work for her survival: "So you can't just say no I can't go to work I can't look

for work, you have to go out and find work for you to pay where you can sleep." Victor expressed how being continually concerned about survival can affect one's sense of belonging:

> The very important things that can make someone to belong that side, if you find something to help yourself. Like money, like the business you are doing if it moves smoothly. That can makes you to feel that ay, you belong somewhere. Because if you don't have money you think so many things in your head… you don't even sleep thinking about tomorrow, what am I going to eat? Where am I going to get money?

3.3) The Importance of Social Participation in a Sense of Belonging

This theme broadly represents the spaces in which respondents felt they needed to participate in in order to experience some sense of belonging. Only two participants felt included in the local South African communities. To Emma, this involves not only invitation to gatherings, but also to participate in the preparation thereof:

> They are South Africans, they will come to our home and say, "I am doing the party, I am inviting you and your tenants." Which means they take us as the family: "Hey, you guys, you don't have to learn our recipes, you have to teach us your recipes from back home."

Lina also brought the example of being invited to events as a space in which she is invited to participate: "we don't fight, we talk nice, you can eat together if there is a party, 'today there is a party here so you are welcome'. Join together to enjoy together and so on." Emma further noted how her participation in some meetings increases a sense of inclusion and comfort: "if they got this meeting and if my landlord is not around she can ask me to go around and I will have say as South African too... they make us feel like we are a part of them."

On the other hand, most participants reflected on their lack of participation in South African communities. This is often associated with a sense of exclusion, as evident in Victor's comment: "Meaning we foreigners, most of the time… actually they don't include ourselves." George shared similar experiences: "sometimes they don't involve us, you understand. When they are doing their thing they don't involve us so it's very difficult to us to force ourselves into them." Stanley highlighted that a sense of separation among foreign nationals and South African nationals reduced his ability to participate in South African communities: "the main thing is separation among the people. If you are not belonging to, to that community there is a separation. We don't have their own identity, that's why if we are doing things they have to separate us." To Pamela, on the other hand, the exclusion is induced by her aversion to being involved in these spaces: "They even, like why I am saying they won't [include me], I don't attend their meetings, I don't attend their anything. Anything, I don't. So, they won't even recognize me… The point they don't know me."

This lack of inclusion appears to have led participants to seek other spaces to get involved in. These were often their own diaporas or religious communities. Victor explained the function of these societies as follows:

> Let's say I come from Olieven, that means they all, the people from Olieven, we came together and make a society. If you came from Midrand, they come together and make a society. And uhm, on top of that, we don't allow one of us to be buried here when he has died. We are always doing the contributions and then we find a transport to take that person to home. To be, get rest at home.

As Victor stated, George mentioned that this involves participation through financial contribution: "If one of us maybe passed on we have got a group where we donate R100, R100 each just to help the family. That's the only group we have on there." Although Emma

does actively participate in other South African spaces, unlike most other participants, she also revealed an element of financial participation in a group of people who share her nationality:

> I have even forgot myself the group of people which I spend a lot of time, they are from Malawi. Those ladies from Malawi, you know? We do this like… every month we will pop our R200, R200, R200, R200 then we will share it December… I love those people from Malawi because they are very honest so that's the group I spend a lot of time with.

Lina expressed how her church community also plays a role in maintaining her national identity: "The church I'm attending is from home. It's from home, so we can meet there, we talk same language, you feel like you are home you are not even in South Africa. Yeah we help each other."

As with Lina, most participants further expressed the importance in religious participation in creating a space of belonging in South Africa. George expressed the important role that his church plays in his experience as a foreign national:

> Yeah, eish, like when its Saturday when I am going to church it's one of my big day. When it's Saturday I know I am talking to my God, my problems, eish… Yeah, that's one of the few places I feel comfortable.

Often, this is associated with the space not using their nationality as a criterion for exclusion, as expressed by Aneni: "when I am at church whether is South Africans, Malawians, Zimbabweans, we are one. We talk of one group." Victor shared the same experience: "in church there is no any difference. You come together, you play together, love each other. Yeah, as one family." As with some other participants, Lina noted that these spaces often accommodate for the language differences: "From other country than South

Africa they are coming [to my church], Congo, Rwanda, Burundi, yeah… We speak Swahili but if for example some visitor came we do translation."

These participants further noted that these religious spaces provide a sense of emotional comfort. Aneni shared that the shared beliefs proved this element of comfort: "when I am at church I am fine. When I am with my church mates we are fine whether they are South Africans we are fine. Because we talk of the same thing." Ronald noted that the shared experiences and increased perspective also provides him with consolation: "when I'm going there sometimes they will try to teach you how to know if you are in this way, to see you are not the only person who is on that situation." Victor also expressed that an element of freedom is involved in the creation of comfort: "because I have got the freedom of prayers, yeah, it's much better because we are there because of God. Yeah, so if you have got the chance to go for prayers it is fine."

4) Longing for Country of Origin

In light of the abovementioned negative experiences and the general lack of a sense of belonging in South Africa, participants seemed to long for their country of origin which they associated with positive experiences. There also seemed to be a strong desire to return.

4.1) Positive Associations with Country of Origin

4.1.1) Sense of Security

In contrast to South Africa being associated as an unsafe place, every participant associated their respective country of origin as a space that provides a sense of security and comfort. Ronald noted this to be the main factors behind his sense of belonging in his home country: "The most thing I'm saying is kept me to feel welcome in my country when I'm there, eh, first thing my relatives and I know the security." To Lina, this involves a sense of familiarity: "I feeling nice [when I think of home] because I enjoy peaceful, because I born

that side I use their, grow up there." Seven participants explicitly expressed that their family and emotional attachments were associated with a sense of home. Ronald shared these sentiments:

> Yes, home is the people, you understand. You can't talk… is home a building? It's not a home **laughs** home is the people. Yeah, so that you can say it is home. Yeah can't make a home where there is no people.

Pamela expressed this too, and further noted how this influenced her sense of belonging: "That I'm feeling like I belong in Zimbabwe is… everything is there. Everything is there. My family, my kids, my gran. Everything is there. Here, I'm here alone, I don't have any family here."

Three participants noted how their lifestyle at home was associated with a sense of security. Aneni equated this sense of security when being in a space she can call her own, despite its challenges: "When I am home I'm just free… because I am in my own place… And I enjoy that poverty which is in Zimbabwe, it's fine to me. Its fine to me than to be here." To Victor, the ability to have his own land and grow food in his country of origin increases this sense of comfort: "the living in our country… I said we make our own food, then the very important thing… we tame animals like cow… pigs." Similarly, Ronald noted how he doesn't need to pay money to live in the rural areas of his country of origin: "Yeah home is the best. Because I live at home without anything. I don't pay rent, you see. Me, I'm not living in town at home. I live in rural, you know."

Despite the fact that many of the participants were responsible for sending remittances back home, in two instances, participants also noted that they sometimes received financial support from their family members back home. To Stanley, this support is given in the form of financial assistance for his children when he is unable to do so: *"*Because I already telled

them that my situation is not fine… I am not working better, so… my father is providing school funds, school fees for my children, their food." Aneni shared similar experiences as Stanley: "So my young sister took my children... If I don't have money I don't mind because she is my mother's child. She can take care of my children without complaining." She further shared that this support involves provision when she is residing in Zimbabwe: "Yeah, 100%, because me and my family, we are united… If someone doesn't have help… They will try to hide your poverty."

4.1.2) Associated Home with a Sense of Rootedness

To six of the participants, home was also associated with a sense of rootedness. To Lina, this meant that she and her family had started and lived their lives in Tanzania: "It's because I born there. Even my mother, my father, my grandmother he born that side… Yes, I've grown up there." George expressed the personal importance of this sense of rootedness and belonging: "That's where I come from, that's where I belong, so it means everything to me." Victor shared these views, and further expressed the security that this rootedness provided to him and the future generations of his family: "You see in Malawi, I've got my own ground, my own land for me and my family. The land it was belong to our ancestors. So, if I am died, then my children take over."

4.1.3) Citizenship

Three participants explicitly stated that this sense of security with their country of origin was also associated with their citizenship. To Stanley, this involves a sense of inclusion and participation with his family and in the country that is secure with his documentation: "My family is playing a big role there, because everything that is happening there, they also count me as I'm in Malawi… Yeah, I registered my ID card there, and my parents collect the ID and put it safe." Lina noted how this sense of security is associated with

her presence not being questioned: “Home you enjoy it because you are home you can go wherever and no one is gonna act something… like here ‘where is your paper? Where is your passport?’ It’s different.” Aneni noted how this came with a greater sense of freedom: “You don’t feel at home than when you are in your home country, you do whatever you want to do. I go wherever I want to go. I sell wherever I want to sell.”

4.1.4) Language

Some participants expressed that their challenges with South African languages seemed to impact further on their sense of belonging. Whether it involves challenges due to their inability to speak these languages or their nationality being exposed. George noted that he is unable to hide his status as a foreign national due to his challenges with speaking a similar language to South Africans in Olievenhoutbosch:

> You know sometimes its rather better for people to know the truth than to lie… I cannot tell people I am a South African because I don’t know the language of this country. I just maybe one or two words, so one way or the other they will realise that no this one is not a South African because of my language.

Two participants expressed how being able to speak a South African language created an element of security. Although Pamela noted that she openly speaks her own language, she explained how being able to speak in a South African language can increase her ability to blend into the community and hide from the law:

> Sometimes you are going to find police they are going to say: ‘Dumelang’, wena you don’t know anything. Like now I don’t have any papers I’m just: ‘no God help me’… Maybe they can find me talking language of here in South Africa they won’t catch me.

Victor alluded to this when reflecting on his experiences when he first moved to South Africa, expressing how he actively learnt the languages in order to increase his sense of emotional security: “because I was new… I was looking each and every face was dangerous to me, you see… At first, uh, my experience was… how can I learn the languages.”

4.2) Longing to Return to Country of Origin

Following the negative experiences in South Africa as well as a general sense of not belonging, every participant expressed a sense of longing for their country of origin. This desire to return seems to be quite laden with emotions, as expressed by George:

> Eish…. **long pause** what can I say… If I speak of home… eh… I just feel like, just feel like maybe I should go back there. That’s how I feel, when I talk of home I just feel like going back to Zimbabwe. That’s how I feel…

In an emotional tone, Aneni expressed her resignation for residing in South Africa and how it is preventing her from being with her family:

> So, it’s difficult for me, because when I am here… inside my hut, truly speaking I don’t want to be in South Africa. I just want to be with my children because they need my care, motherly care, but they can’t get it, you see. So, I’m being forced to be here because of poverty **starts crying**.

A deep sense of longing is further evident in Aneni’s comment when speaking about returning to her country of origin: “I feel… when I just talk at home I just miss home. Like right now, my mind is not settled, I am not here.” Pamela expressed this too: “If I’m here, my mind is in Zimbabwe. Like always I can dream playing with my kids, playing with my kids, doing everything... I miss them very very very much.” Victor also express how his sense of longing affected him: “Yeah you see if you miss something… that day don’t sleep… You

feel something. Like the other time in 20, 2004, ahm… I was even get sick because I was thinking too much of my family."

The participants further expressed how they value the emotional support they receive from their families, and that this is a factor that they long for. Emma noted how she longs for the support she can only receive from her mother back home: "You know, even to comfort, I never been comforted with someone as my mom do. That comfort of a mother, you know **laughs** so I will never… I will think of her every day…" Aneni shared that she can only receive the emotional support she needs from her family in Zimbabwe:

> When I am in Zimbabwe I am with my family and I am fine with them. If I have a problem this one can give me a hand, this one can give me a hand, but right now I am here. I am in a foreign country. No one can help me, no one can help me.

Pamela also shared these views:

> I feel at home while I'm in Zimbabwe because I don't have to stress myself. I [don't] have to call my mom, I am with her. I [don't] have to call my kids, I am with them. Whatever the challenge I have, if I am with my mom or my kids I can pass that challenge.

4.3) Intending to Return to Country of Origin

As many other participants, Lina expressed her intent to return home permanently: "I know I will go there one day and stay forever." This intent is often on the condition that they will either have the finances or employment in their country of origin. This is evident in Ronald's comment: "That's why I'm always thinking no, if our home is good I want to back. Because to be good at home is to see the job. If there is no job that also fine." Pamela shared similar sentiments:

> Like now I don't have money, there at home we don't have money for us to take care of our family. Otherwise if it's not like that I will tell you like now today I am going home to stay with my family. It's hard for me to stay here without my family. You see. Without my kids.

Most participants seem to express a desire for the circumstances to be different in their country of origin, as evident in George's comment: "But if our situation there [in Zimbabwe] was OK I don't think I would be here in SA, I don't think so. It's just simply because of the situation…"

In many instances participants' families were also encouraging them to return. Often this was associated with their families' back home being concerned for their wellbeing whilst in South Africa. To Stanley, his parents are encouraging him to return as he has not succeeded in South Africa: "And also my father is talking about I have to go back because I am not getting something that can help me in South Africa." Lina explained how her mother's concern involves both her safety and financial position:

> Sometime I call, my mom say 'Ah, if you get money just come back home, do something better', because there now are thinking they can see not doing well, OK, the beating people, that thing is not good. Even he- even here she is worried. She is too worried about that.

4.4) Sense of Feeling Trapped in South Africa

Despite the sense of longing and intention to return, three participants expressed a sense of feeling trapped in South Africa whilst two of these participants also noted a sense of hopelessness about their situation. This is seen in Pamela's desire to return home, yet she is stuck here because of challenges with funding these hopes: "Like now I am planning to go this month end. If I win a lotto **laughs** yeah I will go this month end if I get money I will

go." Aneni noted how the economic situation in her country of origin is preventing her from returning home: "It's difficult there [in Zimbabwe] I can't say I belong to Zimbabwe because I just wish, it's just a wish. It's just a wish, but I can't afford to move." Yet, at the same time she expressed her hopelessness with improving her circumstances in Olievenhoutbosch: "Yeah if it is in Olieven, if it comes to poverty its poverty. There is no other way out." George noted how his feeling trapped in this country impacts his response to violent or xenophobic acts: "We have got nowhere to run so we just keep on. If they destroy, we build over we start again." Yet again, similarly to Aneni, George noted how the economic situation in his country of origin contributes to this sense of feeling trapped: "because of the situation back home there I've got no other option. That's why I am here in South Africa. I have got no other option."

5) Need to Maintain National or Cultural Identity

This theme encompasses the pride participants expressed in their national identity, as opposed to a sense of loss or limitation of certain aspects of their identity in South Africa. The theme further shows the attempts participants make at forming or maintaining attachments to groups with whom they share some similarities in their identity. The challenges with language barriers as an identity marker are also reflected under this theme.

5.1) Pride in Their National Identity

Participants expressed the national pride they had for their country of origin. For example, Emma expressed her sense of pride through a desire to rather reveal her identity: "I am proud of being a Shona and I am not going to hide it… I want the crowd to know that ah, this one she is a Shona." This sense of pride is also evident in George's comment: "regardless of the economic situation… I belong to Zimbabwe, I am a Zimbabwean and I am proud to be

a Zimbabwean… that will never change." Pamela shared similar views: "Yeah, so you see I don't belong here. Nuh uh, I belong in Zimbabwe. I am 100% Zimbabwean."

Because of the strong sense of pride linked to their national identity a number of participants reported experiencing a loss of being able to express thier identity in South Africa. Stanley revealed that being an undocumented foreign national limited the expression of his identity: "I can't express my identity there because I don't have rights to do like that." Aneni shared similar experiences, revealing that, although she is free to express her identity at her church, she is unable to do so in Olievenhoutbosch: "I am very free [at church], but in the location I can't. I can't." To Victor, the loss of identity with him and a family member in South Africa is associated with gaining citizenship or employment in South Africa and living here for a long period of time: "He got citizenship because he came here before independence of South Africa. So, they had those people, they had IDs. And he is working in the government, you see. So, we even forget that we are Malawian." It seemed that foreign nationals often felt the need to change their identities in South Africa, whilst Pamela expressed her aversion to doing so herself, specifically connecting this to her name:

> And too much guys here are not using their names, they are using the fake names. The foreigners, fake names. I can tell, my name won't change. Home, here, here, my name won't change. Yeah, my name won't change, I don't want, I don't change my name. It's Pamela, it's Pamela, yeah.

5.2) Need to Connect with Others who Share their Cultural Identity

Following their experienced restrictions in being able to express their identities, some participants found it useful and comforting to attach themselves to groups or communities in South Africa in which they had shared identities. Emma expressed how the similarities

between the culture and practices in some communities in Limpopo are similar to hers, and how this is associated with her sense of belonging:

> In Limpopo I feel like home mostly cause their culture is like our culture so is where mostly like… even their cooking is like mostly like back home you see they put peanut butter in vegetables you see so here in Gauteng you can't find it so mostly in Limpopo Venda I find that its home. We will travel a lot go and fetch water so it reminds me back home.

Lina expressed that she finds comfort in the similarities between her culture and that of people from Malawi, and often finds more comfort in seeking support through advice from them:

> the one I am staying with I can say they are good because we sharing many things… We can share [advice] about this, this, do this, maybe try this, try this. Yeah, I can say maybe more Malawi than Tanzania, most of them the culture the same because we are near. It's like South Africa and Zimbabwe, so Tanzania and Malawi are the same.

Ronald noted that his friendships in South Africa are often associated with shared nationality: "And what we are making friends is because others because we are coming of the same area." Stanley expressed similar sentiments, noting how he maintains emotional attachments with fellow citizens of Malawi: "Yes of course the main reason why I am friend of these people, these people is my friends from Malawi… so here in South Africa we are just continuing our relationship from the place where we are coming from."

In addition to finding communities to become involved in in South Africa, three participants reflected on their participation in their communities in their countries of origin. Although Pamela avoids participation in South Africa, she actively participates in various spaces in her country of origin: "Political parties, yeah. I attend them. Then the home groups,

I attend them… Ai, at home we are even at the netball, there I can do it. **laughs** you see, so yeah. The community meetings I attend." George reflected on the challenges between these obligations to participate and its conflict with his religion, stating that his participation involves financial contributions:

> There are a lot of some of rituals everything, I always participate in those things when I am back at home, that's how I maintain everything, yeah… but the way we participate we just contribute the money, but we don't participate as human being. We just provide maybe if they say they want money or maybe they want a goat or so, I give them… cause in our family we are Christians we go to church. Like myself, I don't believe in rituals, but if they say they need something I just provide. But I don't participate to be honest.

Conclusion

This section highlighted the main themes that emerged from the interviews with the participants. Broadly, these themes revealed their obligations to their families in their country of origin, its influence on their decision to migrate and their migratory experiences. The themes also encompass the experiences participants face in South Africa and how this relates, according to their accounts, to their sense of belonging. Furthermore, the findings showed how these experiences and obligations impacted their desire to return to their country of origin as well as the attempts made at maintaining their national identities. The following chapter will position these findings in the broader body of literature surrounding the research topic and relate it to the theoretical framework.

Chapter 5: Discussion

The findings of this study yielded important information in relation to the research questions posed at the beginning of this project. While there are some, albeit limited, studies on the experiences of belonging among working class African people who have migrated to South Africa, very few studies explore this in light of family relationships (Landau & Freemantle, 2010; Rutherford, 2008). It has further been argued that psychological research on transnational migration is limited, and greatly needed to contribute to the understanding of transnational family relationships and belonging (Palmary, 2018). This research study endeavored to contribute to this field by aiming to explore the experiences of belonging among African immigrants residing in the Olievenhoutbosch community, and the role that their families in their country of origin play therein.

The following questions were asked at the beginning of the project

1. How do immigrants experience a sense of belonging in Olievenhoutbosch?
2. How do immigrants in Olievenhoutbosch maintain family relationships?
3. What role, if any, do family relationships play in a sense of belonging among immigrants in Olievenhoutbosch?

Generally, the analysis of the data reveals that the participants' reason for migrating involved economic challenges in their countries of origin, and the associated financial obligations to their families who still reside there. Although migration may bring benefits and challenges, the participants' most significant challenges were associated with their negative experiences in their host community, Olievenhoutbosch. These negative experiences seem to create a general sense of non-belonging to this community as they appear to experience a sense of exclusion from the community. Due to this, they seem to maintain or form relational ties with the only spaces that welcomes them, which involves people with similar cultural or

national identities, religious spaces, or with their families in their country of origin. As such, the results do point to some spaces of belonging within the Olievenhoutbosch community. However, considering the excessive general sense of feeling excluded, the results strongly highlight a deep-rooted sense of longing for their families and their countries of origin, as these are the spaces where they do feel a sense of ontological security and belonging. This sense of longing seems to play a role in the motivation to maintain contact with them through Information Communication Technologies (ICTs). The findings reveal that by maintaining contact and sending remittances, their sense of belonging to their families is maintained. However, these obligations do not come without significant emotional challenges for the migrants, including a sense of pressure from their families who are often unaware of the financial difficulties the migrants experience in South Africa.

Furthermore, the results reveal that, although their families may not have played a direct role in their sense of belonging in Olievenhoutbosch, there were factors that influenced their sense of not belonging. More specifically, the results show that, firstly, their motivation to migrate is not to build a community or home in South Africa, but rather to support the homes they already have. Secondly, their challenging experiences along with their desire to maintain their cultural and national identities seem to be factors negatively influencing their sense of belonging in Olievenhoutbosch. And lastly, their sense of longing for their familial spaces of ontological security in the midst of these challenging migratory experiences, along with their families' encouragements for them to return, seem to be factors further impacting upon their sense of belonging. Yet despite this sense of non-belonging and their desires to return to what they still consider their home countries, migrants seem stuck in South Africa either due to an inability to afford the costs of returning, or because of the very reasons they came - their families' financial survival.

The next part of this discussion will use the literature surrounding migration and belonging discussed earlier and Falicov's (1995) Multidimensional Ecosystemic Comparative Approach (MECA) to highlight the relational, community and socio-cultural spheres in the data analysed. In this process, the role that family relationships play in migrants' sense of belonging will be highlighted.

The Cultural-Sociopolitical Context

The literature on migration has highlighted that the large influx of migrants to South Africa is mostly associated with economic pursuits and political refuge (Gordon, 2015; Landau, 2005b; Mosselson, 2010). The results of this study strongly point to ***economic motivations for migrating***. The participants' experiences reflect the literature, particularly that of Landau (2005b), which attributes the economic instability in South Africa's neighboring countries to be the main reason behind non-nationals' motivations to move to the inner cities of South Africa: "It's because of the economic situation in Zimbabwe. Things are not good." (George). In agreement to writers such as Mosselson (2010), the adverse economic circumstances in their countries of origin are the most prominent push factors for these participants, while the hopes to have their financial means met in South Africa appears to be the most dominant pull factor: "The Malawian economy is different to South Africa…. That's why I came to South Africa. To fetch for a better living" (Stanley). As such, participants sought opportunities to provide for their families who remained in their countries of origin: "That's why I have decided to move to South Africa so that maybe I can earn a better living for my kids" (George). These findings seems to resonate with Falicov (2005) who notes that "poor immigrants separate from their families, lured by the promise of an eventual better economic future for all" (p. 401).

However, the increased competition for limited resources, along with the large number of migrants who continually move to the urban cities of South Africa, is said to

create conflict between black South Africans who are trying to claim their space in post-apartheid South Africa, and migrants entering these spaces hoping for safety and better livelihoods (Landau, 2005b). This conflict is evident in this study and greatly contributes to the negative experiences reported. Bringing the perspectives of migrants into account, the results significantly point to ***negative experiences in South Africa*** with a disproportionately low number of positive experiences. Despite having migrated with hopes for a better life for themselves or their families, the results show that this did not come into fruition. Falicov (2016) describe migration as often incorporating a lifelong sense of ambiguous loss, as there may be an imbalance of the gains and losses associated with their experiences. These results highlight Falicov's (2016) belief that migration and its associated transitions can be "replete with loss and disarray", as these migrants experienced the reality of isolation, vulnerability and distress on the socio-political, community and relational levels as described in the first two parameters of her MECA framework (p. 223). The results reveal that the participants are exposed to vulnerabilities in terms of their safety, financial constraints and documentation whilst also reporting a sense of isolation from the host community. As such, despite believing that South Africa is a space where safety and economic opportunities could be attained, migrants are met with the reality of a country filled with homelessness, crime, unemployment, conflict and exclusions (Landau, 2006; Mosselson, 2010).

In fact, whilst taking the *ecological context* into consideration, the most predominant experience reported in this study was the significant ***lack of a sense of safety*** in South Africa, and more specifically the Olievenhoutbosch community. The findings point to a lifestyle associated with a constant sense of fear: "So I can't say I am feeling at home in Olieven. You can't because you are always scared..." (Pamela). This was often related to the crime and riots in the Olievenhoutbosch community of which many incorporated xenophobic violence (Brkic, 2010; du Plooy et al., 2006; Hiropoulos, 2017; IOM, 2009; Moatshe, 2018; Tlhabye,

2017). This lack of a sense of safety seems to have a considerable influence on the lack of a sense of belonging to South Africa. In fact, the results indicate that participants associated a sense of not belonging to feeling unsafe: “I don’t feel safe I don’t even belong there. I don’t feel that to be honest” (George). In agreement with these findings, the importance of a sense of safety in developing a sense of belonging, whether physically or emotionally, is highlighted on numerous occasions in the literature (Antonsich, 2010; Boccagni, 2020; Kinnvall, 2004; McMillan, 1996; Ndlovu, 2010). McMillan’s (1996) theory on a sense of community further stipulates that persons’ attraction to a community is dependent on whether they experience a sense of safety and emotional relation to it.

This lack of a sense of safety includes witnessing or ***experiencing xenophobic acts***: “[In] Olieven, when it comes to xenophobia, you don’t even feel free... And they will be threatening you” (Aneni). The vast amount of literature and news reports clearly highlights the xenophobic realities of South Africa (Crush, 2001; Gordon, 2015; Hiropoulos, 2017; Klotz, 2016; Mosselson, 2010; Palmary, 2002; Singh, 2019). The findings of this study further reveal the exclusionary practices and lack of freedom that migrants in Olievenhoutbosch are exposed to due to these xenophobic sentiments “they are calling us the ‘foreigners’. Yeah its really true we are foreigners, but it’s not our name… ‘You are foreigner’, there is another word ‘makwerekwere’, something like that makes me not to feel free*”* (Stanley). Evidently, these results concur with Landau (2006) who acknowledge that nationality has become the focal point in conflict and exclusions.

More specifically, the findings indicate that migrants are excluded from the Olievenhoutbosch community by virtue of their nationality and the attached stereotypes. Drawing on Yuval-Davis’s (2006) *ethical and political values*, these findings highlight how a foreign nationality in South Africa is associated with certain attitudes and beliefs towards migrants, which determines whether they are allowed to belong or not. These ascribed

stereotypes are, however, not in alignment with their own values and moral codes: “They’ve got the belief that only foreigners are dirty… They’ve got the belief that only foreigners are doing these crimes and whatsoever and so forth… I believe in working for myself, not stealing*”* (George). In line with Yuval-Davis's (2006) conceptualisation on belonging, this demonstrates how these exclusionary patterns are foregrounded by the sociohistorical context of South Africa, as these attachments of ‘otherness’ directed to African migrants have been influenced by colonialism and those in power (Gordon, 2015; Landau, 2010). Furthermore, Mosselson (2010) asserts that migrants, whether documented or not, are vulnerable to being ***exploited*** and abused by the general population, which is also a dominant theme in the findings of this study. The results indicate that migrants’ status as ‘foreigner’ rendered them vulnerable to exploitative practices by landlords and employers. An example is seen in the following extract, which shows how an indication of material goods or perceived wealth leads to exploitative practices by landlords: “So you don’t feel at home. Because if you don’t hide [your groceries] they will think you have money and every month the rent will go up” (Aneni). Experiencing a sense of ‘home’ involves finding and creating a space in which social or material security and a sense of control is fostered (Boccagni, 2017). Yet, the inability to create such spaces due to these exploitative practices may, in part, be associated with a lack of a sense of belonging.

It transpired that most of the participants were ***undocumented migrants***, further impacting their sense of security and increasing their vulnerability to being exploited or not having their basic rights met. Mosselson (2010) elucidates this as a factor that leaves migrants especially vulnerable to the exploitation of others, as seen in the excerpt above, and the inability to challenge these acts legally: “It doesn’t matter you can have some complaints but there is no place where you can express your complaints, just because of you are in the country illegally” (Stanley). In fact, connected to the findings, Mosselson (2010) asserts that

illegal immigrants are excluded from practically every right, including access to medical care and protection by the police (Alfaro-Velcamp, 2017; Gordon, 2016; Landau & Freemantle, 2010; Mathope, 2017). The literature additionally highlights the exploitation and extortion of migrants from the Department of Home Affairs when applying for documentation, and the fear of police harassment (Gordon, 2015; Landau, 2005a; Mosselson, 2010). This was found to be a reality in this study: “We have that people who come for renewal, take you arrest you at home affair. Deporting to your country, spending one month in Lindela” (Ronald).

The exclusionary and exploitative patterns based on nationality highlighted in these findings extend from the social to the political, connecting to Yuval-Davis's (2006) notion on the *politics of belonging*. By virtue of their nationality and documentation, migrants are excluded from belonging in the economic, social and universal spaces that the ‘in’ group can enjoy (Antonsich, 2010). Since documentation acts as a symbol of being included in the national identity, those who do not carry it are excluded (Gilmartin, 2008). The abovementioned results show this to be the case despite South Africa’s liberal constitution that is meant to protect the rights and freedoms of “everyone” and other efforts to rid the country of xenophobia (Gordon, 2015; South African Constitution, 2021, p. 7). The literature is not ignorant to this, as scholars have highlighted the exclusionary patterns that these migrants are subject to (Gordon, 2015, 2016, 2017a; Landau, 2010; Landau & Freemantle, 2010; Mosselson, 2010). Literature on belonging outlines that the intersection of people’s social positionalities in a sociohistorical context has implications in terms of who is included or excluded (Yuval-Davis, 2006). In this case, black working-class African migrants in post-apartheid South Africa appear to be excluded from belonging as it is believed that they place additional strain on the already limited resources needed by previously excluded black working-class South Africans (Landau, 2005b, 2006; Mosselson, 2010). This study therefore corroborates with the literature which describes that the South African state has deviated

from its legislation by disregarding the rights of foreign nationals whilst it struggles to ensure the rights of its citizens (Landau, 2005b).

With virtually no means to become documented, legally employed, seek justice and gain adequate medical assistance, a strong sense of ***feeling exploited*** leading to a sense disempowerment and dehumanisation is experienced: "the problem is you can't do something with your power. Our own power, you can't do it" (Stanley). Kinnvall (2004) underlines the sense of powerlessness associated with migration, and further highlight the feelings of homelessness and acute anxiety that migrants experience related to their new circumstances. The results indicate a constant sense of fear, lack of freedom, and other psychological challenges related to inadequate documentation and the prospect of being deported: "They will arrest me, and they will take me to Lindela" (Aneni). These migrants seem to be faced with what Falicov (2016) calls a 'painful ambiguity' as they have escaped adverse circumstances only to be faced with an uncertain fate in their country of origin. They are left with feelings of vulnerability and no prospects of alleviating or finding relief from this anxiety: "That's why I say I will always, always on your marks **laughs** at any time, *hey*, supposed to be alert" (Ronald). It is thus evident that through these experiences, migrants are without the sense of security, dependability, and control in the social and physical spheres of Olievenhoutbosch and South Africa in general, thus rendering them without what Giddens (1984) termed 'ontological security'.

In contrast to these exclusions in South Africa based on their documentation, the results showcased *the* ***sense of security*** that their ***citizenship to their home countries*** provided, speaking further to *the politics of belonging* (Yuval-Davis, 2006). These findings indicated that documentation brought with it an element of unquestioned inclusion and sense of freedom: "Home you enjoy it because you are home you can go wherever and no one is gonna act something… like here 'where is your paper? Where is your passport?' It's

different" (Lina). Compared to the discussion above, these results indicate the opposite when in their countries of origin. It thus substantiates the literature that outlined the symbolic inclusion that citizenship provides into a national identity (Gilmartin, 2008). The findings thus confirm the literature which stipulates that having citizenship acts as a public, formal and imagined symbol that they belong to their nation (Antonsich, 2010; Yuval-Davis, 2006).

Language is also shown to be an important component in migrants' identity and sense of belonging. Not being able to speak South African languages acts as a means to identify their status as 'foreign', as descried by George:

> I cannot tell people I am a South African because I don't know the language of this country. I just maybe one or two words, so one way or the other they will realise that no this one is not a South African because of my language.

The literature also highlights the importance of speaking the language of the host society in developing a sense of belonging (Antonsich, 2010; Hernandez, 2009). However, the results of this study suggest that speaking the language of the host society was employed as a means to survive rather than to foster belonging. Speaking a South African language is deemed important by some, such as Pamela, as it brings with it an element of security:

> Sometimes you are going to find police they are going to say 'Dumelang', wena you don't know anything. Like now I don't have any papers I'm just 'no God help me'… Maybe they can find me talking language of here in South Africa they won't catch me.

Being able to speak a local language further seems to be an important factor in creating a sense of ease with the adjustment process: "because I was new… I was looking each and every face was dangerous to me, you see… At first, uh, my experience was… how can I learn the languages" (Victor). These experiences highlight how speaking the language

of the host society can not only reduce their challenges, but also bring with it an element of emotional security (Antonsich, 2010; Hernandez, 2009). However, the minority of participants can speak languages that are acceptable to the South African community.

In addition to these experiences of exclusions, participants are also met with the additional challenges with ***financial constraints in South Africa***, despite the hopes of financial gain being a reason for migration. Stanley highlighted how this seems to increase the sense of loss in light of the abovementioned constraints as he is unable to create spaces of belonging: "Most of the times I am struggling. After something like a month-end you have to think about rentals worry about this and that… ah I'm not belonging to this side because the way it is like this." Although the findings of this study did not indicate attempts at recreating their homes in their host countries, as Boccagni's (2014) study suggests, the above quote does allude to a desire to create a home in the host society. The findings suggest that possible reasons for this may be associated with the financial difficulties that were highlighted earlier. Njwambe et al. (2019) acknowledges the importance of financial resources in creating a stable and safe physical space and expresses that this involves a desire to invest in the future of the place. The findings corroborate this: "the very important things that can make someone to belong that side, if you find something to help yourself. Like money, like the business you are doing if it moves smoothly" (Victor). However, the findings of this study indicate that the desire to invest in the future of a place is prioritised and directed towards their families and communities in their countries of origin, as the reason for migration suggested. Connecting this to literature on ontological security and literature on belonging, it is possible to deduce that the lack of financial security also negatively impacts these migrants' sense of belonging (Antonsich, 2010; Kinnvall, 2004). Given the limited opportunities to gain adequate finances, and the cost of living in South Africa, migrants' ability to create a sense of belonging in their host society is further negatively affected.

The Community Context

In alignment with Falicov's (2007) ecosystemic model, these adverse realities extended from the sociopolitical context and interacted with the community context. The inevitable decrease in ontological security imposed by migration, suggested by the literature, is exacerbated by the participants' overwhelmingly negative experiences in South Africa and their difficulties to find or create physical or social spaces that would enable them to regain some sense of security (Boccagni, 2014; Kinnvall, 2004; Mallett, 2004). The findings indicate that these migrants were excluded from participating in social and community settings: "sometimes they don't involve us, you understand. When they are doing their thing they don't involve us so it's very difficult to us to force ourselves into them" (George). This lack of inclusion in their host communities leaves them with a ***lack of social and emotional support from others in South Africa***, rendering them alone and isolated in a country where they are not allowed to belong: "Because they are going to say: 'no we don't know you…' You come here alone you go back alone" (Pamela). With no spaces to gain social support in their host society, and being physically uprooted from their families in their countries of origin, this isolation leaves them vulnerable to psychological consequences (Falicov, 2013, 2016a). The findings reflect this, as some participants indicated adverse emotions associated with the violence they feel surrounded by and the exclusions they experience: 'Myself especially when it about to go to sunset and I am thinking of crying. 'Eish, am I going to make my mom alive, when I am still alive? Eish, these gunshots*"* (Emma).

In addition to the results discussed thus far, it is important to recall the bidirectional nature of belonging highlighted in the literature review. The literature stipulates that belonging is not only subject to the host society's inclusion of the persons, but also involves their own desire to belong in the host society (Antonsich, 2010; Christiansen & Hedetoft, 2004; Madsen & van Naerssen, 2003; Njwambe et al., 2019; Yuval-Davis, 2016). This also

aligns with a systemic perspective, and the MECA framework, which emphasises the contextual analysis of individual factors (Falicov, 2007; Marchetti-Mercer, 2006). It is not the host community in isolation that influences migrants' experiences, but also how migrants respond to these experiences, creating a reciprocal interaction (Falicov, 2007). Where McMillan (1996) noted that a sense of community is experienced when members mutually benefit by being together, the results rather suggest that both the host community and the migrants perceived that they are disadvantaged by each other's presence. There thus seems to be a general perception of incompatibility between migrants and the Olievenhoutbosch community which has adverse consequences on their sense of belonging. For instance, where on the one hand the findings have shown that their financial and emotional needs are not being met by South Africa, the literature has shown on the other hand that the general South African community sees them as a threat to their own needs being met (Gordon, 2017a; Landau, 2005b).

This was evident in the ***perceptions that migrants and South Africans have towards one another***. Where participants experience exclusions based on negative perceptions placed on them, their negative perceptions towards South Africans also lead them to exclude themselves. The literature on belonging stipulates that having a sense of psychological belonging involves a person's self-identification as well as the identifications placed on them by others (Falicov, 2017; George & Selimos, 2019; Yuval-Davis, 2006). The results point to the fact that stereotypes placed on participants by the local residents leaves them to feel excluded as these stereotypes do not align with their own self-identities. The opposite was also found to be true in this study as migrants also seem to place certain stereotypes on South African nationals: "What I've realised, if you check most of the South Africans they don't want to work... so if they see people who are hardworking most of them they are very jealous of that" (George).

The present study additionally reveals that these perceptions are sometimes further influenced by an incongruence in migrants' values and the values they perceive the host society to have. On numerous occasions the results suggest a sense of alarm towards the value placed on human life in South Africa: "sometimes I feel very bad about it because a human being doesn't slaughter like a chicken… Because those people will make orphans. They are bad…" (Victor). Applying the literature on belonging as outlined by Hagerty et al. (1996), these experiences suggest that their belonging is negatively impacted by firstly not feeling valued by the community, and secondly, not feeling a sense of compatibility with the values of the host society: "we are not useful to the people around the place where we are staying… so we don't have any value…" (Stanley).

These perceptions may connect with the results indicating that some, albeit few, participants actively exclude themselves from participating in spaces in Olievenhoutbosch: "I don't attend their meetings, I don't attend their anything. Anything, I don't. So, they won't even recognise me… The point they don't know me" (Pamela). The findings additionally reveal that this self-exclusion may also be due to a ***sense of distrust towards South Africans***: "at any time the one who is next to you is the one who is going to kill you… So I'm not feeling welcome" (Ronald). The results thus align with the numerous scholars who have shown that immigrants in South Africa intentionally avoid developing close relationships with South Africans as a result of the adverse experiences and negative attitudes they receive (Adepoju, 2003; Amisi & Ballard, 2005; Araia, 2005; Crush, 2001; Landau, 2005a; Landau & Freemantle, 2010). Additionally, Yuval-Davis (2006) acknowledges the importance of narratives and the attitudes held in a desire to create attachments with a community or person. As such, the results suggest that these negative perceptions created an aversion for wanting to attach or identify with, and therefore belong to, South Africans in the Olievenhoutbosch community.

There were only a very few positive experiences reported, reflecting some ***sense of ambivalence in participants' attitudes towards South Africans***. However, these few exceptions seemed to be overshadowed by the numerous negative experiences: "Some, they are welcoming, but some they are hard. They are hard-hearted" (Aneni). Ultimately, however, ***negative perceptions towards South Africans*** seemed to prevail in the participants' experiences and fostered the sense of general distrust towards South Africans. With no means of building trusting relationships with others, the literature suggests that it is barely possible for participants to regain a sense of ontological security in this country (Dupuis & Thorns, 1998; Giddens, 1989).

Yet, the literature has also outlined that identity is not constant, but rather continually in a process of transition, construction or being reproduced (Fortier, 2000; Yuval-Davis, 2006). The literature further emphasises the importance of identity in the maintenance or development of a sense of belonging (Yuval-Davis, 2006). Falicov (2007) noted that migrants can maintain their identities through the maintenance of their relationships with those in their country of origin, whilst also constructing new identities through the forming of new relationships in the host country. Through the combination of these transnational and assimilative practices, Falicov (2005) believes that migrants can construct "hyphenated identities" (p. 400). The present study shows contrasting results with respect to this, as the results rather highlight increased attempts to maintain their national and cultural identities and no possibilities nor desire to assimilate**:** "If you are not belonging to, to that community there is a separation. We don't have their own identity, that's why if we are doing things they have to separate us" (Stanley). As such, the negative experiences and exclusions faced by migrants seems to have predominantly preceded this 'self-exclusion', shown in the literature and in this study (Crush, 2001; Landau, 2005b; Landau & Freemantle, 2010). These migrants were already displaced before they had an option in the matter, therefore eliminating the

possibility to make an independent decision regarding their assimilation: “When they are doing their thing they don’t involve us so it’s very difficult to us to force ourselves into them” (George). This highlights the importance of viewing belonging from a systemic/interactional perspective, and not as an individual factor, and of acknowledging the role of other contextual and social factors that play a role (Erdem & Safi, 2018; Falicov, 2005; Marchetti-Mercer, 2006; Njwambe et al., 2019).

The migrants’ specific ***cultural identity*** seemed to be an important factor in their sense of belonging (Phinney et al., 2001). Here, the pride associated with culture and language indicated the emotional attachment associated with the cultural spaces of their country of origin and provided an indication for a sense of belonging therein: “I am proud of being a Shona and I am not going to hide it… I want the crowd to know that ah, this one she is a Shona…” (Emma). On the other hand, the inability to express their cultural or national identities in Olievenhoutbosch seemed to add to their negative experiences and a sense of being excluded: “I can’t express my identity there because I don’t have rights to do like that” (Stanley). This concurs with Phinney et al. (2001) and Huizinga and van Hoven (2018) who acknowledges that cultural identity helps facilitate boundaries and emotional attachment, therefore shaping a sense of belonging. Furthermore, where participants do or do not experience a sense of belonging is also evident in the findings related to ***national identity***, as participants would associate their sense of belonging with their national identity: “Yeah, so you see I don’t belong here. Nuh uh, I belong in Zimbabwe. I am 100% Zimbabwean” (Pamela). In fact, just as literature often equates identity and citizenship to a sense of belonging, as Antonsich (2010) criticised, so did the participants: “I belong to Zimbabwe, I am a Zimbabwean and I am proud to be a Zimbabwean… that will never change” (George). This may reflect the deep emotional desire these migrants may have to maintain a sense of

attachment to a community where they actually feel accepted (Antonsich, 2010; Huizinga & van Hoven, 2018; Nordberg, 2006).

Overall, despite associating migration with hopes to gain a better standard of living for their families, the findings rather reveal an overwhelming sense of loss. Participants seem to be faced with a sense of 'ambiguous loss' as they are not only physically separated from their loved ones and the comforts associated therewith, but also faced with a constant sense of uncertainty regarding their security in the host country and ability to provide for their families (Falicov, 2016a). It is thus no surprise the findings reveal that participants experience living in South Africa as emotionally challenging: "Eish, it's very difficult, but no choice. It's very difficult, to be honest it is very difficult" (George). The abovementioned negative perceptions of South Africans towards foreign nationals, along with experiences of discrimination and inadequate social or economic prospects are said to have significantly adverse consequences on migrants' ability to "absorb the losses of migration" and adapt to optimise success (Falicov, 2016a, p. 226). Instead, these migrants' experiences seem to leave them to struggle in a constant state of discomfort and unrest: "the way we are staying is something like struggling, struggling, fighting, fighting" (Stanley). Although Falicov (2016) also mentions the possibilities of having positive experiences due to migration, the results in this study shows that this did not materialise for most of these participants.

Therefore, the findings suggest that these migrants made the only choice they had, which was to remain attached to the few spaces that accepted them, and shared similar cultural or national identities. The literature further suggests that when migrants are uprooted from those familiar to them and their culture, as well as having a decreased sense of ontological security, they may re-create social networks or ethnic communities to manage their cultural and social losses and regain a sense of ontological security (Falicov, 2007, 2013; Kinnvall, 2004; Vaquera et al., 2017). The literature asserts that these attachments and

spaces provide a sense of familiarity and a means to "remain connected to their country of origin by sharing memories and stories" (Huizinga & van Hoven, 2018, p. 311). In fact, the results of the present study showed the ***development or maintenance of*** such ***relationships in South Africa*** almost exclusively ***to those who had similar cultural or national identities***: "And what we are making friends is because… we are coming of the same area" (Ronald). This included maintaining friendships with those who also migrated to South Africa: "Yes of course the main reason why I am friend of these people, these people is my friends from Malawi… so here in South Africa we are just continuing our relationship from the place where we are coming from" (Stanley). This additionally includes regular participation in social or religious spaces that has some form of a connection or association with home: "The church I'm attending is from home. It's from home, so we can meet there, we talk same language, you feel like you are home you are not even in South Africa" (Lina).

It has further been suggested that migrants may create 'new places' in the host society to facilitate a sense of transnational belonging (Falicov, 2007; Vaquera et al., 2017). In this study, participation in what they called burial 'societies' acted as a means through which migrants from the same nationalities would meet and monetarily support those families in their origin countries who had lost someone in Olievenhoutbosch. It is described by Victor as follows:

> They all, the people from Olieven, we came together and make a society… And uhm, on top of that, we don't allow one of us to be buried here when he has died. We are always doing the contributions and then we find a transport to take that person to home. To be, get rest at home.

These behaviours and activities act seem to reflect means through which a person's sense of belonging is facilitated in both countries, and acts as a means through which the two

countries are joined together, thereby involving some form of transnationalism (Madsen & van Naerssen, 2003).

The significance of ***religious spaces*** in a sense of belonging emerged as a dominant theme in this study as, to some participants, these were the only spaces in South Africa where a sense of belonging was experienced. Falicov (2013) acknowledges the importance of religious spaces in providing a sense of support and community involvement, thereby assisting them to adapt to or manage their host society. To the participants, their respective religious spaces seem to be one of the few, if not only, spaces where they experience a sense of comfort: "Saturday when I am going to church it's one of my big day. When it's Saturday I know I am talking to my God, my problems, eish… Yeah, that's one of the few places I feel comfortable" (George). It further seems to be the one space where their nationality is not a criterion for exclusion as they share similar beliefs with other members: "when I am at church whether is South Africans, Malawians, Zimbabweans, we are one. We talk of one group" (Aneni). As Levitt and Jaworsky (2007) note, these spaces connect fellow believers to one another irrespective of their nationality or location of residence. The church is also experienced as a family, indicating the strong emotional attachments they associate with this space: "in church there is not any difference. You come together, you play together, love each other. Yeah, as one family" (Victor). Landau (2009) discusses similar processes and states that these religious institutions and the ideals associated therewith enables migrants to position themselves relative to South Africa and its members.

It is worth acknowledging that there were exceptions, albeit very limited, as illustrated in the case of two participants who recognised the role of social participation and connectedness to South Africans in their sense of belonging. This involved instances of inclusion in social events: "I can say… we don't fight, we talk nice, you can eat together if there is a party, 'today there is a party here so you are welcome'" (Lina). This concurs with

the literature which stipulates that a need for interpersonal connection or relatedness is the common factor agreed upon by most scholars regarding a sense of belonging (Allen & Kern, 2017; George & Selimos, 2019; Hagerty et al., 1996). Another participant in particular expressed how participation increased her sense of inclusion and belonging: “if they got this meeting and if my landlord is not around she can ask me to go around and I will have say as South African too... they make us feel like we are a part of them” (Emma). This aligns with McMillan's (1996) notions of trust and art as they are not only recognised as being trustworthy, but are also participate in shared experiences. Yuval-Davis (2006) further exclaims the importance of repetitive shared social practices in the creation of attachments. Yet, given the dominant sense of exclusion at the sociopolitical and community levels, these instances of inclusion did not occur frequently.

The latter participant’s experiences further concurs with Boccagni and Vargas-Silva's (2021) study which suggests that relationships, safety and time spent in a space may contribute significantly to a sense of belonging in a place: “My home is where I live mostly cause I will spend the whole year here in South Africa but when I go home its only two… sometimes less than two weeks” (Emma). By calling South Africa and her country of origin ‘home’ in this excerpt, it is possible that this is the one and only instance in this study that concurs with the notion on transnationalism where it is asserted that migrants can experience a sense of belonging in two spaces that span across borders (Ehrkamp & Leitner, 2006; Falicov, 2005; Madsen & van Naerssen, 2003; Schiller et al., 1992). It further corresponds with the literature which asserts the importance of social inclusion in the creation of a sense of belonging (Antonsich, 2010; Hagerty et al., 1996; Njwambe et al., 2019; Yuval-Davis, 2006). To this participant, a sense of familial attachments was created through shared social practices, experiences, and support: “the experiences we share, the troubles we are facing we share together, you see. So they are like fam- more than like family” (Emma). This highlights

the malleable nature of belonging and how home is not necessarily fixed or tied to one space (Belford & Lahiri-Roy, 2018). This participant's unique experiences may be attributed to her unique experiences, as she had lied about her age when she migrated to South Africa and was thus taken care of by the host community as a minor and an orphan. It is thus possible that this led her to be included in the host society and enabled her to assimilate to a South African culture. She has also lived in South Africa for longer than most participants in this study, confirming with Boccagni and Vargas-Silva's (2021) study. In light of the abovementioned results, however, safety was reported to be the one factor that decreased this participant's sense of belonging, again connecting to Boccagni and Vargas-Silva's (2021) results and other literature (Antonsich, 2010; Boccagni, 2020; Dupuis & Thorns, 1998). Furthermore, despite experiencing a sense of belonging in South Africa, negative perceptions were still evident in this participant as seen through her aversion for having her children stay in this country:

> I don't want my kids to be schooling in South Africa. I want them back home cause even right now when they come even their minds if you buy car toy they don't want it 'I want a gun' so that thing grows in their mind…

Additionally, it appears that participants remain involved and participate actively in social, political, religious or cultural spaces in their countries of origin, whether physically during visits, or through financial contributions. This may also be seen as a means to maintain a sense of belonging in their communities from which they have migrated. As Hagerty et al. (1996) outlines, a sense of belonging is maintained by being personally involved in that system, thereby leading them to feel a part thereof. The abovementioned burial societies not only act as a means to create spaces of belonging in their host society, but further acts as a means through which migrants can remain involved in their communities' countries of origin and maintain their transnational belonging. The literature further asserts that the sending of remittances is a means through which a sense of belonging can be

maintained with their transnational families or communities (Peter, 2010; Singh et al., 2010). In the following excerpt the sending of finances seemed to act as a means for participating and maintaining a sense of belonging in communities in his country of origin, despite religious differences: “in our family we are Christians we go to church. Like myself, I don’t believe in rituals, but if they say they need something I just provide. But I don’t participate to be honest” (George).

Participants’ need to stay connected with their communities was also particularly visible in relation to their connections to their families still living in their countries of origin. This reflects the relational context of Falicov’s (2007) ecosystemic model.

The Relational Context

In alignment with an ecosystemic perspective, Falicov’s (1995) MECA stipulates that people’s sociocultural experiences, such as belonging, are influenced by their inclusion and exclusions in various groups (Falicov, 2017). The literature points to the fact that it is not only the host community that influences belonging, but also the families in their countries of origin (Falicov, 2005; Madsen & van Naerssen, 2003; Marchetti-Mercer, 2017). Therefore, to make further sense of the findings of this study, one must also focus on the role of the family still living country of origin in the migrants’ experiences, and how it may impact their sense of belonging in their host country.

The results indicate that the overall ***lack of safety*** and being excluded described earlier not only contributed to participants’ sense of not belonging in South Africa, but also significantly to their ***desire to return to their country of origin***: “It’s like when these attacks starts or these shootings starts that’s when I feel like maybe I should go back home” (George). McMillan (1996) suggests that belonging also involves a sense of emotional safety where those who belong to the community are able to speak freely and be vulnerable. The

results of the present seems to support this and a frequent comparison between participants' experiences in their host country and with their families in their country of origin was evident: "If you talk to someone [here in Olievenhout] they will laugh at you, but when you are talking to your family they won't laugh at you but they will come up with a solution to solve the problem" (Pamela). Whilst speaking of their lack of safety and rejection, participants often seemed to long for their countries of origin, as expressed through a desire to return to their countries of origin to regain this sense of safety: "So for you to be safe, you just feel that if there was a bus today or if I have bus fare today I must go" (Aneni). In light of the lack of safety experienced in Olievenhoutbosch, it is evident that participants are reminded of and long for the spaces in which they do feel safe and 'at home', and therefore belong (Antonsich, 2010).

As such, despite the adverse circumstances in their countries of origin which interestingly all participants termed as their 'home' country, the findings indicated that participants ***associate their home countries to sense of ontological security***. Compared to South Africa, their home countries are connected with a sense of constancy both socially and materially, which the literature suggests are important components of ontological security (Giddens, 1990; Kinnvall, 2004). In fact, the findings strongly suggest a sense of security and comfort associated with their respective home countries and relationships there: "The most thing I'm saying is kept me to feel welcome in my country when I'm there, eh, first thing my relatives and I know the security" (Ronald). This coincides with the literature which expresses that safety is a prerequisite to feeling a sense of being at home (Dupuis & Thorns, 1998). This seems to be the case despite its economic and political challenges: "When I am home I'm just free… because I am in my own place… And I enjoy that poverty which is in Zimbabwe, it's fine to me. Its fine to me than to be here." (Aneni). As such, although there is no financial security, they have an assurance that people and things are as they appear to be at

home (Giddens, 1990; Kinnvall, 2004). Their sense of control and dependability in their home countries is also associated with their lifestyles there (Kinnvall, 2004; Mallett, 2004). This involves the ability to survive with minimal resources and having a free space to live: "Yeah home is the best. Because I live at home without anything. I don't pay rent, you see." (Ronald). Antonsich (2010) notes that this 'place belongingness' is associated with a sense of **being rooted**, which was also found in this study: "You see in Malawi, I've got my own ground, my own land for me and my family. The land it was belong to our ancestors. So, if I am died, then my children take over" (Victor). Therefore, the findings of this study supports Boccagni (2020) who argues that, in cases where the migration to that country is associated with marginalisation, such as the results have highlighted, the space that these migrants originate from *is* considered home. This may therefore allude to the frequent comparison by participants between South Africa and their countries of origin in terms of their physical, financial or social security.

More specifically, it is likely that their families with whom they maintain relational ties are their only spaces of security and comfort in this threatening world (Kinnvall, 2004; Mallett, 2004). The findings reveal that this sense of security and comfort was most frequently associated with their emotional attachments in their respective home countries: "That I'm feeling like I belong in Zimbabwe is… everything is there. Everything is there. My family, my kids, my gran. Everything is there. Here, I'm here alone, I don't have any family here" (Pamela). In fact, the data of this study reveal that their countries are often associated with their families: "That comfort of a mother, you know **laughs**… I will think of her every day which means I will think of my mom I will think of Zimbabwe" (Emma). These findings align with the literature which outlines that the abovementioned 'place belongingness' is often associated with belonging to a group of people and the emotional attachments associated therewith (Antonsich, 2010; Yuval-Davis, 2006). This may suggest

why their family and country of origin was frequently used synonymously to ‘home’ in the findings, further connecting to the literature (Boccagni, 2020; Mallett, 2004).

The findings further indicate that the participants’ lack of safety causes concern in their families in the countries of origin. These concerns are commonly expressed with frequent requests for them to return: “They, they are always saying ‘come back home’. … If they can hear people are fighting, they calling same time” (Stanley). The families of origin therefore also view South Africa as an unsafe place and perceives their country of origin to be the space where their family members can regain this safety. Weighing up the gains and losses of migration, as Falicov (2016a) notes in her research, migrants’ families seem to conclude that they would rather lose financial provision than lose their family members: “They call; ‘…If it’s not safe there can you please take a bus now and come back? …even if you don’t have money” (Pamela). Furthermore, in light of the financial challenges faced in South Africa, the results indicate that some participants were in the end financially supported by their families back home, which is contrary to their original plan when moving: “Because I already telled them that my situation is not fine… I am not working better, so… my father is providing school funds, school fees for my children, their food” (Stanley). This may reflect the values of collectivism also described by Falicov in her *Family Organisation* parameter which describes family structures common to rural and disadvantaged settings, who despite their economically precarious realities in their countries of origin, may find comfort in the sharing responsibilities and support to one another (Falicov, 2016a, 2016b, 2017). This, along with the possibility mentioned by some participants of having their own land to grow food, livestock and free accommodation in their countries of origin, as mentioned previously, may render home to seem more appealing in the midst of their financial and security challenges in South Africa. Additionally, the sense of support and unity associated with their families seems to be a significant factor in making home more appealing than South Africa: “because

me and my family, we are united… If someone doesn't have help… They will try to hide your poverty" (Aneni).

There is one interesting exception in the findings as expressed by Ronald, who is the main source of income for his family, and is not encouraged to come back, but rather only congratulated for surviving: "when I'm back home, they will be happy saying 'eish congratulations we know that country'" (Ronald). It is possible that the collectivistic nature of his family, along with his cultural role as the eldest male sibling, and the death of his father, has left him in a position where others depend on him primarily (Falicov, 2013, 2016a). Falicov (1995) has noted that the extended family's collective values may often come into conflict with the nuclear family's individualism, or perhaps in this case the individual needs of the person who has migrated. As such, where their families may entice migrants to return home on some instances, there may be instances which reflect an encouragement to stay despite concerns for safety.

Generally, there was a strong sense of ***longing for 'home'*** which was emotionally laden: "I feel… when I just talk at home I just miss home. Like right now, my mind is not settled, I am not here" (Aneni). This sense of longing appears to be particularly directed towards their families in their countries of origin, as evident in Pamela's expression:

> I feel at home while I'm in Zimbabwe because I don't have to stress myself. I [don't] have to call my mom, I am with her. I [don't] have to call my kids, I am with them. Whatever the challenge I have, if I am with my mom or my kids I can pass that challenge.

It is worth acknowledging the adverse circumstances in their countries of origin which had caused them to migrate in the first place. For example, Ndlovu (2010) highlighted the dangerous circumstances that people are faced with in Zimbabwe, which was interestingly

not mentioned by any of the participants. It is thus possible that migrants are rather reminded of their family relationships and have an idealised view of their home countries as a result of their longing for them. The significant emotional challenges connected with intense feelings of longing after migration can be manifested through imagination, words and actions (Baldassar, 2008; Belford & Lahiri-Roy, 2019). The manifestation through the body was indicated in the findings: “I was even get sick because I was thinking too much of my family…” (Victor).

One way in which this sense of longing seemed to be addressed was by trying to ***maintain contact through Information Communication Technologies (ICTs)***, and sending remittances, which Baldassar (2008) has termed degrees of co-presence. It is important to note that, as also highlighted in the literature (Baldassar, 2016; Ehrkamp & Leitner, 2006; Falicov, 2005; Marchetti-Mercer, 2017), all participants most commonly maintain contact and participate in the family in their home countries through the use of ICTs. Consistent with the literature, it does not only prove to be a more effective and convenient means of maintaining connections and sending remittances, but is further highlighted to be the most cost-effective means through which these working-class migrants can communicate on a regular basis (Bacigalupe & Lambe, 2011; Marchetti-Mercer, 2017). These findings are particularly associated with the use of the more cost-effective platform known as WhatsApp, as opposed to conventional mobile calls: “me I can’t call them normal [mobile] call because it’s very expensive. But through WhatsApp it’s easy. You can talk until you are tired” (Lina). As outlined in the literature review, it is possible that through these ICTs, migrants are able to virtually foster a sense of ‘shared presence’ and maintain their connections and sense of belonging with their families across borders (Antonsich, 2010; Baldassar, 2008; Falicov, 2007; Marchetti-Mercer, 2017; Yuval-Davis, 2006). Through an ‘imagined co-presence’,

migrants and their families may keep each other in their minds until they are able to connect again virtually or physically (Baldassar, 2008).

Despite their efforts to maintain contact, Falicov (2007) notes that ***migration inevitably imposes relational stress*** and considerable emotional costs often resulting from the inevitable separations between family members. To Emma, physically separating from her father through migration also induced a relational separation: *"*To me [moving to] South Africa just broke that relationship with my daddy… [I] can see that she got somewhere somehow she got still that anger". Whereas the results showed that some had personally experienced relational stresses imposed by migration, others only expressed that which they had observed in other migrants: "Like those who come from Malawi, some people they lose their families just because they are staying here" (Victor). Mustasaari (2015) notes that transnational families maintain a sense of 'familyhood' through shared social practices and flows of communication, among others in order to prevent this emotional separation. This was found to be relevant to this study, as participants expressed the importance of maintaining contact with the family members who they have left behind: "It helps a lot, because they won't forget you… Sometimes you end up like your kids won't recognise, like realise you are mom because you are not contacting with them. So you see, you have to contact with them" (Pamela).

This is not possible for every participant, however, as a lack of access to devices or connection leads them to have to resort to the significantly more expensive mobile calls. The results were in agreement with Baldassar's (2008) assertion that migrants' ability to engage in transnational contact is limited to their capacity to do so, as their access to resources determines the frequency and length of contact: "It's like, my children, mostly I talk them once a month, because I can't afford to call them" (Aneni). This highlights the severe limitations placed on migrants of a more disadvantaged socioeconomic status, as they are

challenged and may be required to exert significant energy to maintain their cross-border ties with limited resources (Ehrkamp & Leitner, 2006). This further brings to light the digital divide and the subsequent challenges in maintaining transnational ties brought with a lack of access to financial resources, ICTs and the internet (van Dijk, 2005).

The findings show that participants find value in receiving emotional support from their families (Belford & Lahiri-Roy, 2019; Skrbiš, 2008). In fact, the study has found that they long for this emotional support: “You know, even to comfort, I never been comforted with someone as my mom do. That comfort of a mother, you know **laughs** so I will never… I will think of her every day…” (Emma). On the other hand, one participant highlighted her longing to provide emotional support and nurturance to her children in her home country, highlighting Falicov's (2016) belief that migration can disrupt the relationship between children and parents: “I just want to be with my children because they need my care, motherly care, but they can’t get it, you see” (Aneni). In addition to the lack of resources to maintain regular contact, the findings may also bring to light the shortcomings that maintaining virtual contact has, especially compared to physical contact (Marchetti-Mercer, 2012, 2016, 2017). Their need to maintain contact is thus not only done to maintain their belonging, but to reap the benefits from the spaces of belonging that they do have, which is the emotional support and a sense of security from their families (Baldassar, 2007; Belford & Lahiri-Roy, 2019).

Maintaining contact through ICTs do not only serve as a way to maintain relationships and gain emotional support, but also connects to the migrants’ ***financial obligations***. As such, it also appears to be a means through which participants can remain aware of their family’s material needs, such as in the case of Stanley:

> Each and every weekend I have to take time to chat with them there in Malawi. They have to tell me about their problems there, about my children. I have to send something small to help my children in Malawi.

Peter (2010) and Singh et al. (2010) further highlight the role of sending remittances in maintaining a sense of belonging with their families in their countries of origin. The findings of the present study also connect to what Falicov (2007) calls 'rituals of connection' whereby migrants regularly send remittances or maintain contact in order to communicate to their families that they are still participating despite the distance. It further links to other literature on a sense of belonging which emphasises the importance of feeling a sense of involvement, and the creation of identity and narratives by participating in shared social practices mentioned previously (Antonsich, 2010; Hagerty et al., 1996; Yuval-Davis, 2006).

However, Falicov (1995) brings to light the stressors or conflicts that occur when migrants' demands and those of their families in their countries of origin are misaligned, which in the case of this study, is often associated with their financial obligations. Falicov (2007) further highlights that migration imposes additional reorganizations in the family, at times requiring migrants to assume new roles to compensate for their absence. Although not all participants are the primary breadwinners in their families, and it is unclear whether participants adopted such roles only after migrating, the results suggest that some participants' families expect them to have resources to send remittances, even when this is more frequently not a possibility: "Sometimes you look like you don't want to help, but you don't have, but they don't understand" (Ronald). It further seems as if migrants feel a disconnection between their reality and the expectations of their families, leading to a sense of pressure as noted by George:

> But sometimes they don't know what is happening here in South Africa because they don't see what is happening in reality, you understand, but of course they will keep on saying: "Just try harder, try harder, try harder to work. It's gonna be fine."

As such, participants are often driven to make ***grave sacrifices in an attempt to uphold these financial obligations***, such as Aneni who stated: "I have to starve myself again" to meet the needs of her family in her country of origin. The evidence suggests that the responsibility associated with this role is ***emotionally burdensome***: "I can blame myself because I didn't help them whilst they need money" (Pamela). This validates literature that acknowledges the social pressure imposed on migrants by their families in their countries of origin to send these remittances and the emotional burden that this can create (Bacigalupe & Lambe, 2011; Peter, 2010).

Whilst these migrants sacrifice themselves to try uphold these values and support their families, the results suggest some resistance to show a need for support. Potentially exasperating the sense of emotional burden related to these financial obligations is the reality that many of the participants in this study seemed to withhold the truth of these and other challenges from their families. This was done in order to reduce their families' emotional burden: "No I can't tell them this because I can stress them" (Ronald). This tendency to withhold bad news or stressful information echoes the findings of Marchetti-Mercer (2017) and Baldassar (2008). Where Marchetti-Mercer (2017) suggested that this was done to try uphold a view of an 'idealised' family, Baldassar (2008) suggested that their families' inability to be physically *there* and support them could create distress. Yet, the literature suggests that this withholding of information may rather create a further emotional distance between migrants and their families (Falicov, 2016a; Marchetti-Mercer, 2017). It is likely that both possibilities may contribute to the findings of the present study, as seen in the above quote, and results which indicated that, if participants actually receive financial support from

their families in their countries of origin, a sense of discomfort is experienced. One participant in particular expressed how news about his challenges or ill health may lead to concerns about his ability to provide for them: “I know family is problem if maybe they depend on you they complain too much. And if they came to see you, when they go they say [to others]; ‘No, I don’t know if today he will be alive” (Victor). Thus, despite migrating to provide for their families, it has proven more difficult than anticipated, creating a disjuncture between their families’ expectations and the migrants’ reality (Adepoju, 2003; Mosselson, 2010). Despite these challenges, the findings show that participants still experience ***a sense of purpose and fulfilment*** when they can send remittances and uphold their familial obligations: “I cannot come all the way from Zimbabwe just to come here and sit… Whatever I get as long as my family can… I can put food on the table for my family. It’s better for me” (George).

Considering their active involvements with their families and communities ‘back home’, and their lack thereof in Olievenhoutbosch, the results suggest that they are not living in transnational spaces as their hearts are not divided between two spaces but is still very much attached to their country of origin: “But I belong to Zimbabwe and that will never change, to be honest, that will never change” (George). In light of this, the results indicate that participants ***do intend to return to their home countries***: “I know I will go there one day and stay forever” (Lina). This, however, is subject to their financial goals being met in South Africa, aligning to some extent to the work of Landau and Freemantle (2010) who spoke of the goal-driven nature of such migrants. The difference, though, is that these goals are not driven by individualism, as Landau and Freemantle (2010) claim, but is rather very much rooted in their collectivistic desires to provide for their families back home. Despite the intent to return and the encouragement from their families, the results further point to ***a sense of feeling trapped in South Africa*** and poverty in general. The results points to this either being

due to a lack of finances to move or due to the lack of finances back home and obligations to provide: “because of the situation back home there I’ve got no other option. That’s why I am here in South Africa. I have got no other option” (George). The data therefore goes full circle again, indicating the challenges these migrants face in a country where they do not belong: “We have got nowhere to run so we just keep on. If they destroy, we build over we start again” (George).

Conclusion

The findings in this study show that the negative experiences faced by African migrants living in South Africa negatively impact upon their sense of belonging. Amongst the negative experiences are outright acts of exclusion from the host society by virtue of their nationality, as well as financial challenges, and a significant sense of fear due to a lack of safety. These were reflected by the participants sense that they do not belong in the community of Olievenhoutbosch, as they are unable to create spaces that provide some sense of security and comfort. Although a sense of self-exclusion is also evident, this seems to be more of a response to the discriminatory acts they have witnessed or experienced. As such, these migrants attach themselves to the only spaces in Olievenhoutbosch that will accept them, which are spaces often associated with a shared religious, cultural or national identity. Although some spaces of belonging were noted, these seem to be overshadowed by the general sense of being excluded and not belonging in Olievenhoutbosch. Participants therefore remain connected to their communities in their countries of origin as it seems to be some of the few spaces where they are able to belong. Included here are their relationships with their families as this particularly plays an important role in the management of their adverse experiences in South Africa.

Despite the adverse economic circumstances in their countries of origin, the results show that participants still long for the perceived ontological security that their families,

livelihoods and formal documentation provides. Most significantly is the sense of longing experienced for their families. Evidently, maintaining contact through ICTs is an invaluable means through which they can not only gain emotional support, but also maintain their sense of belonging to their families 'back home'. Maintaining relational ties with their families 'back home' is also associated with their reasons for migrating. Therefore, by sending remittances, they are not only able to participate in their families or communities, but also uphold the obligations placed on them after moving to seek opportunities to make money. However, this does not come without significant emotional challenges, as finding financial opportunities proved more challenging than anticipated.

The findings therefore show that families in their country of origin do have an impact on participants' sense of belonging in Olievenhoutbosch, albeit indirectly. By comparing their sense of ontological security received from their families to their lack thereof in South Africa, a deep desire to return home is evident. Living in poverty with their families seem more appealing than living alone in a foreign and unsafe country, in poverty and in a society that rejects them. Additionally, their economic challenges in their countries of origin, and in South Africa, as well as their roles of financial providers to their families, reinforces the fact that they did not migrate to find a new 'home', but to support the 'home' they already have. It is perhaps their sense of unity related to the collectivistic and interconnected nature of these family relationships that not only motivated migrants to seek better opportunities, but perhaps also contributes to their reasons for longing for 'home' and not belonging in Olievenhoutbosch.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

Closing remarks

This research study endeavoured to contribute to the body of knowledge surrounding migration, belonging and family relationships by exploring the experiences of a group of African migrants in Olievenhoutbosch. It specifically sought to explore the experiences of belonging in Olievenhoutbosch and the role of their relationships with their families in their countries of origin, using a culturally competent ecosystemic perspective. This study has drawn attention to the significant role that the sociopolitical, community and relational contexts play in migrants' sense of belonging in Olievenhoutbosch. The experiences related to each of these contexts further impacted one another, highlighting the importance of an ecosystemic perspective for viewing individual matters.

The findings coincided with the literature pertaining to a sense of belonging, specifically in relation to political and psychological belonging (Yuval-Davis, 2006), as well as place belongingness (Antonsich, 2010). Most prominently was the considerable attention drawn to the role of the host community in migrants' sense of belonging, specifically pertaining to experiences that lead to a lack of inclusion, safety and ontological security. Coinciding with the South African literature, this study has found that these experiences included the crime in the Olievenhoutbosch community, xenophobic acts, a lack of documentation, challenges in speaking South African languages, financial challenges, as well as being excluded from most social events. Given that these are generally experienced as acts of exclusions, migrants in Olievenhoutbosch find it difficult or impossible to experience a sense of belonging to this community and assimilate to its culture. As such, these migrants generally do not seem belong transnationally or with their hearts in two countries. At the same time, these migrants seem to attend existing or create their own spaces where they can

experience a sense of belonging, most often related to their cultural, national or religious identities.

The study further revealed that their sense of longing to their 'home' countries is due to a desire to return to their sources of ontological security, most often associated with their family relationships. Corresponding with psychological studies on transnational families, the study has found that ties are, in fact, maintained to their families in their countries of origin. In fact, it revealed that it is these ties that motivated their reasons for migrating. It concurs with the literature on the use of ICTs as instrumental to maintaining contact as most participants used this not only to reap the benefits of belonging to their families in their 'home countries', but also to uphold their financial obligations to these spaces. These obligations come with significant sacrifices on the part of migrants that can be experienced as burdensome, but is often not communicated to their families 'back home'. Despite relational stressors imposed by migration, the findings have revealed a desire and intent to return, but significant challenges to do so due to the very reasons they came.

Limitations

It is important to recognise the limitations of this study in order to highlight avenues for improvement in future research.

The first limitation of this study undoubtedly involved the number of participants used. Gathering data from only eight participants greatly limited the breadth and depth of the data yielded. The information gathered was therefore quite limited in perspective to the large number of people who have migrated to Olievenhoutbosch for similar reasons. Although a level of saturation had been reached, having more participants may have added to the nuanced details of the general themes gathered, and provided further unique insights that

would certainly have improved the understanding of migrants' experiences in Olievenhoutbosch.

A second limitation involves the heterogenous nature of the sample with respect to their country of origin, culture, length of stay, employment status, and so forth. The participants themselves as well as the literature on migration in South Africa acknowledge the differences in opinions that South Africans have for different African nations, which further results in differences in treatment (Gordon, 2017b; Maluleke, 2018). The literature has also highlighted the impact of financial security and length of stay on a sense of belonging (Boccagni & Vargas-Silva, 2021; Njwambe et al., 2019). Although the aim of this study, its theoretical framework, and the nature of qualitative research was not to generalise the findings to the broader population, mitigating for these factors through a more homogenous sample may have limited the differences in experiences and yielded more conclusive information with respect to their sense of belonging and the role of the family in a sense of belonging (Falicov, 2017; Morrow & Smith, 2000).

Thirdly, although the data gathered was relatively in-depth, the analysis retrospectively revealed that the study would have benefitted greatly by using the MECA framework to develop interview questions and explore the participants' experiences. Analysing the data with this framework highlighted significant gaps in the data gathered, such as the specific cultural beliefs of each participant and their families. This is especially in relation to their responsibilities to one another, the influence of their family organisation in the decision to migrate, as well as more in-depth information regarding the values and beliefs of the family in their country of origin. Furthermore, the study would have benefitted if the MECA model was also applied to myself as the researcher so as to enhance my reflexivity throughout the research process. These gaps and limitations clearly reveal the importance of this framework in conducting research that is culturally competent.

Fourthly, triangulating the data by interviewing both the migrants and their families in their countries of origin may have yielded more trustworthy results as it would have provided opportunity for the migrants' families in their countries of origin to clarify or provide more information pertaining to the research topic (van Rensburg, 2010).

Lastly, the asymmetrical power imbalances between myself as the researcher and the participants may have negatively affected the data gathered. The differences in class and positionality may have limited participants' sense of comfort and trust during the interviews thereby limiting their openness to share their experiences. It also appeared that some expected to be renumerated for attending the interviews even though it had been emphasized that this was not offered. These expectations may have led some to respond in a way that they deemed would be socially desirable by me. Being an outsider to the community, participants may have further struggled to trust me and establish rapport, thereby limiting the information that they were willing to provide.

Recommendations

Despite the limitations, this study has begun to address some of the existing gaps of psychological research in this field. It has also revealed the significant importance of conducting further research in this general topic in South Africa, especially through a psychological lens and from the perspective of migrants. The following research possibilities were revealed during the conducting of this study:

Although there is considerable research exploring the attitudes of South Africans on migrant populations, very few studies exist that explore the migrants' perspectives and experiences from a psychological perspective. As such, further research exploring migrants' experiences and perceptions from this perspective is needed to contribute to a more holistic understanding of migration in South Africa.

It has been noted previously that psychology is greatly underrepresented in migration studies, specifically related to transnational family relationships (Palmary, 2018). The literature on transnational family relationships among working-class migrants in South Africa is also very limited. The literature that does exist opposes the view of transnationalism and proposes other modes of belonging that was shown in this study to not be applicable. This may be due to a sociological as opposed to a psychological perspective. To gain a further understanding of this discrepancy, it would be invaluable to conduct more psychological research in this field.

This study has revealed that a lack of finances increases their negative experiences in South Africa, and likely has a negative impact on their sense of belonging. It is possible that, given the significant limitations in their financial resources, migrants of a lower socioeconomic status may have to choose between creating a new home in South Africa, if possible at all, and supporting the homes they already have in their countries of origin. It may thus be considerably challenging to create and maintain two homes in separate countries given the severe lack of resources that many migrants in South Africa are faced with. This further connects to the fact that most research on transnational families in South Africa is among people of a higher socioeconomic status. As such, more research is needed to ascertain the role that finances may have in the creation or development of a sense of transnational belonging.

Given the culturally diverse nature of South Africa, it would be valuable to conduct future research that applies the MECA framework in family therapy. This may facilitate the development of a more comprehensive understanding of the realities that migrants or transnational families in South Africa may face and may further facilitate culturally competent training in family therapy.

References

Adepoju, A. (2003). Continuity and Changing Configurations of Migration to and from the Republic of South Africa. *International Migration*, *41*(1), 3–28. https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2435.00228

Alfaro-Velcamp, T. (2017). "Don't send your sick here to be treated, our own people need it more": Immigrants' access to healthcare in South Africa. *International Journal of Migration, Health and Social Care*, *13*(1), 53–68. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJMHSC-04-2015-0012

Alfaro-Velcamp, T., & Shaw, M. (2016). 'Please go home and build Africa': Criminalising immigrants in South Africa. *Journal of Southern African Studies*, *42*(5), 983–998. https://doi.org/10.1080/03057070.2016.1211805

Allen, K.A., & Kern, M. L. (2017). The need to belong. In K.A. Allen & M. L. Kern, *School Belonging in Adolescents* (pp. 5–12). Springer Singapore. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-5996-4_2

Amisi, B., & Ballard, R. (2005). *In the absence of citizenship: Congolese refugee struggle and organisation in South Africa [Unpublished Study]*. University of Kwazulu-Natal.

Anderson, B., Gibney, M. J., & Paoletti, E. (2011). Citizenship, deportation and the boundaries of belonging. *Citizenship Studies*, *15*(5), 547–563. https://doi.org/10.1080/13621025.2011.583787

Anderson, B. R. (1991). *Imagined communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism* (Revised and extended edition). Verso.

Anthias, F. (2009). Translocational belonging, identity and generation: Questions and problems in migration and ethnic studies. *Finnish Journal of Ethnicity and Migration*, *4*(1), 10.

Antonsich, M. (2010). Searching for Belonging - An Analytical Framework: Searching for belonging. *Geography Compass*, *4*(6), 644–659. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1749-8198.2009.00317.x

Araia, T. T. (2005). *Routes, Motivations, and Duration: Explaining Eritrean Forced Migrants "Journeys to Johannesburg [Unpublished Masters Thesis]*. University of the Witwatersrand.

ATLAS.ti. (2021). *ATLAS.ti: The Qualitative Data Analysis & Research Software*. https://atlasti.com/product/what-is-atlas-ti/

Bacigalupe, G., & Lambe, S. (2011). Virtualizing Intimacy: Information Communication Technologies and Transnational Families in Therapy. *Family Process*, *50*(1), 12–26. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1545-5300.2010.01343.x

Baldassar, L. (2007). Transnational families and the provision of moral and emotional support: The relationship between truth and distance. *Identities*, *14*(4), 385–409. https://doi.org/10.1080/10702890701578423

Baldassar, L. (2008). Missing Kin and Longing to be Together: Emotions and the Construction of Co-presence in Transnational Relationships. *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, *29*(3), 247–266. https://doi.org/10.1080/07256860802169196

Baldassar, L. (2016). De-demonizing distance in mobile family lives: Co-presence, care circulation and polymedia as vibrant matter. *Global Networks*, *16*(2), 145–163. https://doi.org/10.1111/glob.12109

Baldassar, L., Nedelcu, M., Merla, L., & Wilding, R. (2016). ICT-based co-presence in transnational families and communities: Challenging the premise of face-to-face proximity in sustaining relationships. *Global Networks*, *16*(2), 133–144. https://doi.org/10.1111/glob.12108

Baumeister, R. F., & Leary, M. R. (1995). The need to belong: Desire for interpersonal attachments as a fundamental human motivation. *Psychological Bulletin*, *117*(3), 497–529.

Bayor, R. H. (2016). *The Oxford Handbook of American Immigration and Ethnicity*. Oxford University Press.

Belford, N., & Lahiri-Roy, R. (2019). (Re)negotiating transnational identities: Notions of 'home' and 'distanced intimacies'. *Emotion, Space and Society*, *31*, 63–71. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.emospa.2018.11.004

Boccagni, P. (2014). What's in a (Migrant) House? Changing Domestic Spaces, the Negotiation of Belonging and Home-making in Ecuadorian Migration. *Housing, Theory and Society*, *31*(3), 277–293. https://doi.org/10.1080/14036096.2013.867280

Boccagni, P. (2017). *Migration and the search for home*. Palgrave.

Boccagni, P. (2020). *Advancing transnational migration studies through home: A conceptual inquiry [Unpublished Manuscript]*.

Boccagni, P., & Vargas-Silva, C. (2021). Feeling at home across time and place: A study of Ecuadorians in three European cities. *Population, Space and Place*. https://doi.org/10.1002/psp.2431

Bowen, G. (2005). Preparing a qualitative research-based dissertation: Lessons learned. *Qualitative Report, 10*(2), 208–222.

Bowen, M. (1978). *Family therapy in clinical practice*. Aronson.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, *3*(2), 77–101. https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa

Brkic, B. (2010). The townships are burning – and foreigners may be next. Again. *Daily Maverick*. https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2010-05-18-the-townships-are-burning-and-foreigners-may-be-next-again/

Bryceson, D., & Vuorela, U. (Eds.). (2003). *The Transnational Family: New European Frontiers and Global Networks*. Berg. https://www.academia.edu/8569713/The_Transnational_Family_New_European_Frontiers_and_Global_Networks

Christiansen, F., & Hedetoft, U. (Eds.). (2004). *The politics of multiple belonging*. Ashgate.

Cox, A. (2019). *Undocumented foreigners "putting a strain" on Gauteng clinics and hospitals | The Star*. https://www.iol.co.za/the-star/news/undocumented-foreigners-putting-a-strain-on-gauteng-clinics-and-hospitals-19660481

Crush, J. (2001). The Dark Side of Democracy: Migration, Xenophobia and Human Rights in South Africa. *International Migration*, *38*(6), 103–133. https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2435.00145

Department of Health. (2020). COVID-19 Risk Adjusted Strategy—SA Corona Virus Online Portal. *SA Corona Virus Online Portal*. https://sacoronavirus.co.za/covid-19-risk-adjusted-strategy/

du Plooy, C., Peete, F., & Sapa. (2006). *Three die in violence near Pretoria | IOL News*. IOL News. https://www.iol.co.za/news/south-africa/three-die-in-violence-near-pretoria-263006

du Plooy, T. (2010). Ethics in Research. In G. H. van Rensburg, A. H. Alpaslan, G. M. du Plooy, D. Gelderblom, R. van Eeden, & D. J. Wigston, *Research in the social sciences* (pp. 107–122). University of South Africa.

Dupuis, A., & Thorns, D. C. (1998). Home, Home Ownership and the Search for Ontological Security. *The Sociological Review*, *46*(1), 24–47. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-954X.00088

Durreim, K. (1997). Social constructionism, discourse, and psychology. *South African Journal of Psychology, 27*(3), 175–182. https://doi.org/10.1177/008124639702700308

Ehrkamp, P., & Leitner, H. (2006). Rethinking Immigration and Citizenship: New Spaces of Migrant Transnationalism and Belonging. *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space*, *38*(9), 1591–1597. https://doi.org/10.1068/a38349

Erdem, G., & Safi, O. A. (2018). The Cultural Lens Approach to Bowen Family Systems Theory: Contributions of Family Change Theory: Bowen Family Systems and Family Change. *Journal of Family Theory & Review*, *10*(2), 469–483. https://doi.org/10.1111/jftr.12258

Erol, A. (2012). Identity, Migration and Transnationalism: Expressive Cultural Practices of the Toronto Alevi Community. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, *38*(5), 833–849. https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2012.668025

Falicov, C. J. (1995). *Training to think culturally: A multidimensional comparative framework*. *34*, 373–388.

Falicov, C. J. (2005). Emotional Transnationalism and Family Identities. *Family Process*, *44*(4), 399–406. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1545-5300.2005.00068.x

Falicov, C. J. (2007). Working With Transnational Immigrants: Expanding Meanings of Family, Community, and Culture. *Family Process*, *46*(2), 157–171. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1545-5300.2007.00201.x

Falicov, C. J. (2013). *Latino Families in Therapy*. Guilford Publications.

Falicov, C. J. (2016a). Migration and the family life cycle. In M. McGoldrick, N. Garcia-Preto, & B. Carter (Eds.), *The expanding family life cycle: Individual, family and social perspectives* (5th ed., pp. 222–239). Allyn & Bacon.

Falicov, C. J. (2016b). The multiculturalism and diversity of families. In T. Sexton & J. Lebow (Eds.), *Handbook of Family Therapy* (pp. 66–85). Routledge.

Falicov, C. J. (2017). Multidimensional Ecosystemic Comparative Approach (MECA). In J. Lebow, A. Chambers, & D. C. Breunlin (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of Couple and Family Therapy* (pp. 1–5). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-15877-8_848-1

Finlay, L. (2002). Negotiating the swamp: The opportunity and challenge of reflexivity in research practice. *Qualitative Research*, *2*(2), 209–230. https://doi.org/10.1177/146879410200200205

Fortier, A.M. (2000). *Migrant belongings: Memory, space, identity*. Berg. https://search.proquest.com/openview/573cbe1d4e7895fcf9a2b4a23687a515/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=25110

Fossey, E., Harvey, C., McDermott, F., & Davidson, L. (2002). Understanding and evaluating qualitative research. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry, 36*, 717–732.

Fusch, P. I., & Ness, L. R. (2015). *Are We There Yet? Data Saturation in Qualitative Research*. *20*(9), 1408–1416.

Gelderblom, D. (2010). Strategies of Discovery. In G. H. van Rensburg, A. H. Alpaslan, G. M. du Plooy, D. Gelderblom, R. van Eeden, & D. J. Wigston, *Research in the social sciences* (pp. 1–46). University of South Africa.

George, G., & Selimos, E. D. (2019). Searching for belonging and confronting exclusion: A person-centred approach to immigrant settlement experiences in Canada. *Social Identities*, *25*(2), 125–140. https://doi.org/10.1080/13504630.2017.1381834

Giddens, A. (1984). *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration*. University of California Press.

Giddens, A. (1989). A reply to my critics. In D. Held & J. Thompson (Eds.), *Social theory of modern societies: Anthony Giddens and his critics* (pp. 249–301). Cambridge University Press.

Giddens, A. (1990). *The consequences of modernity*. Stanford University Press.

Gilmartin, M. (2008a). Migration, Identity and Belonging. *Geography Compass*, *2*(6), 1837–1852. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1749-8198.2008.00162.x

Gordon, S. L. (2015). Xenophobia across the class divide: South African attitudes towards foreigners 2003–2012. *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, *33*(4), 494–509. https://doi.org/10.1080/02589001.2015.1122870

Gordon, S. L. (2016). Welcoming refugees in the rainbow nation: Contemporary attitudes towards refugees in South Africa. *African Geographical Review*, *35*(1), 1–17. https://doi.org/10.1080/19376812.2014.933705

Gordon, S. L. (2017a). A Desire for Isolation? Mass Public Attitudes in South Africa Toward Immigration Levels. *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies*, *15*(1), 18–35. https://doi.org/10.1080/15562948.2016.1151096

Gordon, S. L. (2017b). Shutting the Gates in South Africa: National Identification and Popular Attitudes towards Closing Borders to Immigration: Shutting the Gates in South Africa. *Tijdschrift Voor Economische En Sociale Geografie*, *108*(6), 821–835. https://doi.org/10.1111/tesg.12232

Gordon, S. L., & Maharaj, B. (2015). Neighbourhood-level social capital and anti-immigrant prejudice in an African context: An individual-level analysis of attitudes towards immigrants in South

Africa. *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics*, *53*(2), 197–219. https://doi.org/10.1080/14662043.2015.1013296

Hagerty, B. M., Lynch-Sauer, J., Patusky, K., Bouwsema, M., & Collier, P. (1992). Sense of belonging: A vital mental health concept. *Archives of Psychiatric Nursing*, *6*(3), 172–177.

Hagerty, B. M., Williams, R. A., Coyne, J. C., & Early, M. R. (1996). Sense of belonging and indicators of social and psychological functioning. *Archives of Psychiatric Nursing*, *10*(4), 235–244. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0883-9417(96)80029-X

Hernandez, M. Y. (2009). Psychological Theories of Immigration. *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment*, *19*(6), 713–729. https://doi.org/10.1080/10911350902910898

Hiropoulos, A. (2017). *Monitoring Xenophobic Violence in South Africa*. Xenowatch. http://www.migration.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/March-2017-Xenowatch-Special-Report-1.pdf

Hosking, D., & Morley, I. E. (2004). Social constructionism in community and applied social psychology. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology, 14*, 1–14. https://doi.org/DOI: 10.1002/casp.801

Huizinga, R. P., & van Hoven, B. (2018). Everyday geographies of belonging: Syrian refugee experiences in the Northern Netherlands. *Geoforum*, *96*, 309–317. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2018.09.002

Ignatieff, M. (1994). *Blood and Belonging. Journeys Into the New Bationalism*. Vintage.

International Organization for Migration. (2009). *Towards Tolerance, Law, and Dignity: Addressing Violence against Foreign Nationals in South Africa*. International Organization for Migration. https://southafrica.iom.int/system/files/drupal-private/Addressing_Violence_against_Foreign_Nationals_IOM.pdf

Isaacs, A. (2014). An overview of qualitative research methodology for public health researchers. *International Journal of Medicine and Public Health*, *4*(4), 318. https://doi.org/10.4103/2230-8598.144055

Kaarsholm, P. (2019). Aspiration, exclusion and belonging in South Africa and Kenya. *African Studies*, *78*(1), 1–5. https://doi.org/10.1080/00020184.2018.1540512

Kapindu, R. E. (2011). Social protection for Malawian migrants in Johannesburg: Access, exclusion and survival strategies. *African Human Rights Journal,* 27.

Kinnvall, C. (2004). Globalization and Religious Nationalism: Self, Identity, and the Search for Ontological Security. *Political Psychology*, *25*(5), 741–767. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9221.2004.00396.x

Klotz, A. (2016). Borders and the Roots of Xenophobia in South Africa. *South African Historical Journal*, *68*(2), 180–194. https://doi.org/10.1080/02582473.2016.1153708

Kyngas, H., Mikkonen, K., & Kääriäinen, M. (Eds.). (2020). *The Application of Content Analysis in Nursing Science Research*. Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-30199-6

Lähdesmäki, T., Saresma, T., Hiltunen, K., Jäntti, S., Sääskilahti, N., Vallius, A., & Ahvenjärvi, K. (2016). Fluidity and flexibility of "belonging": Uses of the concept in contemporary research. *Acta Sociologica*, *59*(3), 233–247. https://doi.org/10.1177/0001699316633099

Landau, L. B. (2005a). *Migration, urbanisation and sustainable livelihoods in South Africa* (Migration Policy Brief No. 15; Policy Briefs Series). Southern African Migration Project.

Landau, L. B. (2005b). Urbanisation, nativism, and the rule of law in South Africa's 'forbidden' cities. *Third World Quarterly*, *26*(7), 1115–1134. https://doi.org/10.1080/01436590500235710

Landau, L. B. (2006). Transplants and Transients: Idioms of Belonging and Dislocation in Inner-City Johannesburg. *African Studies Review*, *49*(2), 125–145. https://doi.org/10.1353/arw.2006.0109

Landau, L. B. (2009). Living Within and Beyond Johannesburg: Exclusion, Religion, and Emerging Forms of Being. *African Studies*, *68*(2), 197–214. https://doi.org/10.1080/00020180903109581

Landau, L. B. (2010). Loving the alien? Citizenship, law, and the future in South Africa's demonic society. *African Affairs*, *109*(435), 213–230. https://doi.org/10.1093/afraf/adq002

Landau, L. B. (2014). Conviviality, Rights, and Conflict in Africa's Urban Estuaries. *Politics & Society*, *42*(3), 359–380. https://doi.org/10.1177/0032329214543258

Landau, L. B., & Freemantle, I. (2010). Tactical Cosmopolitanism and Idioms of Belonging: Insertion and Self-Exclusion in Johannesburg. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, *36*(3), 375–390. https://doi.org/10.1080/13691830903494901

Levitt, P., & Jaworsky, B. N. (2007). Transnational Migration Studies: Past Developments and Future Trends. *Annual Review of Sociology*, *33*(1), 129–156. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.soc.33.040406.131816

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic Enquiry*. Sage.

Luttrell, W. (2000). "Good Enough" Methods for Ethnographic Research. *Harvard Educational Review*, *70*.

Mackenzie, N., & Knipe, S. (2006). Research dilemmas: Paradigms, methods and methodology. *Issues in Educational Research*, *16*(2), 1–13.

Madsen, K. D., & van Naerssen, T. (2003). Migration, identity, and belonging. *Journal of Borderlands Studies*, *18*(1), 61–75. https://doi.org/10.1080/08865655.2003.9695602

Mallett, S. (2004). Understanding Home: A Critical Review of the Literature. *The Sociological Review*, *52*(1), 62–89. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-954X.2004.00442.x

Maluleke, G. (2018). Women and negotiated forms of belonging in post-apartheid South Africa. *Critical African Studies*, *10*(3), 272–286. https://doi.org/10.1080/21681392.2019.1613901

Marchetti-Mercer, Maria C. (2012). Is it Just about the Crime? A Psychological Perspective on South African Emigration. *South African Journal of Psychology*, *42*(2), 243–254. https://doi.org/10.1177/008124631204200211

Marchetti-Mercer, M.C. (2006). New meanings of "home" in South Africa. *Acta Academia*, *38*(2), 28.

Marchetti-Mercer, M.C. (2009). South Africans in flux: Exploring the mental health impact of migration on family life. *African Journal of Psychiatry*, *12*(2). https://doi.org/10.4314/ajpsy.v12i2.43730

Marchetti-Mercer, M.C. (2012). Those Easily Forgotten: The Impact of Emigration on Those Left Behind. *Family Process*, *51*(3), 376–390. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1545-5300.2012.01407.x

Marchetti-Mercer, M.C. (2016). "If You Uproot a Tree You Leave a Big Hole Behind": Systemic Interconnectedness in Emigration and Family Life. *Contemporary Family Therapy*, *38*(3), 339–352. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10591-016-9386-6

Marchetti-Mercer, M.C. (2017). "The screen has such sharp edges to hug": The relational consequences of emigration in transnational South African emigrant families. *Transnational Social Review*, *7*(1), 73–89. https://doi.org/10.1080/21931674.2016.1277650

Marschall, S. (2017). Transnational migrant home visits as identity practice: The case of African migrants in South Africa. *Annals of Tourism Research*, *63*, 140–150. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2017.01.011

Marshall, M. N. (1996). *Sampling for qualitative research*. *13*(6), 522–525. https://doi.org/10.1093/fampra/13.6.522

Maslow, A. H. (1971). *The farther reaches of human nature* (pp. xxi, 407). Arkana/Penguin Books.

Mathope, G. (2017). SA's healthcare system strained by refugees and migrants – health minister. *The Citizen*. https://citizen.co.za/news/south-africa/1535473/sas-health-system-strained-by-refugees-and-migrants-health-minister/

May, V. (2013). *Connecting self to society: Belonging in a changing world*. Macmillan International Higher Education.

McMillan, D. W. (1996). Sense of community. *Journal of Community Psychology*, *24*(4), 315–325. https://doi.org/10.1002/(SICI)1520-6629(199610)24:4<315::AID-JCOP2>3.0.CO;2-T

McMillan, D. W. (2011). Sense of community, a theory not a value: A response to Nowell and Boyd. *Journal of Community Psychology*, *39*(5), 507–519. https://doi.org/10.1002/jcop.20439

Moatshe, R. (2018). *David Makhura talks tough at meeting in Olievenhoutbosch | Pretoria News*. IOL News. https://www.iol.co.za/pretoria-news/david-makhura-talks-tough-at-meeting-in-olievenhoutbosch-17580505

Mohajan, H. K. (2018). Qualitative Research Methodology in Social Sciences and Related Subjects. *Journal of Economic Development, Environment and People*, *7*(1), 23. https://doi.org/10.26458/jedep.v7i1.571

Morrow, S. L. (2005). Quality and trustworthiness in qualitative research in counseling psychology. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, *52*(2), 250–260. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0167.52.2.250

Morrow, S. L., & Smith, M. L. (2000). Qualitative Research for Counseling Psychology. In S. D. Brown & R. W. Lent (Eds.), *Handbook of Counseling Psychology* (3rd ed., pp. 199–230). Wiley.

Mosselson, A. (2010). 'There is no difference between citizens and non-citizens anymore': Violent Xenophobia, Citizenship and the Politics of Belonging in Post-Apartheid South Africa. *Journal of Southern African Studies*, *36*(3), 641–655. https://doi.org/10.1080/03057070.2010.507570

Muhammad, M., Wallerstein, N., Sussman, A. L., Avila, M., Belone, L., & Duran, B. (2015). Reflections on Researcher Identity and Power: The Impact of Positionality on Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR) Processes and Outcomes. *Critical Sociology*, *41*(7–8), 1045–1063. https://doi.org/10.1177/0896920513516025

Mustasaari, S. (2015). The 'nuclear family paradigm' as a marker of rights and belonging in transnational families. *Social Identities*, *21*(4), 359–372. https://doi.org/10.1080/13504630.2015.1071699

Ndlovu, T. (2010). Where is my home? Rethinking person, family, ethnicity and home under increased transnational migration by Zimbabweans. *African Identities*, *8*(2), 117–130. https://doi.org/10.1080/14725841003629575

Nelson, L., & Hiemstra, N. (2008). Latino immigrants and the renegotiation of place and belonging in small town America. *Social & Cultural Geography*, *9*(3), 319–342. https://doi.org/10.1080/14649360801990538

Njwambe, A., Cocks, M., & Vetter, S. (2019). Ekhayeni: Rural–urban migration, belonging and landscapes of home in South Africa. *Journal of Southern African Studies*, *45*(2), 413–431. https://doi.org/10.1080/03057070.2019.1631007

Nordberg, C. (2006). Claiming Citizenship: Marginalised Voices on Identity and Belonging. *Citizenship Studies*, *10*(5), 523–539. https://doi.org/10.1080/13621020600954952

Nowell, B., & Boyd, N. (2010). Viewing community as responsibility as well as a resource: Deconstructing the theoretical roots of psychological sense of community. *Journal of Community Psychology, 38*, 828–841.

Oppong, S. H. (2013). The problem of sampling in qualitative research. *Asian Journal of Management Sciences and Education*, *2*(2), 202–210.

Palmary, I. (2002). *Refugees, safety and xenophobia in South African cities: The role of local government* (pp. 1–25). Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation. https://d1wqtxts1xzle7.cloudfront.net/50581297/Refugees_Safety_and_Xenophobia_in_South_20161127-6778-1uo77k9.pdf?1480295224=&response-content-disposition=inline%3B+filename%3DRefugees_Safety_and_Xenophobia_in_South.pdf&Expires=1620736246&Signature=RNeSOhPwfGdFyvez0D4KB5fqyR14yTEmOLoCxY4BcK89toFg3C9MD2Tf90--OXZgCHayGkw0NJQFlhPAbM05x4X5hVrHmST8m~b~G6cvIiwCkzcrPmityVAT0fKuDtU1F5Is1ZcLZ12DpEGv2uCVJgKdVslrgFC3Oq9PGwH2oFvvprVrUyBzp5ScTutXX5baisSWsOM-91~ZvOEPu4n3fqjd7QyhiMYK5rLFOZ7unzvn92YSjXZ6yMWCP80I~80p2jt3OODRkGB8d0-PHvYxyyMOaviXOdNsirxFKJ7zFatYA3CD~UrUvZJJJ8IkMgALUY59m8fjkh1CzHcTUpMp6g__&Key-Pair-Id=APKAJLOHF5GGSLRBV4ZA

Palmary, I. (2018). Psychology, migration studies, and their disconnections: A review of existing research and future possibilities. *South African Journal of Psychology*, *48*(1), 3–14. https://doi.org/10.1177/0081246317751276

Peter, K. B. (2010). Transnational Family Ties, Remittance Motives, and Social Death among Congolese Migrants: A Socio-Anthropological Analysis. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, *41*(2), 225–243. https://doi.org/10.3138/jcfs.41.2.225

Phinney, J. S., Horenczyk, G., Liebkind, K., & Vedder, P. (2001). Ethnic identity, immigration, and well-being: An interactional perspective. *Journal of Social Issues*, *57*(3), 493–510. https://doi.org/10.1111/0022-4537.00225

Pietilä, A.-M., Nurmi, S.-M., Halkoaho, A., & Kyngäs, H. (2020). Qualitative Research: Ethical Considerations. In H. Kyngäs, K. Mikkonen, & M. Kääriäinen (Eds.), *The Application of Content Analysis in Nursing Science Research* (pp. 49–69). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-30199-6_6

Pietkiewicz, I., & Smith, J. A. (2014). A practical guide to using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis in qualitative research psychology. *Czasopismo Psychologiczne Psychological Journal*, *20*(1). https://doi.org/10.14691/CPPJ.20.1.7

Ponterotto, J. G. (2005). Qualitative research in counseling psychology: A primer on research paradigms and philosophy of science. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, *52*(2), 126–136. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0167.52.2.126

Ponterotto, J. G. (2010). Qualitative research in multicultural psychology: Philosophical underpinnings, popular approaches, and ethical considerations. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, *16*(4), 581–589. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0012051

Popoveniuc, B. (2014). Self Reflexivity. The Ultimate End of Knowledge. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, *163*, 204–213. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.12.308

Raskin, J. D. (2002). *Constructivism in psychology: Personal construct psychology, radical constructivism, and social constructivism*. *5*(3), 1–17.

Republic of South Africa. (2002). *No. 13 of 2002: Immigration Act, 2002.* Republic of South Africa. https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/201409/a13-020.pdf

Robinson, O. C. (2014). Sampling in Interview-Based Qualitative Research: A Theoretical and Practical Guide. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, *11*(1), 25–41. https://doi.org/10.1080/14780887.2013.801543

Rogers, C. (1951). *Client Centered Therapy*. Constable and Company Limited.

Rutherford, B. (2008). An unsettled belonging: Zimbabwean farm workers in Limpopo Province, South Africa. *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, *26*(4), 401–415. https://doi.org/10.1080/02589000802481973

Saayman, D. S. (2016). Imagining the "other" – The Representation of the African Migrant in Contemporary South African Literature. *International Journal of Language and Linguistics*, *3*(6), 9.

Saunders, B., Sim, J., Kingstone, T., Baker, S., Waterfield, J., Bartlam, B., Burroughs, H., & Jinks, C. (2018). Saturation in qualitative research: Exploring its conceptualization and operationalization. *Quality & Quantity*, *52*(4), 1893–1907. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11135-017-0574-8

Schiller, N. G., Basch, L., & Blanc-Szanton, C. (1992). Towards a Definition of Transnationalism. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, *645*(1), ix–xiv. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1749-6632.1992.tb33482.x

Schwandt, T. A. (1998). Constructivist, interpretivist approaches to human inquiry. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The landscape of qualitative research: Theories and issues* (pp. 221–259). SAGE Publications Ltd.

Silver, A. (2014). Families Across Borders: The Emotional Impacts of Migration on Origin Families*. *International Migration*, *52*(3), 194–220. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2435.2010.00672.x

Simonsen, K. B. (2016). How the host nation's boundary drawing affects immigrants' belonging. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, *42*(7), 1153–1176. https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2016.1138854

Singh, K. (2019). *Xenophobic attacks: "I go to Malawi with a heavy heart."* News24. https://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/xenophic-attacks-i-go-to-malawi-with-a-heavy-heart-20190402

Singh, S., Cabraal, A., & Robertson, S. (2010). Remittances as a Currency of Care: A Focus on 'Twice Migrants' among the Indian Diaspora in Australia. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, *41*(2), 245–263. https://doi.org/10.3138/jcfs.41.2.245

Skrbiš, Z. (2008). Transnational Families: Theorising Migration, Emotions and Belonging. *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, *29*(3), 231–246. https://doi.org/10.1080/07256860802169188

Song, G., Liu, L., He, S., Cai, L., & Xu, C. (2020). Safety perceptions among African migrants in Guangzhou and Foshan, China. *Cities*, *99*, 1–9. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2020.102624

South African Constitution. (2021). *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996*. South African Government. https://www.gov.za/documents/constitution-republic-south-africa-1996

South African Government. (2021). *COVID-19 / Novel Coronavirus |*. https://www.gov.za/Coronavirus#

Spradley, J. P. (1980). *Participant Observation*. Harcourt Brace.

Statistics South Africa. (2018). *Migrants flock to Gauteng*. Statistics South Africa. http://www.statssa.gov.za/?p=11331

Statistics South Africa. (2019). *Statistical release: Mid-Year population estimates.* 26.

Stebbins, R. A. (2001). *Exploratory Research in the Social Sciences*. SAGE.

Stewart, M. J., Makwarimba, E., Reutter, L. I., Veenstra, G., Raphael, D., & Love, R. (2009). Poverty, Sense of Belonging and Experiences of Social Isolation. *Journal of Poverty*, *13*(2), 173–195. https://doi.org/10.1080/10875540902841762

Sy, M., O'Leary, N., Nagraj, S., El-Awaisi, A., O'Carroll, V., & Xyrichis, A. (2020). Doing interprofessional research in the COVID-19 era: A discussion paper. *Journal of Interprofessional Care*, *34*. https://doi.org/10.1080/13561820.2020.1791808

Thomas, E., & Magilvy, J. K. (2011). Qualitative Rigor or Research Validity in Qualitative Research: Scientific Inquiry. *Journal for Specialists in Pediatric Nursing*, *16*(2), 151–155. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1744-6155.2011.00283.x

Tlhabye, G. (2017). *Not in my house, Olievenhoutbosch woman tells protesters | IOL News*. IOL News. https://www.iol.co.za/news/south-africa/gauteng/not-in-my-house-olievenhoutbosch-woman-tells-protesters-8076706

van Dijk, J. A. G. M. (2005). *The Deepening Divide: Inequality in the Information Society*. SAGE Publications.

van Oudenhoven, J. P., & Ward, C. (2013). Fading Majority Cultures: The Implications of Transnationalism and Demographic Changes for Immigrant Acculturation: Fading majority cultures. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology*, *23*(2), 81–97. https://doi.org/10.1002/casp.2132

van Rensburg, G. H. (2010). Scientific research. In G. H. van Rensburg, A. H. Alpaslan, G. M. du Plooy, D. Gelderblom, R. van Eeden, & D. J. Wigston, *Research in the social sciences* (pp. 79–106). University of South Africa.

Vaquera, E., Aranda, E., & Sousa-Rodriguez, I. (2017). Emotional Challenges of Undocumented Young Adults: Ontological Security, Emotional Capital, and Well-being. *Social Problems*, *64*(2), 298–314. https://doi.org/10.1093/socpro/spx010

Vertovec, S. (2001). Transnationalism and identity. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, *27*(4), 573–582. https://doi.org/10.1080/13691830120090386

Vertovec, S., & Cohen, R. (2002). *Introduction: Conceiving cosmopolitanism*. Oxford University Press. https://ora.ox.ac.uk/objects/uuid:401a0c0d-0778-4214-bf92-d2f46205a486

Vindrola-Padros, C., Chisnall, G., Cooper, S., Dowrick, A., Djellouli, N., Symmons, S. M., Martin, S., Singleton, G., Vanderslott, S., Vera, N., & Johnson, G. A. (2020). Carrying Out Rapid Qualitative Research During a Pandemic: Emerging Lessons From COVID-19. *Qualitative Health Research*, *30*(14), 2192–2204. https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732320951526

Walton, G. M., & Cohen, G. L. (2007). A question of belonging: Race, social fit, and achievement. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *92*(1), 82–96. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.92.1.82

Wazimap profile: Ward 106 (79900106), City of Tshwane, Gauteng. (2011). Wazimap. https://wazimap.co.za/profiles/ward-79900106-city-of-tshwane-ward-106-79900106/

Weiss, R. S. (1994). *Learning from strangers: The art and method of qualitative interview studies* (pp. ix, 246). Free Press.

Weissman, R. S., Klump, K. L., & Rose, J. (2020). Conducting eating disorders research in the time of COVID-19: A survey of researchers in the field. *International Journal of Eating Disorders*, *53*(7), 1171–1181. https://doi.org/10.1002/eat.23303

Williams, A. (2003). How to … Write and analyse a questionnaire. *Journal of Orthodontics*, *30*(3), 245–252. https://doi.org/10.1093/ortho/30.3.245

Willig, C. (2001). *Introducing Qualitative Research in Psychology: Adventures in Theory and Method*. Open University Press.

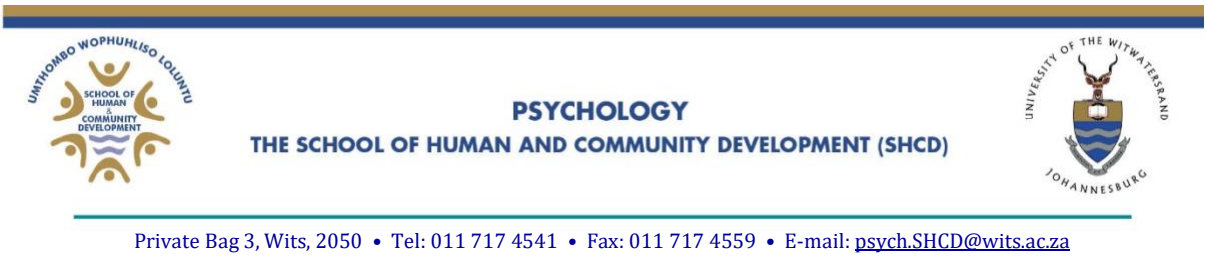
Wilson-Forsberg, S. (2015). "We Don't Integrate; We Adapt:" Latin American Immigrants Interpret Their Canadian Employment Experiences in Southwestern Ontario. *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, *16*(3), 469–489. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12134-014-0349-1

Yuval-Davis, N. (2006). Belonging and the politics of belonging. *Patterns of Prejudice*, *40*(3), 197–214. https://doi.org/10.1080/00313220600769331

Yuval-Davis, N. (2016). Power, Intersectionality and the Politics of Belonging. In W. Harcourt (Ed.), *The Palgrave Handbook of Gender and Development* (pp. 367–381). Palgrave Macmillan UK. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-137-38273-3_25

Appendices

Appendix A: Gatekeeper Confidentiality Form



As a gatekeeper of _____ [Researcher's Name], I understand and agree that the following conditions shall apply to my position:

1. Any information, recorded or not, received or acquired in connection with my duties is considered confidential. Confidential information includes all records which in any way would divulge information in regard to all participants in this study and his/her family.

2. All information given out or discovered about the participants and his/her family's circumstances and / or the operations shall be held in confidence by me.

3. I will not make public statements to the media expressly or impliedly, on behalf of The participants or his/her family.

4. I shall act in a professional manner in the performance of my duties as a gatekeeper of _____[Researcher's Name].

Signed this _____ day of _____, 20___

_____

Gatekeeper's signature

_____

Researcher's signature

Appendix B: Participation Information Sheet

PSYCHOLOGY
THE SCHOOL OF HUMAN AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT (SHCD)

Private Bag 3, Wits, 2050 • Tel: 011 717 4541 • Fax: 011 717 4559 • E-mail: psych.SHCD@wits.ac.za

Good day!

My name is Alida Bonnet and I am currently doing my Master of Arts in Community Based Counselling Psychology at the University of the Witwatersrand. Part of the degree involves the completion of a research project.

I am working on a project that wants to find out what the role is that family relationships play in where immigrants feel 'at home'. I am specifically looking at their relationship with their family in in their home country and whether that plays a role in a sense of being 'at home'.

The study needs participants who are working-class and immigrants. They must be over the age of 18 years old. It is also important that they speak English and have families who still live in in their home country. If you fit into this group of people, it would be greatly appreciated if you take part in this project.

Taking part involves an interview with me, Alida, at a restaurant in Blue Hills shopping centre for about 1.5 hours. Throughout this project I will make sure that what you have told me in the interview is not connected to your name. In other words, what you have told me in the interview will remain confidential. I will do this by giving you a false name in the interview. The interview will be audio recorded so that what you have said can be written down and analysed. Please note that taking part is entirely your choice and, if you do not feel comfortable during the interview, you are welcome to stop at any time.

If you would like more information, please do not hesitate to contact me (contact details provided below).

Alida Bonnet
[redacted]

Prof. Maria Marchetti-Mercer
Maria.Marchetti-Mercer@wits.ac.za

Appendix C: Consent Form

PSYCHOLOGY
THE SCHOOL OF HUMAN AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT (SHCD)

Private Bag 3, Wits, 2050 • Tel: 011 717 4541 • Fax: 011 717 4559 • E-mail: psych.SHCD@wits.ac.za

Good day!

I am a student at the University of the Witwatersrand who is currently pursuing her Masters degree in Community Based Counselling Psychology. Part of the degree involves the completion of a research project.

I am working on a project that is exploring the impact of transnational family relationships on a sense of belonging. Transnational family relationships are those relationships we have with family members who do not live in the same country as us. Essentially, I am exploring what impact one's family back home and, the relationship one may have with them, has on one's sense of belonging.

I would like you to participate in this study. It will require an interview of no more than 1.5hrs that will be audio recorded and conducted at a restaurant in Blue Hills Shopping Centre.

If you are willing to participate, please give your consent by signing this form. Please also read and sign the attached form to give consent for audio recording this interview.

I _____(Participant Name and Surname) hereby give my consent to partake in this study. By signing this form, I understand that (please tick the boxes to indicate your understanding):

- □ The interview will be audio recorded
- □ My confidentiality will be ensured by assigning a pseudonym to my information
- □ I am giving the researcher permission to use the data obtained during the interview for the research project
- □ Participation is entirely voluntary
- □ If I would like to withdraw, I can do so at any time

Date: _____ Signature:_____

Appendix D: Consent for Audio Recording

PSYCHOLOGY
THE SCHOOL OF HUMAN AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT (SHCD)

Private Bag 3, Wits, 2050 • Tel: 011 717 4541 • Fax: 011 717 4559 • E-mail: psych.SHCD@wits.ac.za

This interview will be audio recorded in order to accurately transcribe the interview. Throughout the interview process I will not use your real name to keep your identity confidential. The recording will be kept in a password-protected device and will only be listened by me for transcribing.

By signing this form, you are giving me permission to record the interview and, therefore, use it for the purpose of my research. This means that you understand that (please tick the boxes to indicate your understanding):

- □ If you do not wish to be audio recorded, it will result in your withdrawal from the study
- □ Participation is entirely voluntary
- □ If you wish to withdraw from the study at any time you are welcome to do so
- □ In the event that you withdraw, your recording will be deleted immediately

Please sign this form to give your consent

Name and Surname:_____

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Appendix E: Interview Schedule

What does ‘home’ mean to you?

Where do you feel at ‘home’? (In your home country or here in Olievenhoutbosch?)

What do you feel when you speak of home?

1. **Do immigrants experience a sense of belonging in Olievenhoutbosch?**

Do you feel like you belong in Olievenhoutbosch?

What do you believe has influenced you to feel this way?

Do you feel valued by the Olievenhoutbosch community?

Do you think Olievenhoutbosch has recognised you as a part of the community?

Is there a place in Olievenhoutbosch where you feel you belong the most?

What has influenced you to feel at home here?

Has anything prevented you from feeling at home here in Olievenhoutbosch?

2. **How do immigrants in Olievenhoutbosch maintain transnational family relationships?**

How do you maintain contact with members of your family back home?

What do you find useful or challenging about maintaining contact?

Do you still feel like you belong in your home country? (ask if the questions at the top did not point to country of origin)

How have you maintained this sense of belonging?

3. **What role do transnational family relationships play in a sense of belonging among immigrants in Olievenhoutbosch?**

Has your family in your home country played a role in your sense of belonging there?

Do you think your relationship with your family in your country of origin has influenced if you feel at home in Olievenhoutbosch?

Has your sense of belonging with your family abroad perhaps influenced how you feel living in South Africa?

Appendix F: Ethics Certificate

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (SCHOOL OF HUMAN & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE	**PROTOCOL NUMBER: MACC/19/001 IH**
PROJECT TITLE:	Belonging and transnational family relationship: the experiences of immigrants in Olievenhoutbosch
INVESTIGATORS	Bonnet Alida
DEPARTMENT	Psychology
DATE CONSIDERED	16 May 2019
DECISION OF COMMITTEE*	Approved

This ethical clearance is valid for 2 years and may be renewed upon application

DATE: 16 May 2019

CHAIRPERSON
(Dr Vinitha Jithoo)

cc Supervisor:

Prof. Maria Marchetti-Mercer
Psychology

DECLARATION OF INVESTIGATOR (S)

To be completed in duplicate and **one copy** returned to the Secretary, Room 100015, 10th floor, Senate House, University.

I/we fully understand the conditions under which I am/we are authorized to carry out the abovementioned research and I/we guarantee to ensure compliance with these conditions. Should any departure be contemplated from the research procedure, as approved, I/we undertake to submit a revised protocol to the Committee.

This ethical clearance will expire on 31 December 2021

PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER IN ALL ENQUIRIES