Transnational Mothering, Patterns and Strategies of Care-Giving by Zimbabwean Domestic Workers in Botswana: A Multi-Sited Approach

By

Joyce Takaindisa (334419)

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Supervisor: Professor Ingrid Palmary

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DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my own personal work. It is submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of the Witwatersrand. This work has not been submitted before for examination or fulfilment of a degree at any other university.

Signed

Joyce Takaindisa

ABSTRACT

This thesis focuses on multi-sited transnational motherhood practices by examining the care triangle of transnational mothers who are single and working as domestic workers in Botswana, left-behind children and care-givers in Zimbabwe. Against a background that most studies on transnational parenting have tended to focus predominantly on the migrant's experiences in the receiving context, usually centering on one player at a given time, this study fills in a gap by focusing on transnational family members in both the sending and receiving contexts. Through a multi-sited qualitative research approach in Botswana and Zimbabwe, data for this study was collected through a triangulation of data collection methods (narrative interviews, semi-structured interviews, solicited diaries and photography). Snowball and purposive sampling approaches were utilized. Conceptually, the study acknowledges the multiple-situatedness of migrants in more than one nation state. By so doing, the study filled in empirical, theoretical and methodological gaps in transnational parenting. Theoretically, the study is underpinned by transnational theory, global care chain theory, and new sociology of childhood studies, care circulation framework and intersectional theory. For data analysis, Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was used as the main analytic framework. This study brings Zimbabwe and Botswana into global discussions of transnational motherhood, mobility and care-giving in the era of heightened globalisation. The study also brings to the fore socially constructed underpinnings of motherhood and childhood against contested everyday realities of undocumented migrant mothers by offering new nuances beyond dominant ideologies. As such, the study rejects notions of the universal mother and universal child by privileging context and social location in understanding experiences of motherhood, caregiving and childhood in transnational families. The findings also expose transnational motherhood as a site of unequal power relations between, the state and extra- legal actors on one hand and migrant mothers on the other. The study therefore argues that state and non-state actors in the migration governance system of Botswana are central in the regulation of transnational families. The study highlights the role and contributions of the state and extra-legal actors in shaping the type of motherhood and indeed childhood that emerges in the context of undocumented migrant domestic workers in Botswana. It further illuminates participant's struggles with difference as they strive to reconcile their personal circumstances in relation to dominant ideologies of motherhood and family. Even so, dominant discourses that privilege physical co-presence of biological mothers are further challenged as the findings also suggest that doing family does not necessarily mean doing so in a single physical location. Instead, this study acknowledges that doing family may mean family members are differentially located geographically and that some activities of fulfilling familial obligations like breadwinning may necessitate physical separation of family members in order for them to be fulfilled. Ultimately, though governed by dominant ideologies, motherhood can be altered by socio-economic demands of the transnational family. In relation to children, the study also challenges dominant constructions of a child as someone in constant need of care. Contrary to this notion, this study reveals that children are not only care-recipients but can also be care-givers in transnational family settings. Furthermore, dominant ideologies are also central in children's perceptions of family but findings also suggest that children are capable of adjusting their thinking hence they accept maternal absence and migration when they can directly link the material benefits of their mother's migration to their livelihoods. For the caregivers, findings also show that their care-giving is not given neutrally but is fraught with expectations of reciprocity for their future. Accordingly, by looking after left-behind children, they are in a way securing future social capital which they can draw from in their older ages. The narratives also indicate that caregivers, though widely regarded as other mothers in the absence of biological mothers do not fully embrace the role of mothers in its entirety. Contrarily, they are some roles that they

designate as biological mother's roles such as discipline. As such, findings suggest that caregivers may be reluctant to perform these roles but leave it for the absent mothers. Overall, findings from mothers, caregivers and left-behind children converge in the ways they all prescribe to hegemonic mothering suggesting their thinking is influenced by dominant ideologies of gender. Significantly, though maternal attitudes are driven by dominant ideologies, nonetheless, hegemonic ideologies remain malleable in response to mother's socio-economic circumstances and location. Significantly, the study contributes to knowledge on transnational families in the context of the global South (South to South migration). Empirically, this study responds to the paucity of research in transnational motherhood in the Botswana context. Methodologically, by using a multi-sited approach, the contribution of this study lies in its recognition of transnational migrants as multiply situated beings whose activities permeate beyond the nation state thus doing away with methodological nationalism – the tendency to look at the nation state as the sole unit of analysis. By locating transnational family experiences from different geographical perspectives, this study contributes to a growing body of literature of transnational parenting using multi-sited approaches to the study of spatially disperses families.

Keywords: migrant mothers, left-behind children, caregivers, migrant domestic workers, transnational, illegal, undocumented, global care chains, interpretive phenomenological analysis.

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Dedication:

In its finality, I dedicate this thesis to my family – my husband Fortune and my sons Tashinga and Takunda, my late father, the "gentle giant" Stephen Sibanda and my dearest mother, Phildah Sibanda. I also dedicate this thesis to my family in South Africa notably my sister Elizabeth Sibanda, my nieces and nephews Samantha, Tawana, Tanaka, my brother Thomas and my sister-in-law Kudzai for looking out for me and availing their time, homes and transport during my stay in South Africa.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

> The one who leaves dies and so does the one who stays behind. The feeling of mourning each side experiences may be compared to those one experiences at the death of a loved one. The unconscious association between leaving and dying can be extremely intense (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, p.67)

1.1 Introduction

The focus of this study is on transnational motherhood, in particular, the lived experiences of migrant domestic workers from Zimbabwe who migrated for domestic work in Botswana. The study also incorporates the experiences of their left-behind children and caregivers in Zimbabwe. It therefore provides insights into how the three key players in the transnational care-giving triangle (Graham, Jordan, Yeoh & Su-Kamdi, 2012) perceive motherhood in the context of maternal absence due to migration. In doing so, the study draws insights from transnational mothers who have left from their homes in order to overcome their economic challenges (Moroksavic, 1994). The study aimed to understand their strategies of mothering and patterns of care-giving performed from different geographical locations than those of their families.

This study also examines the perceptions of motherhood from the perspectives of the children left-behind by drawing on their experiences of living in a separate country to that of their mothers. This aspect was particularly imperative in order to articulate children's experiences from an independent point of view, in recognition of children as independent social actors. In order to gain holistic insights into this phenomenon, the research also incorporated the views and experiences of the care-givers who take care of the children in place of their transnational mothers. Methodologically, the study therefore adopted a multi-sited approach in order to capture the views of all key players in Botswana and Zimbabwe.

Empirically, the study drew from diverse theoretical perspectives, based mainly on transnational theory, global care chain theory, and intersectional theory, new sociology of childhood, motherhood and structural vulnerabilities literatures. My epistemological position was informed by phenomenology as I was interested in examining personal lived experiences and subjective perceptions of mothers, children and caregivers. In order to interpret their experiences, I was accordingly guided by Husserl and Heidegger's hermeneutical philosophies in order to describe, as well as, interpret participant narratives.

From a philosophical perspective, the assumptions underpinning hermeneutic philosophy rests on the beliefs that human beings are always in interaction, not only with the self but with the other (Heidegger, 1962), pointing to the interconnectedness of humans in their social environments. Secondly, the philosophy rests on the assumption that our relationships with others tell us about ourselves. Hermeneutical Philosophy also places emphasis on human beings as being "thrown' into the world because it is a world that existed before humans. It is these assumptions that I adopt mainly for this study, in order to understand the relationships between the participants on the care triangle and in turn, their relationship to the worlds in which they live, informed by their subjective experiences and perceptions.

1.2   Background of the study

The years 2007-2008 were marked by a heightened increase of migration from Zimbabwe to the Global North countries as well as neighbouring countries, such as South Africa and Botswana. This period also witnessed many women leaving their homes in search of opportunities in neighbouring countries, particularly for jobs in the domestic and care-work sectors in South Africa and Botswana. Many of the typical stereotypes of what a mother should be or should do are constantly being challenged in the context of migration as women adjust to the new realities of transnational parenting (Gorfinkiel, 2015). Given this background, what has been missing is research that has looked at the causes, consequences and effects of transnational mobility holistically, by incorporating the views of all family members – those who left as well as those who stayed behind.

Therefore, one of the main objectives of this study was to explore how traditionally distinct gender roles are redefined and renegotiated in the everyday mothering practices of migrant domestic workers. In order to make a contribution to transnational scholarship and theory, the study also explores the care-giving triangle in transnational families by looking beyond the migrant but extending it to the other main actors, namely, the caregivers and the children left behind. The thesis therefore sought to interrogate motherhood through a transnational lens by exploring the experiences and perceptions of motherhood in transnational families, through the perspectives of migrant mothers, left-behind children and their care-givers.

1.3   Problem Statement

Although there is significant literature on transnational motherhood that has highlighted the complexities and challenges of transnational families, transnational motherhood between or within the context of the Global South has not been explored widely in studies so far. Migration

studies have also tended to heavily concentrate on the mobility of care-workers from the Global South to the Global North countries. Inevitably, the migration streams that the bulk of these studies have focused on is on Filipino and Latina migration streams to the more developed countries in the global North. Given this obvious bias, this study sought to contribute to understanding migration in the global South, especially given that most migration in Africa takes place within Africa and not to the Global North, as normally assumed.

This thesis aimed to de-Westernise and de-Asianise (Iwabuchi, 2010, 2014) transnational migration research by de-centring it from the aforementioned dominant perspectives, adding to insights in our understanding of the Global South by bringing voices from the South into transnational migration research. This is so, given that scholarship on transnationalism has tended to generalise empirical findings that are dominantly based on migration streams of Asian and Latino origin, thus obscuring those unique differences that arise in South-to-South migration waves. In doing so, the present study aimed to make a contribution in de-Westernising as well as de-Asian sing knowledge production in order to make African experiences of transnational motherhood translocally relevant in the African context.

Given the entangled symbiotic relationship between globalisation and transnationalism (the rise of global care-chains), this study was relevant in order to also show that the manner in which globalisation is experienced in Africa is different to that in the global North e.g. the use of communication technologies in distant parenting. Globalisation has brought about different outcomes dependent on geographical location and thus reproduces inequalities, uneven development and marginalisation (Iwabuchi, 2010) hence it was imperative to re-centre African experiences at the centre of globalisation and domestic care-work in order to fully understand the phenomenon of transnationalism and how globalisation is experienced in this context vis-à-vis how families are transformed to suit the current wave of uneven globalisation.

Secondly, most migration studies have tended to be focused on the migrant experiences, usually in the receiving context. There is a lack of studies that focus on the experiences of those left-behind, in particular, care-givers. Though they play key roles as they essentially enable the mobility of mothers by allowing them to leave their children behind, their roles have been less researched and attended to in academia. This study sought to fill this particular lacuna by incorporating the experiences and perspectives of care-givers who, in essence, enable transnational motherhood. Furthermore, although children are often included in research, studies have tended to privilege adult voices speaking on their behalf. I therefore sought to fill

this lacuna by incorporating the experiences and views of children on maternal separation and from the standpoint that children are independent thinkers who can tell their own experiences, with independent minds.

Moreover, transnational studies have tended to be theoretically and empirically weak because of the tendency to confine social analysis to the boundaries of nation states, thus suffering from methodological nationalism (Wimmer & Glick-Schiller, 2002). In recognition of the continuum of experiences of migrants from origin to receiving country as an iterative cycle that links together those that migrated and those that remained behind (Basch, Glick-Schiller & Szanton-Blanc, 1994), the study incorporated the views of both 'stayers' and 'leavers' through the adoption of a multi-site research approach in Botswana and Zimbabwe in order to gain holistic views into transnational family lives.

The study was therefore not confined to the activities and experiences within one bounded nation state as it encompassed transnational phenomena from the perspectives of mothers in Botswana as well as children and care-givers in Zimbabwe (the stayers). Moreover, although much migration research is focused on movements to the Global North, there is a significant number of studies that have also focused on mobility in and within Africa. However, there still remains a scholarly and academic bias by concentrating on movement to South Africa. Hence, most studies of migration from Zimbabwe to other African countries has been heavily concentrated on movement to South Africa, at the neglect of movement to other destinations where there are comparably large numbers of Zimbabwean migrants, such as Botswana and Namibia. In addition, the few studies done in Botswana have not focused on motherhood nor have they incorporated both migrants and their left-behind families as far as I know. Inevitably, this thesis was envisioned with these gaps in mind.

1.4   My Positionality

In conceptualising this study, I came in with certain pre-conceptions and pre-understandings that possibly have a bearing on how I intellectualised, collected and subsequently analysed my data. The inquiry into transnational motherhood occurred against a personal background of having been mothered intensively by my biological mother in a nuclear family set-up. Having grown up, I merely shifted by moving from my nuclear family to creating my own nuclear family when I got married. As such, I have never experienced being raised in any other family form other than a nuclear family set up. Inevitably, my background of having been brought up

in a nuclear family with a working father and a stay-at home mother unavoidably influenced my own perceptions of what motherhood and family mean.

Having been brought up in a predominantly nuclear family set-up, I went into this research with a position that mothers should not live separately from their children. Informed by own personal upbringing and cultural background, it was simply inconceivable and inappropriate in my view for a mother to leave her children behind in pursuit of other goals. In actual fact, I fully subscribed to the idealised and gendered ideology of doing family. However, I found my position constantly shifting during my interactions with the participants and I emerged from the field with the position that motherhood, similar to childhood, is not fixed but consists of experiences that are mediated by class and social positioning. Hence, I realised that my own form of mothering, where I co-reside with my children is merely another variation of motherhood but it does not represent the entirety of motherhood especially bearing in mind that I have also experienced migration and also been separated from my own child, albeit on a temporary basis.

1.5   Research questions

For this thesis, I primarily adopted a narrative research approach, inspired by Wengraf's (2004) single question approach aimed at inducing narratives. Based on this approach, I began by asking just a single question to all my participants. During the second stage, I would then draft a semi-structured interview schedule that would be drafted in response to the single question narratives. As such, each and every semi-structured interview schedule was individually tailor-made in response to personal narratives. The three main research questions that initiated and guided the entire research were posed to the participants in the following order i.e. the 1st question was posed to mothers; the 2nd question was directed at the care-givers and the last and 3rd question was posed to the left-behind children. From these questions, all participants were given free rein in terms of what they told, how they told their stories,

1. Please tell me about yourself and the child or children you left in Zimbabwe. As you know, I am collecting data on how mothering practices are transforming and being redefined as a result of your migration to Botswana by looking into specific practices and strategies you employ to cope with the emotional, economic, psychological and social consequences of transnational migration in Botswana as well as your home country, Zimbabwe. Please could you tell me your story and experiences? Please take

your time and you may begin your story from wherever you feel like. There are no right or wrong answers. I will listen first and with your permission, record your story as well as take some notes too. I will not interrupt. However, after you finish telling me your story, I may want to ask some further questions as a follow up to your story.

2. Please tell me about yourself and your experiences of looking after the child/children left in your care. As you are aware, I am collecting information from mothers who work in Botswana, whose child/ children are living in your care here in Zimbabwe. I want to understand your own personal experiences of care-giving and how your relationships function between the mothers and the children separated from their mothers as well as the dynamics of reciprocity and mutual dependence characteristic of this relationship. Please could you tell me your story and experiences? Please take your time and you may begin your story from wherever you feel like. There are no right or wrong answers. I will listen first and with your permission, record your story as well as take some notes too. I will not interrupt. However, after you finish telling me your story, I may want to ask some further questions as a follow up to your story.

3. Please tell me about yourself and how you feel about living separately from your mother. I am collecting data on mothers working in Botswana who do not live with their children in Botswana. I am also collecting information from the children living here in Zimbabwe without their mothers so that I can understand the experiences of separation directly from the children, like you. Please could you tell me your story and experiences of separation? Please take your time and you may begin your story from wherever you feel like. There are no right or wrong answers. I will listen first and with your permission, record your story as well as take some notes too. I will not interrupt. However, after you finish telling me your story, I may want to ask some further questions as a follow up to your story.

1.6   Structure of the thesis

Chapter 1:

In chapter 1, I introduce the central role of this thesis, the problem statement, the main research questions and significance of the study. I then close the chapter by outlining the structure of the thesis. I anchor my research by identifying the research gaps that exist in transnational research. Specifically, I point out the contextual paucity of research of transnational studies in the Global South. Specifically, the bulk of studies on transnational families is from the Asian and Latino families migrating to the Global North i.e. Filipino, Mexican families, etc. Rarely has transnational motherhood been researched on migration that circulates within the Global South context. In addition, the studies have over privileged modern communicative technologies as easing the pain and burdens of separation, a factor that is not so common in the Global South context.

In addition, most women who migrate from Asia to the Global North for instance, migrate through labour brokerage services and labour export agreements between their governments e.g. Philippines, Sri Lanka and governments in the global North. This presents a unique arrangement which is not a factor in the context of the present study. In a sense, this study was driven by the need to contribute to the 'de-Arsenisation and 'de- Westernisation of transnational studies in order to understand how transnational motherhood and childhood is experienced in the global South context where conditions of departure and contexts of arrivals present a different set of dynamics and legislative conditions that are markedly different from those in the global North.

Chapter 2:

In this chapter, I explore extant literature as well theoretical and conceptual underpinnings of the study through extensive reference to literature in transnationalism, motherhood, transnational motherhood, the New Sociology of Childhood and Global Care Chain. However, in this chapter, I also point out the weaknesses of transnational theory, global care chain theory. I have argued that transnational theory, in relation to the kind of transnationalism that is practices by migrant mothers in Botswana, on its own, has shortfalls. The kind of transnationalism practiced by migrant domestic workers in Botswana needs to be analysed within an intersectional analysis in order to fully comprehend the effects of migration and motherhood as it intersects with various vectors of disadvantage such as gender, class positioning, legal status and nationality, among other factors.

Moreover, although from its basic tenets, transnational literature tends to be over-celebratory in its approach, the undocumented status of migrant domestic workers in Botswana shows that mothering from a distance (Parrenas 2001, 2005) or transnational motherhood (Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avila, 1997) is challenged and negatively impacted by their precarious positions. As such, agency for these mothers is met with severe constraints which renders them incapable of practicing transnational obligations effectively. Consequently, transnational theory on its own, as I found, is not sufficient to fully explore motherhood and the childhood of the participants in this study.

As the present study established, the kind of transnationalism exhibited by undocumented mothers mimics a forced transnationalism due to material disadvantages faced in the country of origin. Lastly, although I have argued that empirically, it has been dominated by Asian and Latino transnationalism, it did not mean that I could not use it conceptually and theoretically to guide the present study. On these premises, I therefore argue that I could still define African realities (South to South) migration within this paradigm by merely removing Asian and the West from the centre of analysis in order to recreate knowledge in an African context. Hence, in this study, it was possible to deploy an international theory (transnationalism, global care chains and intersectional theory) to analyse African realities within existing international theory.

Chapter 3

In this chapter, I outline my epistemological position by outlining the methodological approached adopted for the study. I begin by outlining my philosophical stance and extensively refer to Interpretivism and Hermeneutic philosophy. I then outline my research approach through the use of multiple qualitative data collection methods i.e. narrative interviews, semi-structured interviews, solicited diaries and visual participatory methodologies, notably cameras and drawings. I also discuss the sampling methods used, namely, snowball and purposive sampling, followed by an outline of the due process followed in collecting data from participants. This is then followed by a discussion of the data analysis procedures adopted, namely, through the procedures of Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA).

A discussion on ethical protocols followed is also further outlined, followed by methodological reflections in relation to personal field experiences and the effects of my positionality as a researcher to the data obtained and field relations. I also pay attention to translation issues in the study and what it meant to translate from a minor language (Shona) to a dominant language

(English) i.e. the implications of placing English at the centre of knowledge production. I close the chapter by bringing attention to issues of confirmability, transferability and trustworthiness of my data.

Chapter 4:

This chapter marks the beginning of the presentation of the research findings on mothers, caregivers and left-behind children. However, for this particular chapter, I focus on presenting and discussing the findings, specifically in relation to data obtained from the transnational mothers. I present the main themes, supported by verbatim quotes from their narratives and diaries by focusing on their interpretations of motherhood and the context and the transnational contexts in which they are practicing their motherhood. After presenting the main themes, I then interpret the findings in a discussion by moving from a descriptive presentation to an analytical position in relation to the emerging findings.

I further discuss the micro and macro aspects of borders and the meanings of borders and surveillance on undocumented transnational mothers and the implications on their left-behind family members. I place emphasis on the role of the state in shaping families, national and global factors in determining how migrant mothers' mother their children. The interaction of the local, national and global structural factors is emphasised as a way of holistically examining transnational experiences and the accompanying outcomes on the ways in which motherhood and childhood are experienced in such context. In addition, I also underscore the significance of hegemonic motherhood in influencing perceptions of motherhood as perceived by transnational mothers in Botswana.

Specifically, my study illustrated that hegemonic motherhood is seen in a very positive light than any other versions of motherhood. The influence of idealised notions of motherhood is quite substantial as the narratives of the participants continuously revealed throughout the study, suggesting that "even when resisted or foregone, mothering ideology forms the backdrop of action and evaluation of oneself (Arendell, 1999, p.3). Significantly, the study also revealed the persistence of gendered thinking not only in mothers, but in the children and care-givers as they all continued to reify hegemonic motherhood as the preferred option of mothering, driven by the moralities of doing mother work. Their perceived failures to fulfil normative traditional aspects of motherhood served to induce feelings of guilt for leaving their children behind.

In essence, this showed that even when women leave their reproductive arenas (the home) to go out and work, motherhood still remained the primary duty and expectation. Ultimately, on the basis of this expectation, mothers found themselves in positions where they always had to over-justify why they were absent from their homes and also exhibited feelings of guilt and regret for leaving their children behind. The women I encountered in this study continuously reproduced traditional gender expectations of motherhood.

Yet in reality, motherhood was not the only role women had to fulfil but in addition, they were also the main breadwinners for their families' livelihoods - suggesting the irreconcilability of these two significant roles. As such, the study showed that motherhood is not a fixed category for women because it is not the only identity for women. In essence, maternal availability that seems to be privileged normatively and is synonymous with co-presence does not imply physical presence because motherhood can be done even in the absence of physical presence. As such, doing family does not mean it is done in one home where all family members are together but doing family can be done across different geographical spaces.

Evidently, the findings in the study also served to illustrate the contradictory nature of transnational motherhood. In essence, transnationalism is contradictory for women (Zontini, 2004, p.1142) given the irreconcilability of simultaneous fulfilment of both economic provisioning and emotional provisioning for the family. Consequently, this study also revealed that the most significant trigger factor for migration was the origin state's failure to provide employment opportunities to women within their national boundaries (Cheng, 2004).

Chapter 5:

In chapter 5, I present the emerging themes from the left-behind children. I do so by drawing from their narratives, diaries and journals, photographs and drawings. In presenting these findings, I maintain a position that children are agentic human beings capable of acting on their own, but I do so, bearing in mind the context from which the narratives are emerging. In other words, the environment in which the children are experiencing their childhood and maternal separation are also key in the analysis of their experiences and subjectivities. Hence, for example, what emerged as a major finding was the manner in which the children were complicit in reproducing and reifying traditional notions of motherhood.

The children's gender beliefs were also consistent with larger societal beliefs and indeed the adults in their environment who also believe in hegemonic mothering. Furthermore, I interrogate the notion of the universal child in locating experiences of left-behind children in

Zimbabwe and instead adopt the standpoint that childhood is mediated and in turn, produces differentiated childhoods depending on location. Again, an intersectional analysis was found to be fitting in order to understand the experiences of childhood and maternal separation. In particular, although the New Sociology of Childhood recognises children as independent thinkers who have the capacity to exercise their agency, an intersectional analysis exposes the limitations of agency on the children in the present study when factors such as class positioning, age as well as macro-economic factors in Zimbabwe, mediate negatively upon the agency of children.

Given the socio-economic conditions that have prevailed in Zimbabwe, particularly since the period 2007/2008, all children in this study had no say in the migration decisions of their mothers. For the children in the present study, the choice between their emotional and economic well-being was a difficult, if not impossible, choice (Castaneda & Buck, 2011). However, even though they have difficulties in accepting maternal separation, on the other hand, they also accept maternal separation as a necessary reality for their livelihoods. The findings show that children realise that even though the remittances they receive are insufficient, they nonetheless accept the lack of choices and opportunities their mothers have and meagre as the remittances may be, migration is what is necessary for them to sustain their livelihoods, humble as they may be.

In addition, I also discuss paternal absence as an issue that was raised by all children in the study. However, it appears their sentiments regarding their absent fathers was exacerbated by absence of their mothers. Furthermore, I also show children's gendered thinking through their association of mothers with the care/reproductive role whilst fathers, on the other hand, are often associated with the role of breadwinner. The narratives of the children also illustrated changing family roles and responsibilities in transnational families as the study established that in some families, children had now assumed the roles that were previously done by their mothers e.g. older siblings taking care of their younger siblings or taking up the role of caring for elderly caregivers in the family or taking up paid piece jobs to earn some money to assist their families.

Chapter 6:

In chapter 6, I focus on presenting and discussing the empirical findings from the care-givers of left-behind children in Zimbabwe. I present the main themes that emerged, again followed by their subjective experiences of motherhood. I place emphasis on the context of care-giving,

and although I draw theoretically from the Global Care Chains theory, I place attention on the context of care-giving in the Global South, care-giving practices and gendered obligations of care in transnational families. I illustrate the concept that care-giving is often not neutral but is given with expectations of future reciprocity, even though there are possibilities that the social returns may not be realised.

Hence, the study discusses care-giving as a form of social capital for future social protection and also as a duty that is highly gendered with women expected to take responsibility for child-caring and raising. The factors that mediate on care-giving experiences in Zimbabwe are discussed in relation to the class and social positioning of the mothers back in Botswana and the way these factors flow back transnationally to affect the care-givers in question, as well as the children left-behind. The caregiver's narratives and their subsequent experiences are analysed at the intersections of gender, kinship ties, socio-economic positioning and globalisation i.e. technological privileges.

In concluding this chapter, I further extend the gains of multi-sited research (MSR) by reflecting on the outcomes of triangulating data across two different geographical sites from participants who are from the same families. I also highlight the efficacy of multi-site research in getting supplementary information on families and improve the quality of data obtained by highlighting and discussing the convergences and divergences that emerged from members who are spatially located across two nation states. Subsequently, I also bring attention to factors that may account for such confluences or differences and what these may mean on the narrative story-telling of families that are spatially dispersed.

Chapter 7

This marks the last chapter of this thesis where I consolidate all the research findings. I begin by summarising the main findings that emerged from transnational mothers, left-behind children and their care-givers. I then outline the empirical, theoretical and methodological contributions of this thesis. I also devote attention to discussing the limitation and shortcomings of the study, particularly related to the methodological shortcomings. I then close the chapter by pointing out the implications of the study and the areas recommended for future research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

"Inevitably, motherhood ideology reaches deeply into the lives of individuals and family processes. Rhetorically proclaimed, it shapes women's very identities and activities. Even when resisted, mothering ideology forms the backdrop for action and assessment" (Arendell, 1993, p.3).

2.1 Introduction

The aim of this section is to reflect on past and current debates in the literature on the institution of motherhood and dominant ideologies surrounding it in order to situate the experiences of motherhood by Zimbabwean domestic workers in Botswana. By doing so, the oddity of transnational mothering is brought to the fore as it runs in a parallel but contradictory fashion to what is generally perceived and normatively prescribed as good mothering. The aim is to contribute to a more nuanced understanding of empirical realities of gendered cultural transformations and renegotiations of ideologies in the context of globalisation and feminised migrations in contemporary society. In discussing the various feminist debates in this chapter, I do so from a position that acknowledges the multiplicity of feminist positions in extant literature.

Transnational mothering can be counted as one of the many categories that are considered as performing mothering from the margins (Carpenter & Austin, 2007) by mothering their children from a distance – as physically absent mothers. I therefore begin by giving an outline from an international perspective, largely based on notions of idealised mothering and what is perceived as good mothering, based on dominant discourses. I will briefly give a pre-colonial and post-colonial perspective in order to appreciate how the institution of motherhood has transitioned within these two eras in Zimbabwe and how the colonial remnants of this institution have, to date, influenced ideologies of motherhood in the post–colonial era. By doing so, this section aims to contribute by furthering theoretical insights into how gender intersects with culture, globalisation, care work skills and legal status as reflected in the lived experiences of low skilled migrant mothers, who simultaneously labour and mother from the margins across two nation states.

2.2   Motherhood

2.2.1   Essentialised motherhood ideologies

The institution of motherhood is and has always been characterised by fluid and ever-changing sets of practices. Conceptions of motherhood have predominantly centred on essential motherhood although there have been contestations around this. Over the years, new family forms and new forms of motherhood have emerged over time and to date, motherhood continues to be a widely–contested arena among theorists. Psychoanalysis, particularly through the work of Bowlby (1969), was influential in theorising motherhood through his theory of maternal attachment and deprivation. Bowlby (1969) argued that children who were separated from their mothers, even briefly, could result in negative outcomes for the child. Focusing his lens on the notion of secure attachment, he posited that a mother is responsible for children's upbringing, with women seen as reproducers of culture in order to derive its secure attachment from the availability of mother (Bowlby, 1973). The basic tenets of Bowlby's theory argued that a person's environment was linked to his/her development. He conceived attachment behaviour as any form of behaviour that results in a person attaining or retaining proximity to some other differentiated and preferred individual, who is usually conceived as stronger and/or wiser (Bowlby, 1977, p.203)

However, an individual that showed attachment behaviour was usually the child and the attachment figure was usually its mother. He further posited that once a child had formed early attachment, this would not be easily abandoned although it was possible that as the child grows, they may supplement that attachment with new ones. In addition, attachment led to the development of what he termed affectional bonds and if these were broken or discontinued, this could lead to feelings of anger or sorrow and antisocial behaviour, but renewing such bonds could be a source of joy for the one attached.

Most importantly, his central thesis argues that attachment behaviour occurred during the first nine months in the majority of infants and whoever was mothering that infant would be the principal attachment figure for the infant and ideally the principal preferred attachment figure would be the mother. Furthermore, if the mother was around the infant's environment, a child usually ceased to display attachment behaviour and instead explored its environment (Bowlby, 1977). However, there is need to contextualise Bowlby's work in order to appreciate how his theory was influential in the notion of mother-child relationships and fed into the ideology of what constituted good motherhood. Against a background of a post-war context, it is imperative

to acknowledge that Bowlby's research emerged out of a context where there was a preoccupation with restoring families in the aftermath of World War II.

Bowlby's findings (1969) had the desired effect of justifying the removal of women from the jobs traditionally undertaken by men but which men had abandoned to fight in the war and now on return, needed to re-occupy. Thus, it is from the particular context that we can appreciate how Bowlby's central ideas of attachment, loss and separation were linked and subsequently developed, leading to the idea that the mother-child dyad was central to children's wellbeing. In the same vein, Winnicott (1971), a psychoanalyst, concluded that a child who faced challenges of growth and development was directly linked to a lack of maternal devotion. His theory rested on the assumption that women were in stable marriages and failed to take into account marital challenges, class and economic positioning of women, among many other factors.

The central argument that underpins attachment theory is premised on the construction of a mother and relationships between her and her children as key to children's identities and mental health (Phoenix & Woollett, 1991; Miller & Tina 2005; Burman, 2008,). Most importantly, it was through these key attachment theorists in Europe that shaped contemporary understandings of motherhood and childhood, occurring in a specific historical, spatial and time context. However, to date, mothering continues to be viewed as crucial to children's lives, educational, mental and behavioural outcomes (Burman, 2008).

Equally influential was the bio-social perspective advanced by sociologist Rossi (1977) who claimed that due to biological differences, women were already predisposed to the mothering role because of their biological capacities to give birth and lactate and the mother-child bond was hormonally determined and therefore critical for the survival of the special bond mothers produced. Her assumption was that all women desired motherhood and that mothering came easily to women. She however ignored the connections that exist between fathers and children and essentialised mother-child connections only. Other attachments theorists, though varying and extending slightly from Bowlby, similarly argued that beyond physical availability of the mother, it was also important for the child should believe that the mother will respond when in need of help from her (Kobak & Madsen, 2008).

The line of reasoning and arguments put forward by attachment theorists suggests that early separation has a direct link to insecure attachment and mental health challenges. Some theorists have argued that separations increase the risk of behavioural and emotional problems (Crawford, Cohen, Chen & Ehrensaft, 2009). In relation to family disruption systems, others have found that whilst both mother and father-child separations have negative consequences, negative outcomes of mother-child separations appear higher (Adam & Chase-Lansdale, 2002). Multiple child-care arrangements have also been found to have negative effects on children, in particular, girls (Morrissey, 2009).

This perspective on motherhood perceives mothers as born to naturally fulfil mothering duties. As such, mothering is thus critical to the survival of humans more than to any other mammalian species to provide for prolonged infant care and this is achieved through intense attachment to its mother (Rossi, 1977). "Women as mothers are pivotal actors in the sphere of social reproduction" (Chordorow, 1978, p.11) and a good enough mother (Winnicott, 1953), based on the concept of intensive mothering (Hays, 1996) is assumed as one who puts her child's needs above her own and is responsible for children's upbringing, with women seen as reproducers of culture in order to own.

Universalised notions of motherhood are also perpetuated by women themselves as images of their mothers and grandmothers serve to reinforce notions of domesticity and femininity that is premised on how motherhood and mothering are socially constructed (Hochschild & Machung, 1998). Essential motherhood has thus determined that mothering is central to the functioning of women's female nature, perceived as the primary goal of women's sexual desire (DiQuinzio, 1999). Women who conform to this norm are therefore labelled as appropriate mothers while those who do not conform are pathologised. An appropriate mother is therefore one who:

> Is a heterosexual woman, of legal age, married in a traditional nuclear family, fertile, pregnant by intercourse with her husband and wants to bear children. She is likely to be able-bodied or normal mental functioning, of middle to upper middle-class status, and supported primarily by her husband (DiLapi, 1989, p.110).

For DiQuinzio (1999), the notion of essential motherhood is underpinned by an ideological norm that specifies essential attributes of motherhood and that closely conflates motherhood with femininity. At the other extreme, the bad mother is cast opposite essentialised attributes of motherhood that are acceptable within the framework of broader social norms and values.

This analysis resonates with Hays' (1996) notion of intensive mothering which is underpinned by a hegemonic ideology of what it means to be a good mother (Hallstein, 2017) According to Hays (1996, p. 1194) "this motherhood mandate declares that mothering is exclusive, wholly child centred, emotionally involving and time-consuming"

Motherhood ideology is entwined with idealised notions of the family, presuming the institution and image of the idealised white, middle class heterosexual couple with its children in a self-contained family unit". (Hays, 1996, p.1194). Essentially, the ideology presumes one kind of family form in which there is a breadwinner male and an ever-present mother looking after children in the home. It is on the basis of this ideology that many appreciate that the standards by which good mothering are set are not only difficult but unrealistic for many women who fall outside the norms and do not measure up to the standard and are labelled as deviant (Arendell, 2000). Such women have been largely labelled as mothers who trouble the boundaries of mothering (Carpenter & Austin, 2007, p.662) due to their failure to conform to universalised motherhood.

2.2.2 Feminist perspectives on motherhood

Although many feminists identify with psycho-analysis, feminists counter-argue that the gendered division of labour was a direct outcome of women's insubordination in patriarchal society. This subordination confined women to the reproductive domestic sphere with the primary responsible for children's upbringing, with women seen as reproducers of culture in order to perform the responsibilities of child rearing and childcare (Chodorow, 1982). Some feminists have actually identified motherhood as one of the main factors at play in the oppression of women (de Beauvior, 1949). Ruddick concluded that women's nurturing abilities were constructed out of reflection, judgement and emotion, leading to what she termed 'maternal thinking' which produced a co-operative way of thinking which was blind to aggressive ways of patriarchal social behaviour.

In concurrence, Rich (1977) bemoaned the institution of motherhood for being heavily reliant on societal expectations and rules that dictate how a woman should mother her children, suggesting that motherhood is socially constructed. The notion of the 'good enough mother,' originally coined by Winnicott (1953), is based on what Lindeman (2001) had referred to as the master narratives of motherhood. According to Lindeman (2001), master narratives are those stories that are found in culture and that serve as summaries of socially shared understandings resulting in societal and cultural expectations that define the master-way that

dictates that all mothers should perform mothering in the same fashion, thus overlooking differences among mothers.

Garey (1995, p.416) argues that women "are doing motherhood" as they actively seek to construct their motherhood identities in line with the dominant discourses of the 'good mother'. Butler's theory of performativity can certainly find a place in this argument. Gender is "a compulsory performance in the sense that acting out of line with …norms bring with its ostracism, punishment and violence (Butler, 1991, p.24)". From this theory, one can argue that women perform motherhood in conformity to prevailing norms and regulations based on cultural codes at the given time. The actions of mothers are thus actively performed in line with the master ideologies whilst alternative ideologies are condemned and face societal sanctions.

Actions are performed and communicate meaning to an audience and "what matters is how others interpret actor's meanings" (Alexander, 2008, p.179), meaning those mothers who do not conform are pathologised and "they remain powerless to fight against the scripted performance assigned to them with a push to assimilation (which is never truly possible)" (Hill-Collins, 1994, p.57). Winnicott assertion (1965) that people who have not received good enough mothering and have been maternally deprived serves to push the good mother ideology further, yet the idealised notion of motherhood was restrictive to women as it failed to recognise a mother's individuality and rights (Benjamin, 1988) resulting in women being labelled as bad mothers if they failed to live up to the set standards of motherhood (Chorzow & Contralto, 1982).

A common criticism of attachment theories is their essentialist bias, disregard for contextual factors and overlooking the capacity of men to also nurture children whilst the biological perspective has tended to prioritise and essentialised biological motherhood over other categories who mother from the margins such as adoptive mothers, step parents or gay mothers who may have no biological connection to the child but still nurture children successfully. Kiguwa (2004) posits that material identities and roles are not predetermined nor fixed as responsible for children's upbringing with women seen as reproducers of cultures in order but are reproduced and evolved through prevailing ideologies.

Vygotsky (1978) had earlier advanced that it was the community that was central in the process of meaning making for a child's development. He argued that "learning is a necessary and universal aspect of the process of developing culturally organized specifically human psychological functions" (Vygotsky, 1978, p.90). Hence the centrality of his theory argued that

individual development could not be understood without referencing the social and cultural context of the individual in question. Adults were also a key source of cognitive development for children as he saw adults as transmitting cultural tools that children eventually internalise (Vygotsky, 1977). Essentially, his theory rejected biological determinism in child development.

Hoffnugg (1998, p.282), using the concept of the motherhood mystique, criticised essentialisation of motherhood for presenting biological motherhood as the only form of mothering. Biological, custodial motherhood is presented as the only "natural oath to childrearing and other forms of parenting are ignored or silenced". The motherhood mystique, an idealised version of motherhood presumes that all women are uniquely created to raise children and motherhood is the ultimate fulfilment of all women (Skott, 2016). The motherhood mystique disregards other real-life situations of women which inhibit women from fitting into the category of the good enough mother (Winnicott, 1965). Motherhood, whilst socially prescribed, is "romanticized and idealized as the supreme physical and emotional achievement in women's lives" (Modi, 2015, p.9).

Phoenix, Woollett and Lloyd (1991, p.13) argue that the socially constructed notion of a good mother runs counter to the reality of motherhood for many mothers and as a result of these normative prescriptions, many mothers are then constructed as pathological if they do not fit the norms. By and large, mothers are considered to be the most crucial figures in their children's environments and their attitudes towards child-rearing are viewed as major determinants of their children's development (Woollett & Phoenix, 1991). Motherhood can thus be seen as varied and as occurring "within specific social contexts that vary in terms of material and cultural resources and constraints" (Glenn et al, 1994, p.3).

Bearing in mind that most ideal norms of mothering have been born out of developmental psychology, Burman (1994; 2008) argues for the deconstruction of developmental psychology (a reformist perspective) and rightly questions why psychology and associated disciplines have tended to act as a regulatory mechanism of social control processes such as motherhood and childhood, whilst overlooking other contextual factors. Motherhood also presents as a site of gendered inequalities (Craig, 2005) so that mothers and not the fathers continue to be responsible for the major care and upbringing of children (Daniel, Featherstone, Hooper & Scourfield, 2005) as it is mothers who are mostly tasked with the proper upbringing of children.

Gillies (2007) argues that it is mothers who are often held responsible for their children's behaviour, social adjustment and development. Although motherhood is ideologically inscribed, it is also mediated upon and shaped by various social and cultural factors (Glenn, 1994). Motherhood and womanhood are thus conflated to depict women as natural care-givers (Arendell, 2000; McMahon, 1995) and that is so because motherhood tends to be located on a societal context that is organised according to gender and running in accordance with the prevailing gender belief system (Arendell, 2000, p.1193).

Similarly, Athan and Reel (2015) also argue that women are held responsible for children's upbringing, with women seen as reproducers of culture in order that mothers are seen as 'functional agents', only in so far as they are drivers of their children's development but are overlooked as people in their own right. Athan and Reel (2015) contest that the process of freeing mothers from the objectifying gaze of developmental psychology has been slow and instead suggest that research in psychology has been slow and instead suggest that researchers in psychology should prioritise studies of what they term 'studies of matrescence' in order to interrogate lived experiences of mothers and to also challenge dominant assumptions.

However, feminists, in advancing their critique, also impose the risk and possibility of creating normativity in the way they conceptualise motherhood. That is so, given that in this process, they may also pathologise those who genuinely desire motherhood and ultimately end up creating their own categories of exclusions and normativity. As argued by Arendell (2000, p.1196), "mothering is neither a unitary experience for individual women nor experienced similarly by all women". There is no universal motherhood or universal mothering practices. This censure resonates with earlier discontentment of psychology for constructing models of mothering that either distort or fail to account for women's varied experiences of mothering advanced by Woollett and Lloyd (1991).

Feminists also challenge the polarised and unsatisfactory treatment of black women in psychology literature and refer to it as either a state of 'devalued absence' or 'pathologised presence' (Phoenix & Woollett, 1991). The foregoing concerns suggest that there is no universal motherhood or childhood as women's experiences of motherhood are diverse and therefore heterogeneous, hence by calling for the deconstruction of developmental psychology, Burman (1994; 2008) is effectively questioning empirical knowledge producing practices of psychology in the broader society. Failure to deconstruct may mean researchers and practitioners apply a hegemonic model of motherhood or childhood that overlooks differences.

As Third World women of colour, lesbians and working-class women began to challenge dominant European and American conceptions of womanhood, and to insist that differences among women were as important as commonalities, they have brought alternative construction of mothering into the spotlight. The existence of such historical alternative and social variation confirms that mothering, like other relationships and institutions, is socially constructed, not biologically inscribed (Glenn, 1994, p.3).

Mothering ideals place mother's needs as secondary to children's and that of their families (Glenn 1994) and yet there are alternative motherhoods that stray from the master/dominant prescription of doing, thus presenting stark contrasts to what is idealised (Glenn, 1994; Silva, 1996; Collins, 1994; Phoenix & Woollett, 1991; DiQuinzio, 1999; Rich, 1977; Hays, 1996; Douglas & Michaels, 2004). However, it is not every woman who is either fortunate enough or who may even want to conform to the hegemonic models of motherhood (Glenn, 1994; Collins, 1994). In conceptualising motherhood, my central argument holds that transnational women's access to socially valued models of family and motherhood are structured by class, race/ethnicity, and sexuality, marital and legal statuses.

Of significance is to bear in mind that socially valued models of motherhood and indeed childhood emerged from a post-World War II European context. That same context is what seems to account for the routine pathologisation of working-class mothers or lesbian mothers, often with state responses designed to fix these types of mothers, a point that has been made bare in the works of Glenn (1994); Phoenix, Woollett and Lloyd (1991). Most women, particularly those of lower socio-economic status although seen as responsible for children's upbringing and reproducers of culture have an inclination towards what Dow (2016) has termed alternative mothering ideologies. There is no single fixed identity that embodies all women. In this deconstruction, motherhood should be seen and redefined in a manner that is contextually relevant to those who define themselves as mothers and those that do 'mothering' (Silva, 1996).

2.2.3 Colonial Africa and Motherhood

In framing motherhood, particularly in the African context, it is essential to do so within the context of how motherhood intersected with colonisation. Generally, in the African context, though cultures differ in the different cultural settings, motherhood occupies a central position that represents women as powerful matriarchs but powerless victims, whose representations as matriarch and victim constrain their agentic capacity (Clark, 2001). Motherhood is therefore a key theme that informs women's social identities (Walker, 1995) and whose identities are constructed based on gendered representations of the black woman according to race, culture, nation, class and gender (Mama, 1995). In order to contextualise and understand the institution

of motherhood in Zimbabwe, it is imperative to provide an historical base that has mapped the ideologies of mothering by firstly, looking at the history of colonial Zimbabwe (then known as Rhodesia).

Motherhood in Zimbabwe has been influenced and impacted by a mix of social, political and economic, cultural and religious factors (Batisai, 2017). The institutionalisation of domesticity targeted at African women in Rhodesia can be traced through colonial state power whereby family processes were inextricably linked to policies of the state and institutions of politics (Kaler, 1999), home-craft clubs that were led by white settler wives and later on, white farmer's wives in the 1950s aimed to instil appropriate domesticity in African women.

Family ideological norms and values, was therefore a colonial project which was designed to for the native women to learn good mothering skills from colonial women as well as how to be good wives. (Kaler, 1999). The vision of the home clubs was premised and sold as a narrative that all women, the black native woman and the white settler wives, were united in sisterhood and shared the same identity as mothers and wives, although in reality, this was not the case.

Black women were not equal to white settler women and most worked as their servants and domestic helpers. However, this agenda was designed to fit onto the broader agenda of the colonial project which was disguised as a project to improve African family life and to emancipate women through incorporating them into citizens of Rhodesia. Family life was central to the political project of Rhodesian colonialists such that it intruded into private family affairs. Instead, it was based on the idealised notion of the 'imagined community' of blacks and whites building Rhodesia together (Kale, 1999) although in reality, it was never an equal relationship but one that was based on the servanthood of black people.

The colonial state created programmes of domesticity such as home craft projects with the aim of socialising African women as biologically responsible for children's upbringing, with women seen as reproducers of culture in order to be reproducers (Hunt, 1988) and using Africans to achieve their agenda (Laker, 1999). In order to guarantee a continuous and steady flow of African male supply to white farms and mines, the colonial state therefore did not restrict itself to matters of the public sphere but deliberately influenced and drove its agenda into the private sphere i.e. the homes of the colonised.

> While white capitalists found it in their interest to try to create a male African proletariat in both urban areas, the wives and daughters of these men were considered economically unproductive and of importance solely for their role in their production

and home life; it was this aspect of women's lives that the colonial social engineers of domesticity focused on (Schimdt, 1992, p.3.).

Consequently, the colonial project trained men to be modern and rational producers whilst simultaneously shaping native women to be rational reproducers, pointing to the fact that the colonial project permeated beyond the public sphere, into the private sphere. Comarrof and Comarrof (1992) argued that teaching African women how to look after their children and cooking was merely superficial as the deeper agenda sought to persuade black people to adopt a moral, social and economic project based on notion of gender-specificity, with the intended outcome of producing families that would be within the control of the colonisers. (Schmidt, 1992). Notions of domesticity were thus manipulated and assigned women to the home in order to reproduce gendered divisions of labour (Kaler, 1999). Christian missions also taught hygiene, health and gender specific domestic duties in an effort to create 'civilised Christians'. Ideals of marriage and domesticity were therefore sold to the native women as part of Christian indoctrination. The creation of institutions, for example, the 'Jeans teachers' in 1929, drove the colonial agenda by training women over a period of two years and eventually those trained would be dispatched back to their rural homes to replicate the teachings and demonstrations on home nursing, personal hygiene, mothering skills, religious knowledge and housekeeping skills, among other simple tasks (Flood, 1973).

Significantly, this served to reinforce domesticity of women during that era. After the Jeans institution, many others followed along the same agenda in different parts of Rhodesia, such as the Catherine Langham Hasfa Homecraft Village in 1942. This institution ran a programme whereby

> women with their children and girls preparing for marriage could come to learn to be homemakers, builders of Christian homes, in which health, and love and laughter might be found, because the mother had learned the simple responsible for children's upbringing, with women seen as reproducers of culture in order to things of life, along the same lines as the instructions given to the Jeanes women (Preston & Stebbing, 1969, p.19).

According to Kaler (1999), this particular institution aimed to perfect a woman's work in the home in order to become the perfect wife and mother. During the 1950s, these clubs became more prominent when the wife of a local chief, Mangwende, collaborated and joined the wife of the then assistant native commissioner and travelled all over the districts teaching native women on how to feed and care for their families. This collaboration spelt an era of a more elaborated project of domesticity and accompanying gendered division of labour in colonial

Rhodesia and throughout this period into the 1970s, the clubs continued to grow (Kaler, 1999). It has in fact been argued that

> These women articulated a particular vision of domesticity, one expressed through benevolence and philanthropy, founded in the common sisterhood of maternity shared between black and white wives and mothers and aimed at the transmission of wifely and motherly skills from white to black women (Kaler, 1199, p.279).

White settler wives justified their interests in black women's families by claiming to enhance black native females mothering abilities by imparting their own version of what a mother and a wife should be i.e. imparting British based values of child-raising. This agenda was carried through by settler wives in various ways, including petitions to the Rhodesian administration to prioritise teaching of domestic service skills for the native black girls rather than focusing on academic training in 1946 (Kaler, 1999). Yet again, in 1947, settler wives lobbied for the creation of formal teaching of African women in British housekeeping skills (ibid). However, in reality, this particular lobbying was essentially driven by personal desires to subject African women to servanthood, working as their maids and housekeepers (Kaler, 1999).

In reality though, the purported 'sisterhood of maternity' was merely a strategy used to fit into larger colonial project by the settlers. The popular narrative of motherhood and sisterhood between white and black women functioned to mask the real colonial scheme as it deliberately painted a picture of women united as sisters in arms. It is for this reason that Kaler (1999, p.270) argued

> That the creation of the good wives and mother among the African population of Rhodesia was part of the work of the state, and an intrinsic part of being a good wife and mother was commitment to and participation in the imagined community of colonial Rhodesia   whether as a (white) citizen or (black) subject

In the broader equation, it appears that the idea of Homecraft movements became part and parcel of the Rhodesia's political economy in order to create an illusion of shared responsibility for children's upbringing, with women seen as reproducers of culture in order to obscure the maintenance of white oligarchy through a sense of purported nationhood (Kaler, 1999). With the foregoing in mind, one can therefore argue that women in colonial Rhodesia were constructed as gendered subjects for the colony by using domesticity as a weapon of Rhodesian propaganda, control and subjugation to reproduce domesticity.

However, it is also important to acknowledge that there was no evidence of coercion on the part of white settler wives to force black native women to participate in home craft training. In fact, empirical evidence suggests that black native women, though they were subjects of the

colonial project, also joined for their own benefit i.e. for income generation. Contrary to the commonly held view that black women were merely passive followers in the colonial project, there is perhaps need to connect their complicity to the benefits they would in turn, accrue if they enacted socially appropriate domestic practices they were taught at that time.

Consequently, Kaler (1999) suggests that the home craft institutions were seen as avenues to access resources, like personal income for personal control. It presented black women with opportunities for projects such as making uniform garments in order to support their families. This kind of thinking by black women frustrated their white trainers as income generation was counter-productive to the broader agenda of domesticity and subjugation (Kaler, 1999).

This reasoning also goes to shows that although the prevailing discourse was the colonial project, black native women, through their agentic capacities were also practicing a counter discourse (that of resourcefulness and income generation) to deal with their circumstances during this era.

By implication, this meant that whilst native black women were subjected to the prevailing colonial discourse at that time, they in turn, reformulated this discourse through counter-practices of power in order to derive benefits amid their circumstances. This alternative discourse ran parallel to the colonial project discourse and can thus be seen as salient forms of resistance. Nevertheless, in spite of the seemingly different and competing agendas of white women and black women, this history gives valuable insights into factors that contextually shaped motherhood in Zimbabwe, bearing in mind that the particular version of motherhood that settler wives were teaching native black women was a British one, that was shaped in Europe, based on the prevailing conditions at the time of world war.

In particular, the version of motherhood that white settler women were teaching black women in Zimbabwe was one modelled around British values of motherhood prevailing at that time. Therefore, what is important to appreciate is that through British colonial conditioning, the dominant ideology of motherhood in Zimbabwe today has its roots from this colonial ideology although of course, in the post-colonial era, other factors have crept in to re-shape and transform motherhood. The following section is written with the changing context of motherhood in mind after independence.

2.2.4 Post–independence Zimbabwe 1980-present

It was only after independence in 1980, that women's organisations began to openly criticise the domesticity of women that had emerged under the colonial banner of home craft clubs, created under the colonial era, supposedly because of the shift in power when the black now became the majority rule, marking the official end of colonisation. However, beyond this criticism, gendered norms of domesticity centring on wifely duties such as hygiene, mothering, cooking and cleaning, persisted into the independence era with women held responsible for children's upbringing and as reproducers of culture from the onset of this new era.

To date, in Zimbabwe, deeply ingrained gendered ideologies of mothering and femininity still exist. Motherhood therefore still remains central to national discourses in post–colonial Africa (Millns, 2008). However, the idea of demarcating between the private and the public division of labour does not easily capture the pre-colonisation situation as the home was always a site of economic production through farming and women provided much of this labour. During the first decade after independence, the country enjoyed positive growth through increased agricultural output, delivery of health, water and sanitation projects and road construction, among other developments (Win, 2004).

The adoption of economic structural adjustment programmes, driven by the IMF and the World Bank, impacted negatively on the country from 1991, causing significant economic shifts during the second decade of independence (Mutangadura, 2001). In post-colonial, independent Zimbabwe, the year 2000 officially marked the beginning of what is popularly termed 'the Zimbabwean crisis' as the country has since then been riddled with serious socio-political and economic crises (Kowere & Mabugu, 2006; McGregor, 2008, Bloch, 2008, Hammar, McGregor & Landau, 2010, Crush & Tevera, 2003; Crush, Chikanda and Tawodzera, 2012; Batisai, 2017).

This period, widely written on in extant literature on Southern Africa, also marks the period of mass exodus of Zimbabweans into the diaspora. Throughout these changing socio-political times and turmoil, women as mothers have been hard–hit and it comes as no surprise that many have thus migrated to neighbouring countries independently, thus marking an increase in the practice of transnational motherhood (McGregor, 2008). This post independent migration wave from Botswana has not left women behind as most have escaped to neighbouring countries to pursue livelihoods for their families, invoking family transformations and re-configurations as a result of spatial configurations.

2.3 The Transnational Paradigm

The birth of transnational theory in migration rose in response to the rising need by scholars for a conceptual framework that could place empirical findings in multiple nation states, specifically in migrants' countries of origin, as well as host nations. Basch, Glick-Schiller and Szanton-Blanc (1994) popularised this framework in the 1990s. Underpinning this relatively new paradigm was the perceived need to look beyond essentialisation of the nation state as a static container in which all social processes occur, a tendency they refer to as methodological nationalism (Wimmer & Glick-Schiller, 2002).

They defined transnationalism as the "processes by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement" (Basch et al., 1994, p.6), pointing to a simultaneous embeddedness in more than one nation state (Glick-Schiller, 2003). Basch et al. (1994) criticised methodological nationalism for its epistemological tendency to assume the nation state as its boundaries as defining objects of social inquiry. Methodological nationalism can be defined as an "intellectual orientation that assumes national borders to be the natural unit of study, equates society with the nation state and conflates national interests with the purposes of social science" (Glick-Schiller, 2005, p.439).

Their arguments stemmed from the fact that "the web of social life was spun within the container of national society and everything exceeding over its borders was cut off analytically (thus removing trans-border connections and processes from the picture" (Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2002, p.307). In de-naturalising the nation state in social inquiry (Faist & Amelina, 2012) or de-territorialising the nation state in social inquiry, Vertovec (2001) prioritised the need to look at both the sending and receiving societies as a single field corresponding with Marcus' recommendation (1995) to deploy multi-sited ethnography which could look at evidence from 'pluri-local social spaces' (Pries, 2004) because if research fails to look into both the sending and receiving contexts, it is difficult to then understand how migrants circumnavigate across transnational social spaces (Lutz & Palenga-Mollenbeck, 2011).

Still, the transnational paradigm is also referred to in diverse ways as 'transnational social fields' (Glick Schiller et al., 1992); 'transnational social spaces' (Pries, 1999); 'transnational social village' (Levitt, 2001) and has been criticised for lacking a coherent theory and sufficient analytical rigour (Portes, Guarnizo & Landolt, 1999). They underscore sustained and regular contact as the primary prerequisites for an activity to be considered transnational. Portes et al.

(1999) further complement this argument by dismissing occasional once-off remittances and irregular visits to the country of origin as unfit to be labelled transnational.

Instead they argue that there are certain conditions to be met for one to be considered truly transnational. In particular, these conditions relate to the massness of the transnational activity, the frequency and continuity of such activity, as well as the presence of technological advances and communication presence through which transnational movement as well as communication by ordinary transmigrants can flow (Portes et al., 1999). This criticism poses some epistemological challenges as it suggests that there is no standard agreement on how to conceptualise transnationalism as well as how to apply it to different typologies of migrants.

Although transnationalism has paved the way to move away from conflating the nation state with society, proponents of the paradigm have failed to clearly demonstrate how it differs from earlier theories of migration and immigrants' experiences. This has often led to the critique that transnational theory offers nothing new. Yet again, it appears to blanket a single theoretical approach to all forms of transnationalism. It fails to properly typologise the different forms of transnationalism and the factors that affect them (Vertovec, 2001).

It is therefore a term that is criticised for being applied too loosely. In countering these criticisms, I intend to follow Wimmer and Glick-Schiller's (2002, p.302) position that "the value of studying transnational communities and migration is not to discover something new but rather to have contributed to this shift away from methodological nationalism". I therefore position my study within this conceptualisation and attempt to make connections of motherhood within different contexts, different people of the same family units that are doing family beyond/ outside the confines of a single nation state.

2.3.1 Transnational Mothering

With the foregoing in mind, I discuss the complexities and dilemmas of transnational motherhood as it connects two practices that run concurrently yet parallel to each other in challenging ways. Migration and motherhood are entangled and intersect in complex ways that span from the private domestic sphere to the public sphere, particularly for women engaged in care and domestic work. Transnational motherhood can be conceived as the thoughts and various nurturing and caring practices that mothers exert from afar for their children (Fresnoza –Flot, 2009, p.253). Consequently, transnational motherhood stands in direct opposition to earlier developmental theorists who tended to work from a sedentary notion of the family and were therefore much more concerned about the effects of maternal absence on children.

I have adopted the term 'universalised motherhood' to refer to the normative hegemonic form of motherhood that is privileged across many societies as the best form of mothering or raising children. Furthermore, transnational mothering questions the efficacy of conceptualising a single nation state as a meaningful and adequate site for understanding the social realities of spatially dispersed families. Uptake of work as domestic workers does not necessarily mean that mothers renounce their roles of mothering and childcare but may instead require them to practice emotional care from a distance (Lutz & Palenga-Mollenbeck, 2011), suggesting that mothering intensifies gendered inequalities (Craig 2005) because maternal absence from the home does not necessarily prevent mothers from fulfilling their normatively prescribed obligation of mothering, even when they are geographically separated from their children.

Essentially, transnational mothers' absence from their homes and their subsequent involvement in global care chains is driven by the desire to fulfil the necessary economic/material needs for their children (Uy-Tioco, 2007); yet even from a distance, they are still expected to be emotionally available for the care of their children (Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avila, 1997; Parrenas, 2005; Dreby, 2010). Thus, women who are judged as mothering outside the socially valued norms (non-normative) are labelled as those that are 'mothering on the margins' (Carpenter & Austin, 2007).

Moreover, most family theorists tend to privilege geographical proximity as a prerequisite for interaction of families and those that 'do family' across national borders are seen as having inadequate or pathologised family arrangements (Mazzucato & Schans, 2008).Transnational mothers therefore stand out of the norm when juxtaposed against universalised mothering that adopt a normative stance of the necessity of mothers and children living together (Phoenix, 2011). This is because:

> By migrating and leaving their homes, children behind, they often must cope with stigma, guilt and criticism from others. Secondly, they work in reproductive labour, getting a wage and caring for other people's children is often not compatible with taking daily care of one's own family and all this raises questions about contemporary meanings and variations of motherhood (Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avila, 1997, p.552-553).

In related observations, Fresnoza –Flot (2009) describes how mothers redefine roles and deploy multiple strategies to negotiate their absence from home and to fulfil normatively ascribed gender expectations in their countries of origin. In her study of Filipino transnational mothers working as domestic workers in France, she found that mothers, especially when undocumented, experienced prolonged stays due to their irregular legal status, emotional difficulties and distant relationships with their left-behind children. That may be so because

regular contact is the glue that keeps transnational families together and is therefore at the centre of distant parenting (Zentgraf & Chinchilla, 2012).

Migration status also emerged as a key factor in prolonging mother–child separation among Filipino migrants in the United States of America (USA) (Parrenas, 2005), suggesting that host country migration policies have direct consequences in transnational families on both sides of the borders i.e. the mothers in the prolonged separation that produces 'distress and ambivalence' (Raijman, Schammer-Gesser & Kemp, 2003). Nation building, mainly driven by political values and notions of sovereignty – the right of a recognised state to self-governance, significantly impacts on the abilities of migrant mothers to mother their children in ways that are deemed socially valuable, hence constrains the type of families that are socially acceptable. Hence, sovereignty projects of nation states cast serious aspersions on the validity of the public/private divide in analysing social realities of transnational families.

In an effort to mitigate these effects, evidence of intensive communication and intensive gift-giving practices also emerged in this study (Fresnoza-Flot, 2009). Parrenas (2001), in her study of Filipino transnational mothers, earlier come to similar conclusions as intensive communication and commodification of love through buying gifts and sending remittances emerged as the dominant practices of transnational mothers. Explicit in this observation is the pressure to conform to the socially constructed image of good mother as Fresnoza–Flot (2009) concluded. Alicea (1997) also observed that women are still expected to nurture even when they are far away from home as well as maintaining intimate relations with their children.

Children expect mothers to continue maintaining contact (emotional intimacy) more than they expect from their fathers (Zentgraf & Chinchilla, 2012). This again illustrates the power of hegemonic discourse which continues to regulate women even when they migrate, as they continuously assert their motherhood roles from a distance in order to uphold the 'good mother' practices and often under restrictive conditions which deny them access to socially valuable family structures. Such is the case, particularly when they are undocumented and lacking legal rights or protection. Elaborating the paradoxes presented in reconciling these roles is one of the primary goals of this study, in order to understand how migrant domestic workers make sense of these identities in the context of maternal absence.

Likewise, Levitt (2001) posits that separation breaks families, with left behind children always paying the emotional price of separation; although this may be true, a popular discourse that usually emerges from transnational parents appears to justify migration as a means of ensuring

economic support, emotional pain and sacrifices that migrant parents make for their benefits since an important part of a parent's role is to provide emotional comfort (Castaneda& Buck, 2011, p 97). Empirical findings presented in previous studies are complicit by participating in the pathologisation of transnational families as they have the effect of reifying or rather condoning the dominant discourses i.e. the good enough mother/ mystique motherhood.

Despite the fact that motherhood is not universal or based on co-residence, Mardianou (2012) illuminates the cultural contradictions emerging that need to be understood in the context of mothering that takes place in a different geographical space while working in another locality. Many migrant domestic workers leave their children behind and Erel (2002) argues that the common discourse of mothers as primary caregivers is then questioned in the context of migration whilst Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila (1997, p 552) also argue that "domestic workers across national borders breaks with the deeply gendered spatial and temporal boundaries of family and work". That is so because in most societies, mothers are mainly tasked with ensuring that children are raised into responsible citizens (Phoenix, Woollett & Lloyd 1991, p.17) and the normal growth of children is assumed to occur within the socially constructed ideals. A study of Mexican migrants by Dreby (2010) suggested that left-behind children tend to be critical of their migrant parents by basing it on gendered norms and therefore expected their mothers to be physically present to care for them.

Interestingly, the children did not expect their fathers to be present but to fulfil their roles as the male breadwinners (Dreby, 2010), suggesting how care work is highly gendered, with women being held more to account than men. Although "remittances represent the sweat, sacrifice and loneliness that migrants endure in order to provide their families with basic goods and a humble increase in living standards" (Castaneda, 2008, p.235), empirical evidence from many studies suggest that whilst children may benefit from remittances, may be suffering emotionally from prolonged separation (Suarez-Orzoco, Todorova & Louie, 2002; Schmalzbauer, 2004, Dreby, 2010, Parrenas, 2005).

Perhaps this evidence explains why transnational mothers tend to be more heavily criticised than transnational father as ideological socialisation of children in society along lines of what is termed masculine and feminine, influences children's reactions to their mother's absence in different ways to that of their fathers (Parrenas, 2001; 2005). Parrenas (2001) studied Filipina domestic workers who had migrated to Italy and the USA and she found that Filipina transnational mother were also conforming to the breadwinner model by sending remittances

back to their children. Furthermore, in addition to their motherhood roles, this study established that even from a distance, transnational mothers continue to conform to their traditionally ascribed roles of nurturing.

Similar findings emerged in a study by Hondagneu-Sotelo (1994) among Mexican transnational mothers who had moved to the USA. Her findings also revealed that the meaning of motherhood in the context of migration changes, but then women extended their motherhood role to also incorporate breadwinning roles for the sake of their children. These findings all reveal that transnational mothers strive to fulfil both breadwinning and emotional intimacy roles concurrently. Women are generally viewed as being responsible for their children's upbringing because women are regarded as reproducers of culture, as primary care-givers of children and as essential to the development of children. Thus, in order to sustain emotional connections with their children back home, financial and material remittances to their children appears to be one practice of maintaining that emotional connection (Boccagni, 2012; Dreby, 2010; Parrenas, 2001; 2005). Yet, in reality, such normative prescriptions run contrary to the realities and experiences, not only of migrant mothers but their left–behind children as well. Mothering, whilst simultaneously trying to settle in a new country, is very difficult for migrant women (Lutz, 2008).

Although it has been argued that the possibilities for transnational families to maintain shared imaginaries through regular contact and visits (Yeoh, Huang & Lam, 2005) or via virtual communication technologies (Wilding 2006) are many, therefore enabling simultaneity of family lives across transnational spaces through shared activities and routines (Levitt & Glick-Schiller, 2004), that may not be always the case for all transnational families as resources are a crucial mediating factor in the maintenance and sustenance of communication among transnational family members. Emotional labour and work are more often than not left to the care of women (Skribis, 2008) and geographical separation of mothers from their children gives mothers leaves mothers with a sense of being here and there (Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila 1997).Ultimately though, motherhood is not determined by dominant models of motherhood but rather it is situational and is determined by the class positioning of each individual.

2.3.2   Global Care-Chains

Care labour extraction across borders is what has been described by Hochschild (2001; 2003) as global care chains. A typical global care chain is one where the migrant domestic worker plays an enabling role to their employers by allowing them to move into and stay on in the

workforce pursuing their professional occupations. "The global care chain concept captures a process in which several phenomena, such as capitalism, globalisation and the feminisation of migration interact with gender relations, care and emotional work" (Lutz & Palenga-Mollenberg, 2012, p. 17). Global care chains have been created as a result of importing care and love from poor to rich countries, which facilitates the transfer of those services normally associated with the traditional roles of wife or mother.

As a result of this importation, 'care drains' are experienced in the countries of origin, in the Global South (Hochschild, 2000; Ehrenreich & Hochschild, 2003; Parrenas, 2001.) Accordingly, migration of domestic workers is part of the global care chain, brought about by the gendered division of labour in societies where patriarchy continues to prevail (Hochschild, 2000). The phenomenon of global care chains thus presents changes in family structures because women are now migrating independently to seek work, in sharp contrast to the notion of women migrating historically as tied migrants i.e. for family (Hochschild, 2002). Nevertheless, family members living separately are not a new phenomenon but what is new is the number of left-behind children by parents who are facing declining economic opportunities. This separation is then exacerbated by a high level of demand for labour that migrants are able to provide (Zentgraf & Chinchilla, 2012). This reasoning suggests that separation is brought about by global inequalities and demand for cheap labour from poor and less developed countries, thus invoking transnationalism.

Moreover, as domestic workers, their roles as mothers in their home country and as domestic workers in the host country are often contradictory, invoking emotional and psychological distress because migrant mothers are expected to perform the double duty of both caring and emotion work (Parrenas, 2005). Furthermore, the demand for domestic service jobs, referred to as the 3cs to denote cooking, cleaning and caring (Anderson, 2000) that are normally filled by migrant women are therefore not independent of global factors at play. Neoliberal policies in the global North where the state has minimised its role in the welfare of families has meant that family welfare is predominantly a private and not public affair (Ehrenreich. & Hoschild, 2003; Yeates, 2009; Lutz & Palenga-Mollenbeck, 2012).

At the same time, there is an increased participation of women in the labour market which has seen them leaving their private homes for work, consequently inducing the demand for migrant labour to fill in gaps in their homes. Subsequently, due to globalisation, contemporary society is marked by an increased participation of women in the formal workforce leading professional

women to purchase household services which they traditionally performed such as child-caring, cleaning, cooking (Parrenas, 2001). As women cross the threshold into the formal economy, they create a void/ vacuum in their homes leading women from the Global North to seek substitute labour for household tasks, resulting in feminisation of migration as a result of increasing demand for migrant women from the less developed or peripheral countries (Augustin, 2003; Ehrenreich & Hoschild, 2003).

Attached to the global care chain approach is the recognition of how poverty is also feminised hence leading to feminised migration (Sassen, 2005)? Feminisation of poverty is a phenomenon in which women account for an increased proportion of the economically disadvantaged (Pearce, 1978). Chant (2006) observed that women represent an unequal percentage of the world's poor and how rising poverty of women is deepening and there is a linkage to increasing female headed households. (Chant 2006, p.2). This also resonates with Sassen (2005) who argues that as a result of gender inequalities and the fact that most societies, especially in the developing world, are patriarchal in nature, more and more women now seek opportunities outside of their countries, resulting in what Sassen (2005) terms the feminisation of survival whereby households become progressively more dependent on women for survival.

However, the prevailing capitalist system, by its very nature is patently attached to profitability, has no regard for human labour, in this particular context, domestic service jobs such as domestic workers whom the capitalist system does not recognise as waged labour. Consequently, this view has resulted in excessively low wages for such kinds of jobs because capitalist ideology views domestic work as informal (Newcomb, 2010). Furthermore, in domestic work, "the private sphere of the employer is the public sphere of the employee" (Newcomb, 2010, p.12) leading to the conclusion that care work is very close to unpaid work and closely tied to private relationships such that it is quite difficult to gain a professional status of its own (Lutz, 2011).

In essence, domestic and care work reinforces gender bias and inequalities. As argued by Piper (2005), domestic workers belong to one of the most vulnerable groups among migrants, thus further pointing to the rationale for studying the chosen populations. Moreover, abundant and inexpensive migrant labour is necessitated and enhanced by neo-liberal structural adjustment policies that have been imposed on developing countries by the richer countries at the core of the world economy (Cox, 2006). According to Milkman et al. (1998), the demand for migrant domestic help only becomes actual demand when such help is easily affordable or cheap. As a

consequence, neo-liberal policies can be attributed to the increased feminisation of labour as they lead women to seek work abroad.

In this scenario, gender is then seen as playing a crucial role because immigrant women from Eastern Europe, Asia and Africa then migrate so as to replace European women (from the core countries) in their cleaning, cooking and care tasks in their homes (Lutz, 2011). Migrant women therefore play an enabling role to their employers by allowing them to move into and stay on in the workforce pursuing their professional occupations. In turn, migrant women's children are also taken care of by the other women who have stayed behind (non-migrant) and may perhaps be a family relative Hochschild (2001; 2003).

For example, in the Asian-Pacific context, empirical evidence suggests that when women migrate, care work for the families is passed on to the other female relatives within the extended family rather than giving that role to paid caregivers (Asis, Huang & Yeoh, 2004). Typically, global care chains produce what Sassen (2008) has termed two types of women i.e. professional working women as "professional households without a wife" and migrant women who step in to fill this role as "strategic infrastructure maintenance worker". Sassen further argues that without migrant women, professional households, together with the globalised corporate economy cannot survive (Sassen 2008).

Global care chains are also sustained by continuous impoverishment in poor countries which have led women to pursue migration as a livelihood strategy, thus fuelling feminisation of migration (Sassen, 2008). Of central note here is how gendered obligations of care persist across different geographical contexts i.e. the Global North and South. This is so because even though global care chains speak directly to class differences amongst women based on race, class and other markers of difference, it still serves to demonstrate that women are still expected to fulfil care duties in their homes, even where there may appear to be emancipated through their participation in formal labour markets.

Hence from the privileged women in the Global North who employ a migrant care-worker to fill in the gap she has left in the home, to the woman who assumes the role of surrogate mother to the children of the woman who has migrated for work, gendered obligations still persist and cut across race, ethnicity and class. In some developing countries, e.g. Philippines and Sri Lanka, migrant domestic labour is exported as a technique of curbing local unemployment and reducing the pressure on governments as remittances significantly contribute to the economy. The government therefore assumes a proactive brokering role in the distribution and export of

its nationals to work as care workers in developed countries (Rodriguez, 2008). While this is characteristic in the Asian context, that is not so in Sub- Saharan Africa.

In the final analysis, female migration touches on all aspects of women's lives beginning right from the homes where they originate to the places to where they migrate. Gender without doubt, impacts on every aspect of migrants (Piper, 2005a; Donato et al., 2006) leading Hochschild (2002) to conclude that when mothers migrate; not only does the mother suffer but their children too, who may even suffer much more than their mothers. While the reasons for feminisation of migration suggests a rationale for studying females as a distinct analytical category, that is not to suggest that they should be treated as a homogenous group. They have different experiences, exercise their agency differently and experience different outcomes in migration in relation to how they are positioned in the social hierarchy.

2.4   Intersectionality

In foregrounding my research, intersectionality theory, particularly in the migration of domestic workers for care work is unquestionably a useful way of analysing the social processes in migration of domestic workers. I adopted it in order to be able to interrogate notions of class, race/ethnicity and legal status in understanding how they influence the ways in which families are being reshaped in the context of migration and the manner in which motherhood is practiced from a distance by migrant domestic labourers. Moreover, an intersectional analysis elaborates on how socially valued models of motherhood and childhood intersect with axes of disadvantage/advantage that are produced out of a combination of micro-individual factors and structural factors.

The term 'intersectionality' was used to underscore the interconnectedness and interdependence of categories of disadvantage (gender, race and ethnicity) as opposed to looking at them as separate categories (de-essential sing categories of difference). Intersectionality allows for a "processual analysis of the interconnectedness and hierarchical structures relating to gender, ethnicity, race, class or other social divisions at local, national, transnational and global levels" (Anthias, 2012, p.102). As such, using intersectionality as an analytical framework to understand the patterns of mothering by transnational domestic workers and how power and social hierarchy vis-à-vis the multiple disadvantages they face impacts on their mothering practices and motherhood ideology was particularly insightful.

Intersectionality, a theory deeply rooted in feminist theory of power and difference, can be credited to Crenshaw (Bastia, 2014). Yuval-Davies (2007) refers to dissimilarities as vectors

and also regards these vectors as mutually constitutive of each other and not separate. I therefore deployed an intersectional analytical framework in order to assess how different categories of disadvantage intersect and how the everyday lived experiences of transnational mothering by domestic workers can be analysed and explained through this framework. In particular, the legal status of the participants in the study was useful to understand how the mothers were vulnerably positioned, legally and materially, and in turn, how this affected their motherhood obligations.

Although intersectionality does not represent the entire debate around transnational mothering, it is nonetheless the one that speaks directly to how motherhood itself intersects with gender, class, culture, ethnicity and class, legal and marital status among many other categories of difference. The approach also discourages constructing women as a homogenous group because their experiences are different and mediated by different axes, mainly, gender, race and class (Yuval-Davis, 2006; Crenshaw; 1989). Hence, a migrant's position in relation to gender, class, legal status, skills level and other axes influences their entitlement to family reunification as well in the receiving country (Koffman, 2004).

Bearing in mind that class plays a determining role in how transnational mothers interact with their children from a distance, I use this approach to understand how mothers' class positionalities intersect with motherhood and migration. For instance, class determines a transnational mother's access to financial resources, communication tools and frequency of physical contact. Moreover, class too determines the level or amount of remittances as well as the frequency and capacity to remit. Gender therefore intersects with class to shape not only the experiences of transnational mothers but also those of the children left-behind and their caregivers.

When researching on transnational mothers, analysis of the positionality of participants is crucial in relation to the power relations taking place in transnational social places in order to interrogate how domestic labour positioned their lives and how their patterns and practices of care respond to these positions. Furthermore, at the intersection, mothers are also faced with contradictory roles they are expected to fulfil across geo-spatial spaces i.e. in the sending and receiving countries. Social differences that women experience are multi-layered and exist at individual level, at how they are represented as well as at state or institutional level (Yuval-Davis, 2006). There is a heightened consensus on the need to do away with analysing differences in compartments, particularly through conflating gender with other categories, in

order to avoid essentialisation (Yuval-Davis, 2006; Palmary et al., 2010, Lutz, 2014; Bhabha, 2004).

In line with this approach, motherhood identities vary and are thus structured according to class and other qualities such as education, legal status, etc. Whilst the essentialised assumption is that all mothers are the same, motherhood is embedded in different cultural and personal contexts which often repudiate the universalised claim that sees motherhood as similar for all women. (Collins, 1994). Varieties in mothering underscore the importance of recognising diversities within commonalities (Collins, 1994). Inevitably, experiences of motherhood differ and are shaped by varied hierarchical circumstances (social/ economic). Moreover, nation states have a direct impact on transnational mothers as they detect who enters a country, who leaves and who works thus having a direct impact on motherhood and mothering identities. The role of the nation state in reunification processes cannot be overemphasised and an intersectional analysis that looks at women vis-à-vis factors such as legal status, illuminates how the mothering role of migrant low skilled women, although, on one hand, is a matter in their private domains, is impinged upon by the state in the public sphere, shaping their identities and reconfiguring or renegotiating their roles as carers of their children.

Nation states have a direct bearing on reunification as a result of the legal status of transnational mothers, a status that ultimately impinges on their gender role expectations as transnational mothers as well as has a direct effect on the relationships and interactions of mothers and their children. For example, in a study of Indonesian and Filipino domestic workers living in Taiwan, Lan (2006) draws attention to the intersection of globalisation, race and gender on migrant domestic workers. These workers found it difficult to visit families often because of the expenses involved versus their under-valued and over-worked wages, as reflected in their wages. "Transnational mothering is not in isolation, but rather is based in a historical, political and economic context which affects mother's ideals and perceptions of mothering" (Dewi, 2011, p.209).

As such, factors such as country of origin, class, ethnicity, education, legal status, cultural backgrounds, etc. come into play and intersect to shape mothering practices of migrants. Although recognised as a potent framework of analysis, intersectionality does not come without its own criticisms, primarily for its lack of a clear methodology, thereby posing challenges to its application (McCall, 2005 & Nash, 2008, as cited in Bastia, 2014). Furthermore, intersectionality theory has been criticised for its tendency to conceal intra-group differences

(differences within difference) (Bastia, 2014). How power is organised within societies and its structures is a notable weakness of the approach (Bastia, 2014).

There is a risk of turning it into a 'tick-box' exercise as a way of demonstrating that sufficient differences have been accounted for. In addition, the applicability of intersectionality in different geographical contexts requires caution, particularly given the fact that it is a theory that was born out of experiences of historically marginalised black women in the USA (Bastia, 2014). Despite the notable disadvantages, intersectionality is "sufficiently malleable so as to enable the inclusion of multiple and complex categories of identification, while at the same time enabling the analysis of both privilege and disadvantage" (Bastia, 2014, p.11). In deploying a transnational intersectional analysis, this paves way for a more nuanced examination of how positionality is relational and also affected by place, space and time, denoting the fluidity of social position where one might simultaneously or at different points, be in a position of dominance and in another, may be in a position of subordination (Anthias, 2012).

The approach thus allows for a detailed inquiry which looks into multi-levelled intersectional ties at micro (transnational practices and positions of actors i.e. class, legal status, etc.) meso (social networks) and macro levels (migration regimes and labour market regimes) (Lutz & Mollenbeck, 2011). Moreover, the strength of intersectionality lies in its ability to work both as a research and policy paradigm (Hancook, 2007). Hence, understanding difference should not be taken as an end in itself because what happens after an intersectional analysis is equally if not more important in reducing social injustice, inequalities and pursuing policies that aim towards emancipation of marginalised groups.

2.5   Information and Communication Technologies

For transnational mothering, regular communication is key to maintaining and sustaining relations with left behind children. It is also recognised as a key factor in maintaining co-presence. New communicative technologies such as mobile phones, Skype, internet, email, etc. have been hailed as tools that have helped ease the burden and pain of distant parenting as they have paved the way for families to create spaces of 'transconnectivity' as they practice simultaneous and on-going belonging across significant temporal and geographic distances and subsequently affecting how transnational migrants 'do emotion work' (King-O'riain, 2015, p. 256). Therefore, the role of communication technologies in transnational relations is imperative

to understanding how domestic workers practice transnational communication with their children in Zimbabwe.

In the dawn of heightened globalisation and complementary developments in communication technologies, how transnational contact with left-behind children is affected and mediated by new technologies is crucial to the understanding of distant mothering practices and patterns of care-giving. This is necessary in order to assess their meditative impact on mother-child separations, given that communication technologies, such as mobile phones, Skyping, etc. have been cast as helping ease the negative effects of separation by introducing newer and easier means of frequent communication, thus maintaining co-presence (Mahler, 2001; Parrenas, 2005; Mardianou & Miller, 2011; Wilding, 2006; Lutz, 2010) .

Similarly, Pertierra (2006) argues that the mobile phone offers empowering qualities as it allows for a hybrid communication that combines both calling and text messaging and also enables one to communicate with others immediately and reflectively. Likewise, Paragas (2017) also observes how mobile phones can now act as a transnational communicative bridges that can offer temporal, technological and spatial simultaneity for migrants given that transnational migrants are heavy users of new communication technologies (Mardinou & Miller, 2012; Parrenas, 2005; Uy-Tioco, 2007) whilst 'Skype mothering' is a relatively new phenomenon that has afforded transnational mothers greater opportunities to be involved in the day-to-day communications of their families (Lutz & Palenga-Mollenbeck, 2012).

Although there is ample evidence to illustrate how positively transnational communication has been affected by new communication technologies by enhancing virtual co-presence, this has been evident in major care export countries, such as the Philippines; little is known in the African context. Furthermore, regardless of empirical context, to assume communication technologies have eased the burdens of separation without considering how other factors impact on this commemorative development in transnational parenting would be short-sighted. For transnational mothers to wholly take advantage of new technologies requires that they fulfil at least three conditions, namely access, cost and media literacy (Mardinou, 2014).

Bearing this in mind, an intersectional analysis is called for in order to illuminate how categories of disadvantage intersect and impact on transnational communication capabilities between transnational mothers and their left-behind children. Although significant strides have been achieved in communication technologies, this does not automatically entail accessibility to every transnational mother or parent, but rather depends on where they are situated or

positioned in the social hierarchy. New technologies cannot positively mediate on transnational relationships if those involved lack access to resources or are bankrupt in terms of technological literacy and access. Financial resources determine the ability of transnational mothers to maintain co-presence and emotional intimacy from a distance via communication technologies (Baldassar, 2007; Wilding, 2006).

2.6   Summary

I made the conscious decision to use the conceptual frameworks discussed above (transnational approach, global care chains, intersectionality and, globalisation and ICT (media) frameworks as they closely spoke to my empirical intentions. However, I did so fully aware that the efficacy of these frameworks may not be fool proof in their applicability and portability to the Southern African context as they came with their own limitations in view of the empirical context of my study. However, this does not necessarily imply the inability of these theories to travel into our own context. Rather, what I found useful was to draw relevant and applicable theoretical insights that closely matched my research and by combining them, I believe they will complement each other in answering the main research questions posed.

Lastly, in adopting these frameworks, I admit to having personally harboured some reservations, some of which have also been similarly expressed by other migration scholars. For starters, whilst there is strong evidence suggesting information and communication technologies (ICTs) have provided easier means of long-distance intimacy for many migrant care workers in the core countries, (Mardianou & Miller, 2011; Mardianou, 2012), this empirical evidence cannot be generalised, particularly in the Sothern African context. Despite evidence suggesting that new technologies have allowed women to reconstitute their roles as effective parents through what they term 'mobile phone parenting', suggesting the capacity of technologies to empower women in the context of transnational mothering, in the Global South, the realities appear to dispute this overly celebrated claim.

 I have however argued that this capacity is mediated by other factors such as the extent of development and capacities of ICTs in poor countries, the costs of these technologies that are further mediated upon by class, skills level, and educational level, legal status in host country, nationality, working conditions and so forth. The class of migrants for my research were low skilled women who are placed at the 'bottom of the labour market' (Hoschild, 2001) which has implications for the wages they earn and working conditions, in general. As reasoned by Mahler (2001), geographic location matters because the world's resources are not evenly

distributed, meaning the supposed benefits of globalisation and the accompanying 'communication revolution' were a privilege to a few and excludes most migrants and the poor around the globe.

Furthermore, in Africa, the gains of technological developments brought about by globalisation have been slow to reach us. Moreover, literacy of information technologies is heavily dependent on what class position women occupy in terms of their access to modern technologies, skills and education, amongst others. The uptake of ICTs and the poorly developed infrastructural technologies in both the sending and receiving contexts usually acted as constraints and not enhancers of distant parenting, exacerbated by the fact that they were not always evenly distributed on both sides of the borders. Bryceson and Vuorela (2002) note how communication is mediated by other factors, such as income levels or material assets, which in effect, can act as barriers to communication transnationally. Thus, in order to fully interrogate transnational communication between mothers, children and carers, requires one to look into the structural barriers present in both the sending (where the children stay) and receiving contexts (to where the mother migrated) (Graham, Jordan, Yeoh, Lam, Asis & Su-kamdi, 2012).

Lastly, without necessarily discharging the meditative effects on technologies on transnational separation, structural barriers raise the question of whether new communication technologies can overcome challenges and complications that arise due to mother-child separations, which are by their very nature, characteristically social and not necessarily technological. In other words, I found it difficult to reconcile technologies with emotions of separation, especially in instances where the mothers in question are confronted with structural constraints in both their origin and destination countries. The global care chains approach (GCC), whilst it gives a strong analytical tool to theorise on globalisation and its effects on the participation of Global North women in the labour market, also casts women who migrate for domestic work as mere victims of globalisation (Yeates, 2009).

Accordingly, it fails to address women's agency particularly that women willingly and agentically choose to migrate for domestic work to meet their own ends. If women are cast as powerless and vulnerable victims responding to the globalisation forces, then its efficacy becomes even more compromised because it does not go further to explain why then some women choose to stay/ not migrate for care work whilst others choose to, when they are all from one region. What are the in-between factors (apart from globalisation) that distinguish

those women who stay from those who migrate in response to globalisation forces? It also narrows its effectiveness by focusing on those women who participate in the global care chain from a purely economic perspective. Other categories like refugees, those displaced through other ways and those that engage in circular (internal) migration are not accounted for.

Yet women migrate for many other reasons that may have little to do with the economic or globalisation aspects. Nonetheless, it offers some theoretical insights that can be applied in studying transnational mothers. The transnational approach, on the other hand, offers a useful starting point as it allowed me to look beyond the nation state in inquiring about social relations. However, it has been criticised for failing to distinguish how it is any different from earlier migration theory. In other words, before it came to the fore, were all migrants not transnational in their activities? Additionally, among the early proponents of the approach, there is theoretical incoherence when it comes to demarcating who or which migrant can be labelled as transnational. Portes et al. (1999), for example, offers a highly prescriptive and stringent criterion for assessing which migrant activities constitute genuine transnationalism.

Sustained simultaneity in both nation states (sending and receiving contexts) and regular and frequent contact and activity across nations is a pre-condition for one to be labelled truly transnational. Consequently, he dismissed occasional visits and irregular remittances as non-transnational, a position that is also endorsed by Tsuda (2012) who argues that most of what we term transnationalism is in fact 'transborderism', suggesting that the tendency to conflate 'transnationalism' with 'transborderism' is a further weakness of the approach and points to a lack of a proper methodology with this framework.

As a result, as I am writing this, I find myself pondering one key question, i.e. whether my study is or should be on transborder mothers as opposed to transnational mothers, a question that I have continued to engage with throughout my research process and one I have attempted to answer in my conclusion of this research. I have also reflected deeply whether the presence of Zimbabwean transnational domestic workers in Botswana can be labelled as 'simultaneity', given that they live under the shadows, undocumented and invisible from public policy, often hiding in order to avoid detection in their reception context. Given the kind of motherhood they practice as mere visitors once a year, if at all, I continue to question if they are indeed simultaneously embedded, economically, politically and socially in Botswana and Zimbabwe.

In Botswana, foreign domestic workers, though present in their numbers are living at the margins of society, intersected by multiple disadvantage and hiding from the police is part and

parcel of their everyday lived experiences. These conditions stand out as oppositional to 'simultaneous embeddedness' advanced by the transnational approach. Perhaps then the 'celebratory' tone advanced by transnational theorists is a novelty to many migrants whose everyday realities are far distant from their lived experiences. Although this may be so for highly skilled and highly resourced migrants who can afford to be deeply embedded in both nations and may even hold dual citizenship or legal residence in both countries but not so for the many lower skilled migrants who cannot afford the luxuries of experiencing and living 'genuine' transnational lives.

Yet again, in marrying the concept of simultaneity with the advances in communicative technologies, I find myself wondering if frequent communication brought about by new technologies is at all equivalent to simultaneous and frequent embeddedness in and across two nation states. In other words, can virtual embeddedness as a result of frequent communication across borders, entail labelling such activities genuinely transnational because of the simultaneous presence through virtual regular communications. The approach, in casting migrants as free actors who shape and contest the governmentality of more than one state (Glick Schiller, 2005a) fails to account for power relations in terms of class and ethnic position of different categories of migrants, legal statuses and the impact of nation state immigration policies and laws on migrants.

It also fails to take into account differences between migrants based on skills and education, etc. seems to paint novel pictures of docile nation states, whose powers have been overtaken by transnational activities and yet the rise in transnational migration may in actual fact correspond with an increased 'hyper-presence' of various nation state organs in an effort to curb and regulate migration, as is the case in Botswana. Despite the epistemological challenges posed by the transnational approach, it's strengths, particularly in adopting a multi-sited methodology, allowed for deeper insights into the affective dimensions of transnational mothering affecting not only the migrant mothers but those who stayed behind and how in the process, socio-cultural processes of mothering were transformed and reconfigured within families.

Within the confines of this study, my multi-sited focus was on the 'transactions between those who have migrated and those who have stayed in place' (Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2004) and the transnational approach allowed this research to focus on the multiplicity of perspectives (Glick-Schiller et al., 2005) on social lives or multiplicity of identities and belongings in

denationalised research i.e. shifting the focus beyond the boundaries of the nation state but of course, without necessarily dismissing it from the equation. Inevitably, I had to concur with Mahler's position that you cannot leave the nation out of the equation (Mahler, 2001).

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

> "To advance scholarship on transnational families, multi-sited research and data collection in different nation states are necessary" (Mazzucato & Schans, 2011, p. 706).

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a detailed outline of the methodological framework that was employed for this study. This section outlines the methods employed in this study, data collection and analytical procedures. I highlight the research questions first, and then move on to discuss my philosophical assumptions and the methods employed in the study of lived experiences of transnational domestic workers in Botswana, their left-behind children in Zimbabwe and care-givers. I further highlight issues relating to how I negotiated entry into the field, the nature of relationships established in the field, my positionality as a researcher in the different fields I entered and lastly, discuss the ethical dilemmas and challenges I encountered and how I negotiated my way around them.

3.2 Methodology

The framework of this study was nested in the philosophical roots of the phenomenological paradigm (in particular, hermeneutic phenomenology as propounded by Heidegger (1967). For Creswell (2003), research methods depend on the research paradigm chosen by the researcher suggesting a direct relationship between the methods a researcher adopts and how she/he choose to go about in search of knowledge. Neuman (2014) identified three main approaches to knowledge, namely, positivist social science, interpretive social science and critical social science. In designing this study, I illustrate my epistemological stance by drawing on Burrell & Morgan's (1979) paradigms of social analysis. This framework identifies functionalism; radical structuralism; interpretivism and radical humanism as the four main paradigms of social science knowledge.

In line with this, I used this framework merely as a guide to situate my study's epistemology and justify the methods.

Four Paradigms for the Analysis of Social Theory (Burrell & Morgan, 1979,22)

The Sociology of Radical Change

Radical Humanist	Radical Structuralist
Interpretretive	Functionalist

Subjective ——————— Objective

The Sociology of Regulation
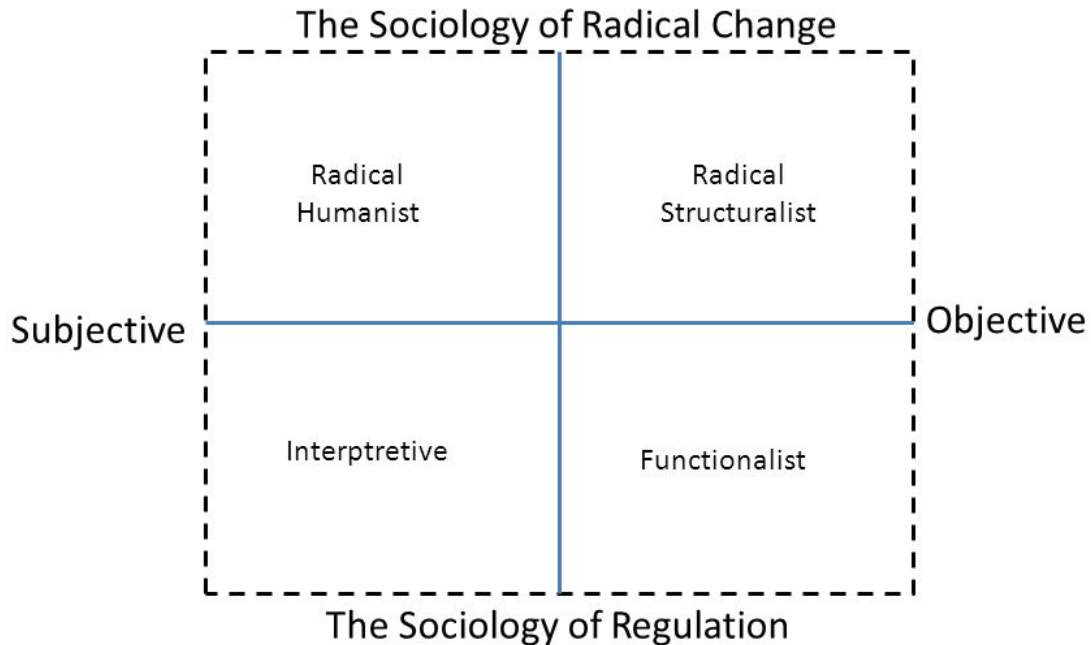
Figure 1: Four paradigms for the analysis of social theory (Burrell & Morgan, 1979, p.22)

Following the illustration above, this study is situated within the philosophy of Interpretive Social Science (ISS) whose epistemological emphasis draws from the subjective nature of social reality and interpretation. However, within the varieties of interpretive social science, I chose to use hermeneutic phenomenology, in particular, Heidegger's philosophy. As one of the many varieties of Interpretive Social Science (ISS), phenomenological philosophy comes in several forms - hermeneutics, phenomenology, ethno-methodology and constructionism (Neuman, 2014).

In essence, phenomenology is the study of 'being' that has passed two major historical phases i.e. 'transcendental' and 'hermeneutic' also referred to as 'existential' (Larkin & Thompson, 2012). The first historical phase of transcendental phenomenology is credited to Husserl. His core philosophy called for identifying and suspending everyday taken-for-granted assumptions in order to arrive at the essence of a phenomenon. In other words, it was a philosophy of suspending or bracketing off everything, be it culture, history or context (Larkin & Thompson, 2012; Eton & Smith, 2008). He believed that only through 'phenomenological reduction'

would one get to truly understand people's experiences and get to what he termed the essence of a phenomenon. The second historical phase of phenomenology is often credited to Heidegger, a scholar and follower of Husserl. Hermeneutics is derived from the Greek language means to interpret or to make clear (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012). Heidegger came up with what is today popularly known as hermeneutic phenomenology (hermeneutics /interpretive phenomenology) (Eatough & Smith, 2008; Larkin & Thompson, 2012).

As major phenomenology supporters, they criticised Husserl's philosophy as too purist (Heidegger, 1967) and alleged that such a purist reduction, as proposed by Husserl, was not possible. Heidegger (1967) argued that 'persons' or 'daseins' were already thrown into an existing world that had existing culture, language and history. In other words, 'dasein' and the world were mutually constitutive of each other. Based on this argument, phenomenological reduction was impossible and too utopian. Instead, for them, in order to understand a phenomenon, one had to take it through the process of interpretation. It was this criticism that gave rise to the second school of thought in phenomenology.

Essentially, interpretive phenomenology views the social world as comprising both the individuals and the world they live in, in a reciprocal relationship. In other words, the individual who experiences whatever phenomena does not exist in a vacuum and will therefore be always influenced by the external world in which they live. The aim of a phenomenologist is concerned with the participant's experiences of whatever phenomena they may be investigating and how they make sense of their life worlds (Babbie, Mouton, Vorster & Prozesky, 2015; Welman, Kruger & Mitchell, 2007). Secondly, their understanding of social reality, based on the fact that it will always be influenced by the external world, will be subject to previous meanings and interpretations.

Therefore, unlike his teacher, Husserl, Heidegger (1967) refuted claims to the possibility of phenomenological reduction where one could truly get to the core or essence of a phenomenon. Instead, he perceived phenomenology as acts of interpretation. Heidegger's philosophy viewed a person (*Dasein/ being*) is inextricably involved in the world and more so in relationship with others, hence this fact shapes our perceptions of being or '*dasein*' (Larkin & Thompson, 2012; Eatough & Smith, 2008). As such, phenomenological reduction is impossible because of the fact that our observations of phenomena always originate from somewhere, implying that any phenomenological inquiry is a 'situated' enterprise.

Consequently, hermeneutic phenomenology as a situated enterprise by implication, calls for one to move beyond transcendental phenomenology which is often descriptive phenomenology, to hermeneutic (interpretive) phenomenology in order to fully capture the experience and meanings of social reality (Larkin & Thompson, 2012, p.102). Human beings are seen as 'self-interpreting beings' (Taylor, 1985), therefore the emphasis of hermeneutic phenomenology is to seek an understanding of the subjective experiences and meanings attached to social reality by the subjects who experience the phenomena – by delving into individual experiences.

Consequently, hermeneutic phenomenology is a process that involves the participants trying to make meanings from their world and the researcher attempting to decode and understand those meanings (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012) or rather making sense of the participant's meaning-making (Smith & Osborne, 2008). In essence, this is what is referred to as the double hermeneutic or the hermeneutic circle. And hence the present study sought to engage with participants in a process of simultaneous interpretation and re-interpretation. Given that sociological knowledge is by nature interactive and interpretive (Giddens, 1984), I found interpretivism as the most suitable paradigm for this study in order to fully understand subjective meanings (Neuman, 2014) that participants assigned to their social realities.

In examining the experiences of transnational mothers, care-givers and left-behind children, I engaged in a process of making sense through the hermeneutic process of interpretation and re-interpretation (Smith & Osborne, 2008). By engaging with transnational family members across different geographical locations, I argue that through this process, this study engaged in a process of double hermeneutics (Giddens, 1984, Heidegger, 1967). Although I borrowed some ideas from the first school of phenomenology led by Husserl, in particular the concept of bracketing, I found further leaning towards Heideggerian philosophy for the simple reason that I wanted to move the empirical interpretations of this study to a theoretical level.

By placing this study in the philosophical underpinnings of hermeneutic phenomenology as my theoretical roots, I managed to offer both descriptive and interpretive accounts of my subjects. Moreover, Heideggerian philosophy also has a heavy leaning towards the notion of empathy as it is argued that that researchers can imagine themselves in the lives of their participants and may even become part of the group they are studying (Welman, Kruger & Mitchell, 2007). Equally important is the notion that human existence cannot be separated from its context and vice versa, implying that humans derive meanings from their life-worlds (ibid).

Therefore, although my study focused on transnational mothers, their children and the caregivers, an analysis of their experience devoid of their history and context in which they are living would not have afforded me a wholesome analysis of their experiences. Heidegger's philosophy allowed me to keep the subject's narratives in mind but also analyse participants' narratives within the time, space and place dimensions (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

3.3   Research Approach: Multi-site Qualitative Research Approach

The present study was adopted a qualitative research design. Qualitative studies broadly serve four main purposes, as identified by Peshkin (1993). Firstly, they offer description of some social phenomena, they provide interpretation of phenomena, they can also be useful where a researcher intends to test the validity of certain assumptions and they can also be useful where an evaluation is needed to judge the effectiveness of some phenomena. Creswell (2007) identifies five qualitative approaches as narrative, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography and case study. Each approach comes with its own philosophical and paradigmatic assumptions and is underpinned by interpretivism and subjectivism meaning that qualitative researchers study phenomena in their natural settings so as to interpret and make sense in terms of the meanings people assign to them (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003).

Ritchie and Lewis, (2003) advance that qualitative research tends to provide a very detailed interpretation of data when it comes to data analysis, mainly through the usage of themes and codes to identify theories that may emerge from the data. It is an approach that is mostly useful in answering three main questions of the "how", the "what" and the "why. Epistemologically, my study therefore adopted a qualitative multi-sited approach because it was the most suitable method to answer questions of why participants interpreted motherhood the way they did, how they interpreted it and what meanings they assigned to the phenomena of transnational motherhood. To answer these questions, I therefore collected data through a triangulation of methods, namely, exploit narrative interviews, diary and visual methods as the main data collection approaches. These tools, as well as the sampling procedure used, are now discussed in the forthcoming section.

3.3.1   Multi-sited research approach

Multi-sited research is a research methodology that "moves away from the conventional single site location, contextualized by macro-constructions of the large social order, such as the capitalist world system, to multiple sites of observation and participation that cut dichotomies such as the 'local' and the 'global', the 'life-world' and the 'system'" (Marcus, 1995, p.95).

My methodological framework was informed by the experiences of mothers who migrated to Botswana to work as domestic workers, as well as those who have stayed behind, in particular, the children and their caregivers, with the aim of making connections or linkages between different contexts by following the people and their stories (Marcus, 1995).Based on extant literature, one of the main criticisms that has emerged from transnational studies has been its focus on one site for data collection, usually with either the parent in the host country, or the children or caregivers in the sending country.

Epistemologically, I also adopted the standpoint that families, though on the surface may appear as a homogenous unit, have a diversity of experience, hence there was so single way of knowing from one site, but rather from multiple spatialities. Crucially, given that migrants and their families are embedded within broader social systems that have their own structural dynamics at play, it was key to understand motherhood from the different situatedness of the players in the transnational social circuits, further justifying a multi-sited research approach. Furthermore, most transnational studies are characterised by the notion of methodological nationalism in which the units of analysis are located in a single nation. (Wimmer & Glick-Schiller, 2002) leading to research on families biased towards single locations i.e. based mainly on families living in one location or nation state (Mazzucato & Schans, 2011).

Consequently, this has often led to ensuing studies that offer only partial insights into transnational families (Mazzucato, 2008). My study sought to fill in this lacuna Moreover, of particular concern is the observation that in such studies, children are rarely interviewed directly, but rather the caregivers are asked to evaluate the well-being of these children (Mazzucato & Schans, 2011) and yet the uneven impact of globalisation increasingly shows how they have intruded into the micro-worlds of families and households, resulting in family membership becoming multi-sited (Yeoh et al., 2004). In addition, beyond focusing on the migrant in the receiving context, Mazzucato and Schans (2011) further note how most studies on well-being of left behind children has predominantly focused on migration streams from Asia and Mexico to the USA, overlooking transnational families in areas such as Sub-Saharan Africa.

With this in mind, I thus chose to focus on transnational studies in Sub-Saharan Africa where little research has been done in this field. As far as I know, there has been no study of transnational motherhood that has been done in the context of the Zimbabwean migration of mothers to Botswana so far. By moving beyond methodological nationalism through

employing a multi-sited research design, my study was designed with the explicit aim of making methodological contributions to transnational studies by taking into account migrant mothers' experiences of 'doing mothering' from a distance within their historical cultural and context specific norms of mothering from their country of origin.

Additionally, this study further sought to fill a gap by undertaking a holistic analysis of the transnational care triangle (Graham et al., 2012), which consists of three main actors i.e. the mother, the caregiver and the child/children left behind. By focusing on this triangle, I was able to get the subjective meanings of migrants, as well as non-migrants, by comparing their subjectivities, shared meanings and understandings of migration and motherhood. Historically, migrant families have predominantly been conceived as living together and bound by the nation state, yet it is not all families that are based on co-residence (Baldassar, Baldock & Wilding, 2007). By adopting a multi-sited/ bi-national research approach, this study made a significant contribution to knowledge in the broader field of transnationalism.

I also aligned my conceptualization of the present study to Glick-Schiller et al., (1998) who argued that it is no longer sufficient to focus solely on transnational migrant's experiences of adaptation and incorporation, as it is important to draw data from multiple levels of analysis. When I initially conceived this research, I did not set out to do multi-sited research. Instead, my focus was solely on transnational mothers from Zimbabwe working as domestic workers in Botswana. In addition, even in its initial conception, my choice of Botswana as my research site was rather deliberate as that is where I resided and from the surface, that was indeed convenient for me in terms of time, access and resources. Evidently, it was a biased choice.

Nevertheless, as I continued to engage with literature on transnationalism, I began to notice the methodological weaknesses of my research proposal, specifically that I intended to study transnational mothering practices and experiences only from one viewpoint, that of the mother in the host country. I interrogated myself over the efficacy of such a project and the extent of knowledge contribution I would achieve by reifying methodological nationalism, especially given that the mothers I targeted in Botswana in in actual fact raising their children in a different nation state (Zimbabwe). Subsequently, I changed my method to a multi-site by including left-behind children and caregivers in Zimbabwe, in order to fully grasp the experiences and consequences of this phenomenon from all subjects' views.

Consequently, this implied travelling between two nation states during fieldwork. The fieldwork was relatively less daunting in the receiving country (Botswana) as it is also my

residence. However, it proved a highly daunting task to travel to Zimbabwe on two occasions i.e. in May 2017 for the first round of interviews with the left-behind children and their care-givers and for the follow-up interviews in September 2017. To begin with, my participants were not located in one single physical site but were spatially located across Zimbabwe. Hence, as a single researcher, I realised that I had spread myself out too thinly as I had to travel across different locations in Zimbabwe (rural and urban areas). This scenario had cost and time implications.

In spite of the painstaking process of travelling across borders, a point I raise from the personal experience of being a Zimbabwean national who has experienced first-hand the difficulties of travelling across SADC borders as well as from an empirical point of view, I realise that taking a multi-sided standpoint was useful in producing rich 'insider' perspectives into transnational mothering. I did not have to hear from the mother how the children were faring or what the children thought of mother-child separation. Thankfully, I had the opportunity to see the effects, to feel the experience, to empathise directly and to hear those voices that are normally invisible in scholarship and policy. Furthermore, the multi-sited approach enabled me to engage in a case-by-case analysis of a family unit across two nations.

Thus, by doing so, I was not only afforded the opportunity to listen to subjective accounts but, because I was conversing and interacting within a family triangle, I was able to interpret from three different perspectives (all insiders) and analyse how the narratives told in one country were either converging or diverging from the narratives told on the other side of the border, based on different social contexts. Without taking away my participants' voices, in trying to understand and interpret the meanings of their narratives, I was also able to manoeuvre my analysis from merely some hermeneutics of empathy to a higher level by engaging in the hermeneutics of suspicion whose aim is mainly to decode those hidden meanings that may have been disguised (Ricouer, 1975; Josselson, 2004).

This allowed me to dig into further and further layers on interpretation in order to get to the core meanings of my study, especially in view of the fact that I also triangulated my data collection methods through narrative interviews, semi-structured interviews, diary methods and visual research approaches. This meant I got data from my participants using multiple methods across nations and the end result was a thick description of very rich findings and it enhanced the credibility and trustworthiness of my data.

3.4   Sampling

I utilised two non-probability sampling approaches for this study, notably purposive/judgement sampling and snowball sampling. It was purposive because the participants I chose shared some common characteristics, in particular that they were all mothers who had left their children behind in Zimbabwe and that they were working as domestic workers in Botswana. "In judgement sampling, you decide the purpose you want informants (or communities) to serve and you go out to find some" (Bernard, 2000, p.176, as cited in Patton, 2002, p.230) and it is basically sampling based on your knowledge of the population, its elements and the purpose of one's study (Babbie, Mouton, Vorster & Prozesky, 2015). From this standpoint, this meant that participants shared common key characteristics that I intended to investigate hence it was a purposeful sample.

In addition, it was also a snowball sample in the sense that once I purposefully identified the first two mothers, they eventually referred me to other mothers in their network who also shared the common characteristics aforementioned so in the end, it became a chain referral process as I would ask each mother I interviewed if they could refer me to someone who was in similar circumstances as they were. In snowball sampling, a few individuals are approached and they in turn, act as informants and identify other members for inclusion in the study sample (Welman et al., 2007). Imperatively, with snowball sampling, the researcher has no means of forecasting or ensuring that each element of the population will be represented in the sample (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005) suggesting that its weakness lies in its inability to have a sampling frame.

The snowball approach means one uses already established contacts to gain connection to further informants within the relevant part of the field (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005; Creswell, 1998; 2003; Bryman, 2012). A further potential weakness is that by relying on referrals, the informants are likely to refer me to those people who exist within their own networks, hence the possibility of precluding other informants with useful data. On the other hand, Neuman (2014) argues otherwise because linkages do not necessarily imply that each person in the network interacts with or is influenced by the other.

3.5   Data collection Methods

My empirical inquiry applied a range of methods in order to arrive at thick and rich descriptions of transnational caregiving by mothers and their experiences, those of the children they left behind as well as the care-givers who become alternative mothers in the context of absent

mothers in Zimbabwe. I was convinced that in order to enhance the trustworthiness of the data, I had to triangulate data collection methods in order to ensure rigour, credibility and trustworthiness. I must admit it was a complex task to employ three data collection methods across three different groups of participants' i.e. transnational mothers, children and caregivers. I employed narrative interviews guided by Wengraf's Biographic Narrative Interpretive Method in the first instance (Wengraf, 2001; 2004). I utilised the SQUIN (single question aimed at inducing narrative) in the first interview, and then I made a second follow up interview with each of my participants by way of semi-structured questions that differed per participant as they were determined by what the participants had narrated in our first interview.

In line with the SQUIN and Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) guidelines, my questions were follow-up questions to the first narratives of the participants that opened the way for further questioning and understanding. In addition, I also gave diaries and journals to all participants over varying periods of time (between 3-6 months) where I asked them to record their story or experiences in relation to the topic of transnational mothering. In addition to the narrative interviews, which were all audio-recorded and diaries, I was also mindful of the fact that my research comprised both adults and children. I felt compelled to employ a further data collection method as a way of engendering child-friendly research methods for this research. As such, I then made use of visual research data collection methods, specifically with children.

To elaborate, I offered children a wide array of choices, namely disposable cameras, journals, art and drawing books, drawing charts and extra notebooks as well as colours, pens, highlighters, pencils, stencils, rulers and erasers. The children were not obliged to utilise all options available to them and could choose to use all of them, use some of them or not even use any. I gave them the full right to choose. However, as I expected, they were excited, and it came as no surprise when all the children who participated wanted each and every item that was on offer. I allowed them to take whatever was on the table. Nonetheless, not all the items that the children took were utilised. However, this did not in any way diminish the richness of the data I got back from them as the children delivered lots of data to work with.

From my side, it was also my first time to do research in which I had to work with diaries and visual methodologies, making the process very intimidating and overwhelming. Being in constant consultation with my supervisor, as well as constantly engaging with literature related to these methods mitigated my amateurism and I believe, has managed to produce nuanced analysis of transnational motherhood that has made significant contributions at empirical and

methodological levels. Given this background, I now discuss each of the data collection methods that I used in the ensuing section beginning with the single key question that I initially asked every participant. By asking a single question, I wanted to encourage my respondents to tell their stories in their own subjective way, without initial direction from me. The study itself was guided by three main objectives. It set out to explore the experiences of mothering from a distance by migrant domestic workers in Botswana. It also set out to examine left-behind children's meaning making processes of living separately from their mothers or being mothered from a distance. Last but not least, the study also examined the experiences of care-givers in the absence of biological mothers in order to understand their perceptions of care-giving and motherhood. To follow up on these three single narrative questions were posed to the participants as follows:

3.5.1 Narrative Inquiry

3.5.1.1 SQUIN question (for transnational mothers)

Please tell me about yourself and the child or children you left behind in Zimbabwe. As you know, I am collecting data on how mothering practices are transforming and being redefined as a result of your migration to Botswana by looking into specific practices and strategies you employ to cope with the emotional, economic, psychological and social consequences of transnational migration in Botswana as well as your home country, Zimbabwe. Please could you tell me your story and experiences? Please take your time and you may begin your story from wherever you feel like. There are no right or wrong answers. I will listen first and with your permission, record your story as well as take some notes too. I will not interrupt. However, after you finish telling me your story, I may want to ask some further questions as a follow up to your story.

3.5.1.2 SQUIN question (for caregivers)

Please tell me about yourself and your experiences of looking after the child/children left under your care. As you are aware, I am collecting information from mothers who work in Botswana, whose child/ children are living under your care here in Zimbabwe. I want to understand your own personal experiences of care-giving and how your relationships function between the mothers and the children separated from their mothers as well as the dynamics of reciprocity and mutual dependence characteristic of this relationship. Please could you tell me your story and experiences? Please take your time and you may begin your story from wherever you feel like. There are no right or wrong answers. I will listen first and with your permission, record

your story as well as take some notes too. I will not interrupt. However, after you finish telling me your story, I may want to ask some further questions as a follow up to your story.

3.5.1.3 SQUIN question (for left-behind children)

Please tell me about yourself and how you feel about living separately from your mother. I am collecting data on mothers working in Botswana who do not live with their children in Botswana. I am also collecting information from the children living here in Zimbabwe without their mothers so that I can understand the experiences of separation directly from the children, like you. Please could you tell me your story and experiences of separation? Please take your time and you may begin your story from wherever you feel like. There are no right or wrong answers. I will listen first and with your permission, record your story as well as take some notes too. I will not interrupt. However, after you finish telling me your story, I may want to ask some further questions as a follow up to your story.

The preceding questions were deliberately posed to participants in order to invoke narrative story-telling by participants. I chose this method given that narratives focus on individual life stories. Though they may have some weakness, the underlying purposes of narratives made it a worthwhile method of collecting migration narratives from participants. Based on the belief that human reality is about constructing and reconstructing personal stories, narrative inquiry is a method that "involves gathering of narratives through written, oral and visual means, whilst focusing on the meanings that people ascribe to their experiences and seeks to provide insight that benefits the complexity of human lives" (Josselson, 2006, p.4).

The key focus in narrative inquiry involves the "narrative scholar pays analytic attention to how the facts got assembled that way. For whom was the story constructed, how was it made and for what purpose? What cultural discourses does it draw on or take for granted? What does it accomplish?" (Riesman & Speedy, 2007, p.428-429). Clandinin and Connelly (2000) posit that narratives are a way of understanding what emerges out of a collaborative association between the researcher and the narrator, a collaboration that is constructed over time and in a specific place or places. This resonates with Connelly and Clandinin, (2006, p. 480) who suggest that "the inquirers are always in an inquiry relationship with the participants". Creswell and Miller (2000) also reason along similar lines by asserting that both the researcher and the storyteller constantly negotiate the meaning of stories by providing validation checks throughout story collection and story analysis.

As such, dimensions of space, temporality, sociality and place are important in narrative inquiry (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006) because the participant's interpretations of experiences may change within time, within new experiences and new or different social interactions (Ezzy, 1998). This suggestion similarly resonates with what Ricouer (1990) calls the "threefold present" whereby past memory and future expectations co-exist within the present in the mind of the participant. Narratives are always told in this three-fold present where the past, present and future are in constant interaction. Location is crucial in understanding the experiences of storytellers as well as the requirement to think of the impact place and time has in their experiences. Likewise, time is equally significant because it not only determines but may also transform interpretation (Riley & Hawe, 2005).

On its shortcomings, the narrative approach is at times criticised for being less rigorous than other approaches because it focuses on individual experiences that tend to describe common themes reported by participants through their lived experiences (Van Manen, 1990). Its criticism lies in the creation of a story based on the researcher and participant relationship or the duality of the process called double hermeneutics (Smith & Osborne, 2003, Smith et al., 2009). Furthermore, it often suffers from researcher bias and subjectivities but these can be mitigated by adopting a phenomenological attitude where one suspends all their preconceptions and biases (Smith & Osborne, 2003; Smith *et al*, 2009).

Owing to the fact that both the researcher and the participant share the narrative landscape in telling the story (Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007), narrative interviews are characterised by power imbalances between the researcher and participants (Siedman, 2006), presenting a further weakness of this approach. In spite of its probable pitfalls, narrative research provides an opportunity for the voices of the narrators to come out, with their own unique perspectives of how they view their own world and experiences (Chase, 2005). My research intentionally chose to give migrant domestic workers a platform to narrate their experiences of working as domestic workers in Botswana while living separately from their children. I wanted to follow migrant family stories hence it was imperative to use narrative storytelling to get deeper understanding of participant' subjective experiences in transnational families. All interviews for mothers, children and caregivers were audio-recorded, after getting full consent and assent from the participants.

In line with the requirements of narrative inquiry, my first interview was done by way of posing one single question aimed at inducing a narrative. I posed the question and then just sat back,

listening and observing without interrupting (by voice, or gesture) until the narrator had finished telling her story. Admittedly, although I chose this method, I realised the challenges it posed once the SQUIN process had begun. As a method of narrative inquiry whose primary purpose is to induce a narrative as suggested by the name (SQUIN), I observed different levels of discomfort across my participants. To limit this discomfort to my participants only would be remiss of me to omit my own personal discomfort and uneasiness. I equally found myself going through moments of uneasiness, emotions of pity, instances of judging my participants, struggling with maintaining neutral facial expressions when something of significance was referenced by the narrator and even feelings of embarrassment, etc.

To me, it not only felt but also looked theatrical and I found myself wondering during this process if I would succeed in inducing rich narratives. I also questioned the fairness of employing this method once the reality set in, particularly the fairness on my participants. It really did feel like I was putting them 'on the spot' and that made me feel slightly uncomfortable. However, I also observed that as time lapsed, some of the narrators would then get comfortable and less nervous and then open up. To make participants more comfortable with this method, I ended up not following Wengraf's guidelines strictly but became flexible or liberal during the initial single question narrative interviews. For example, some of them were clear from the onset that they would prefer if I left the room whilst they shared their stories.

Nonetheless, despite the discomfort, the narratives produced in the first account and the follow up interviews produced rich data from most of my participants. Once done, I would just thank the narrator and explain that I would go through their story, then ask them for a second interview based on questions arising from the narrative. In the case of mothers, it was also at this point that I would also ask them if they consented to the use of a diary for some months. If they granted consent, I would then outline the basic instructions (to be discussed in the diary section). A similar protocol was also applied to the children and their care-givers. After the SQUIN interview, I would immediately jot down my own assessment of the process, observations, judgements, reflections, etc. as I was also journaling during and after my field-work.

I would listen to the audio recordings for the time without writing anything but just listening. The second time I would replay the audio and then start transcribing. This was a long process that would take time as it required rewinding the audio back and forth in order to capture the

narrator's experiences in verbatim format. Once the transcript was done, I would then sit down and read it in whole, after which I would derive questions in preparation for the second interview following the guidelines of interpretive phenomenological analysis (Smith & Osborne, 2008). Most of the questions asked in the second interview were questions arising from the SQUIN interview of the participant. As such, no two interviews were ever the same in their semi-structure as there was no standard question schedule. It all depended on what the narrator had narrated in the first instance and from this, I would then ask further questions, seek further clarification and elaborations or ask the participants to tell me more on whatever phenomenon had captured my inquiring self.

The Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) way of questioning through the use of a semi-structured interview schedule was comparatively easier than SQUIN due to a number of factors. Firstly, the interviews were very interactive in nature, as I would ask and the narrator would respond and elaborate their story, thereby shaping how they wanted their story to be understood and interpreted. Secondly, by the time I met with the different participants for the second interview, a positive level of rapport had been established in most instances, and the participants were relatively at ease and relaxed as we conversed. Due to these reasons, I was actually able to mine more data in the second interviews than in the first interviews. During SQUIN, I had no control over the process once the narrator began. This meant the narrator could begin their story at whatever point in their life and stop at any time.

Moreover, in those interviews where the narrator asked me to leave them in either a room or the car with the recorder only, there was no human element involved, meaning that I was not able to note facial and body language of my participants. Essentially, that meant there were episodes when I was not in control of the process but on the other hand, it was perhaps a blessing in disguise as the participants went into comfortable narrative mode once I excused myself, producing detailed and rich narratives. Furthermore, unlike the second interview which was highly interactive, with SQUIN, I had to contend with stories told that were not significant in answering my research questions per se. Instead, I was forced to sit back in silence, without any form of interruption and bear it all; the good, the bad, the unnecessary and the off-topic stories.

It was a totally different experience during the follow-up interviews that I engaged intensely in conversations with a purpose (Kvale, 1996) and it gave me control whilst allowing flexibility for the participants to share their stories further. In line with interpretive phenomenology, it

opened the doors for me to closely listen to the participants trying to make sense of their experiences while at the same time, also interpreting my participant's understanding in this process.

3.5.2   Diary methods

Diary methods involve intensive, repeated self-reports that aim to capture events, reflections, moods, pains or interactions near the time they occur (Lida, Shrout, Loreanceau & Bolger, 2012, p.277). Broadly, diaries allow the researcher to look into participants' experiences of a phenomenon and how such experiences vary over time, space and context. In addition, because of their amenability of looking into day-to-day variations, they have the advantage of offering the researcher an in-depth look into the trajectory of experiences as they vary day-to-day and across different persons. Reis and Gable (2000) suggest extensive training sessions as a basic requirement for diary usage because their efficacy in usage depends on the commitment and dedication of the participant involved. As such, the diary method ushers in some methodological weaknesses.

Common weaknesses include participant burden and participant forgetfulness. Identified sources of burden include the length of the diary entry, the frequency and the length of the period of diary entries, all of which can lead to non-compliance (Lida, Shrout, Loreanceau & Bolger, 2012, p.277). Furthermore, on the researcher's side, data analysis of solicited diaries may be costly and time consuming. However, in a bid to mitigate methodological weakness of the diary method, I employed some strategies which I felt could help to improve my research outcomes. I began by explaining the importance of the diary in studying transnational mothering, parental separation and care-giving.

That led me to take each and every participant through a briefing session where I explained the aims and objectives of the study, how and why they came into my study, how the study would be conducted and also how the diary would be kept confidential and anonymised if they voluntarily chose to use it. I conducted one-on-one sessions with each of the participants who had consented to use the diary over the course of the study, to ensure proper training of diaries. In line with Gollwitzer's recommendations (Gollwitzer, 1999, cited in Lida et al., p.284) of 'implementation intentions' in order to minimise obsolescence and inactivity in participant's diaries. I advised my participants to observe particular prompts as reminders of filling in their diaries, such as advising them to fill in the diary at a particular time or moment that coincides with one of their routine daily activities.

I also advised them to always remember to fill in the diary every night when they brush their teeth before retiring to bed. I believed that such planning could perhaps establish a practical routine that my participants would eventually internalise as their daily routine in order to enhance diary compliance. Lastly, I also made regular follow-ups with the mothers in particular, reminding them about their diaries and just checking with them, initially on a fortnightly basis. In a bid to get rich data that could answer my research questions, I also used the diary approach as one of my research instruments to augment narrative interviews. The diary method became useful in my endeavours to get a sense of the transnational subjective experiences of the actors in the care-giving triangle. I sought permission from each and every participant after our first interviews.

For the children, I sought assent from them directly but also permission to conduct research with diaries from their mothers as well as their caregivers. In the case of transnational mothers, I requested them to record everyday contact with the children they left behind, the caregivers, and even when they communicated with or contacted other significant people in the children's lives, such as their teachers, doctors or nurses, where applicable. Additionally, frequency and the nature of remittances for the children they left behind was also given as a guideline to the use of their diaries.

Furthermore, I also asked them to record any thoughts, effects, and experiences as a result of transnational mothering. I also asked them to record any strategies they employed on their everyday practices of transnational mothering. Whilst I gave them guiding themes for the diaries, it was very much a collaborative process as I did not limit them to the direction I gave them. Instead, I asked them to record anything of significance that came to their mind in relation to the topic at hand (transnational mothering) including even the feelings and emotions they go through on a daily basis. It was really up to them to write whatever they felt like as long as it centred on the main theme i.e. that of transnational mothering practices, consequences and strategies, etc.

Similar permission was also sought from caregivers as well as the left-behind children. For those who consented, I took them through the same process of guiding them towards the main thematic areas on which the research was focusing. For instance, in the case of children, I sought to understand their feelings about a mother's absence and the effects or consequences they experienced as a result of this separation. After giving them a briefing on the guidelines, I basically encouraged each participant to feel free to include whatever issues they felt were

relevant as there was a possibility that I may have also overlooked some matters that they could bring to the fore within the spirit of co-constructing knowledge.

The practicalities of diary usage in my research resonated well with the common weakness of this method as identified by Lida et al. (2012). In spite of the fact that I got rich data from the diaries, in particular those of the children, I still noted that over a prolonged period of time, compliance was a challenge. By analysing length of the diary entries, the frequency and the length of the period of diary entries, I concurred with Lida et al. (2012) that diaries may be a form of burden to research subjects and that resulted in cases of non-compliance. Examples of non-compliance include participants who would not utilise the diary frequently, those who added some entries that were undated and those that would simply forget about them for a while or simply not follow through with any of the thematic guidelines on which I had oriented them.

However, on the other extreme, I also got those who were over-zealous and really gave it their all. I have in mind the diary of one mother who literally authored 'a book' for me and openly shared and gave me a lot of insights into the emotional and day-to-day living of transnational mothers. Most of the children's diaries were superbly done and really gave me a sense of their day-to-day living, although they were not done daily or dated in most cases. However, the underlying nuances they projected in their diaries were much more revealing on the issue of maternal absence. I was especially surprised, as well as humbled, by the journals I got back from three children who are rural-based. While their journals did not contain much text, they were able to depict their daily living and experiences in pictorial form. Overall, I must point out that some of the stories that I got in the diaries were insights that I would not have gotten if I had restricted my data collection to interviews only.

The diaries were really revealing and opened up new interpretations of participant's lived experiences. From my side, their downside for me was and has been the workload involved in analysing them in their own right, thematising them separately from the interviews and then connecting them to the interviews to see whether the emerging themes diverged or converged, if so where and why or how. It was a daunting task, but one that I happily endured because of its positive outcomes. I provide analysis of the diaries in the next three chapters when I present the findings. However, due to the voluminous data obtained, I chose to fuse the findings from all sources i.e. from the interviews, diaries and photographs rather than as individual sources

in their own right. The next section presents the third data collection method that I utilised with children i.e. visual participatory methods.

3.5.3   Visual participatory methods

Visual based narrative inquiry is story-telling research that uses visual methods such as images, photographs, drawings, paintings, collages, film, video, signs, symbols and other visual technology (Kim, 2016). I chose to use photographic narratives and drawings to assist children in telling their stories. I was convinced that photography would act as an assistive tool to use in enhancing the meanings of separation that the children had articulated through the interviews. I chose to incorporate visual participatory methods, specifically with the children because I wanted to be more sensitive to my participants and genuinely wanted to incorporate their independent perspectives in this study. I realised that talking freely did not need to be confined to verbal interactions only.

I also realised that I would develop rich data by allowing the children to talk through other non-verbal means such as photography, drawings and diaries. In line with the new sociology of childhood, I wanted my research to be child-centred. Out of the realisation that children's thinking is multi-faceted (Engels, 2005) and that children are collaborative beings (Vygotsky, 1978) and informants in their own right (James, Jenks & Prout, 1998; Corsaro, 1997), I adopted the stance of children as independent thinkers in their own right. With this standpoint, I introduced other ways of collecting data from children that would make them more comfortable and have the least adult influence (Thorne, 1993).

There is a growing recognition to use other forms of non-verbal communication with children in research (Punch, 2002; Christensen & James, 2000). Consequently, (James et al., 1998, p.189) call on researchers to

> make use of different abilities rather than asking children to participate in unpractised interviews or unasked…Talking with children about the meanings they attribute to their paintings or asking them to write a story ..., children to engage more productively with our research questions using the talents which they possess

Participatory research methods are therefore a:

> Productive way of engaging with children and may also help in reducing power imbalances that exist between the researcher and their participants at the points of data collection and interpretation (Morrow & Richards, 1996, p.100).

By using participatory research techniques in this study, I enabled children to direct and interpret their content back to me, especially given that the research in question was premised on sensitive matters and the methods provided the medium through which children could interpret and share their meaningful everyday realities of living separately from their mothers. Given my age, as a middle-aged woman, in need of information from children, I also saw visual participatory methods as a means through which I could reduce the power imbalances and reduce the adult-centeredness of the study. Hence, in addition to the interviews, I gave children the option of using disposable cameras, drawings, journals and charts. They were free to decline and most importantly, they were not forced to use any of the tools on offer. The first round of interviews was conducted in May 2017 in Zimbabwe. It was at this point that I left children with their visual pack, comprised of a "27" exposure disposable camera, charts, drawing books, journals/diaries and a wide array of stationary (pens, pencils, erasers, stencils, colour pencils and stickers).

I then took each child through an orientation of what was expected of them and once they understood and agreed, they would then sign their assent forms. I asked the children to record their thoughts, communications with their mothers, gifts and money received from their mothers and practically anything else they wanted to tell in their story regarding maternal absence, hence there was no particular script they would follow. In particular for the photos, I asked the children to either write in their journals or note-books the image they had taken, the date taken and the meaning of such image to their story. I did so in order to cut costs of travelling back to Zimbabwe for a third time because without such descriptions at hand, it would have meant I would develop the photos and have no knowledge of the meanings the children attached to the images.

Also, given that the children were spatially located in different places, urban and rural, there was need to consider the time and cost implications seriously. Some followed the instruction while others did not, hence on my second visit, I had to ask the children to write what they recalled regarding the images they had supposedly taken and then I would reference, once I had developed the images in Botswana. In addition, I also emphasised to the children and to the caregivers that the visual research supplies I gave them were not schoolwork and therefore, they were not required to change their daily routines in order to do my research work.

My emphasis was also to make them aware that their schoolwork and other regular activities in their homes should not be interrupted by my research as this could spell all sorts of problems

for them, either at school or in their homes. From early May, 2017 until the end of September, 2017, the children were allowed to use any of the supplies to tell their stories. I went back to Zimbabwe again in September 2017, in order to conduct the second round of my interviews with the children and caregivers and also to collect the visual data that they had been producing.

I had the films developed and got a sizeable number of images. Some of the images I got were not clearly explained though, but they still served to illustrate their home environments. I could not use all images in my findings but rather selected a few that I could use to complement or illustrate themes the children had raised through interviews, diaries and photography. I have also ensured that every image I have used in presenting the children's findings in chapter 5 is accompanied by a written narrative that explains the meaning attached to the photograph and images. Thus, narrative interviews, diaries and journal data complement each other in presenting the stories of my participants and are not analysed in isolation. With the foregoing in mind, I now move to discuss the methodologic framework adopted for analysing my data.

3.6   Data Analysis

3.6.1   Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis:

In analyzing my data, my analysis was informed by IPA. I was guided by phenomenology in line with the methodological underpinnings of the interpretive paradigm. Whilst acknowledging the many varieties of phenomenology, I deliberately chose to use Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) as my methodology. It is a relatively new approach that first came to the fore in the 1990s in the field of health psychology (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). The examination of how people make sense of life experience is the major focus of IPA as it primarily seeks to understand and uncover the meanings that people attach to their everyday experiences. To give a brief synopsis of this method, IPA is subjective and situated within the paradigm of interpretivism whereby reality is based on mentally, historically and socially constructed processes (Smith et al., 2009). As such, the main idea of IPA is to understand personal experiences and the meanings those who experience the phenomena attach to it.

Crucially, the process of meaning-making of experience does not end with the participant but moves to the researcher as well who interprets based on the subjective accounts provided by the participants, i.e. hermeneutic phenomenology. The duality of the IPA process, i.e. the subjective account of the participants and the meanings they attach to an experience and the interpretation of the researcher based on his/her participant's accounts, underpins the

epistemology of IPA and is commonly known as the 'double hermeneutic' (Smith & Osborn, 2003). In the final account, IPA takes a critical interpretive look at how the researcher thinks about what the participant was thinking (Smith *et al.* 2009).

Interpretation is vital in making knowledge claims from IPA standpoint, one of its fundamental elements is bracketing or epoch. IPA researcher is required to engage in what is known as phenomenological reduction in order to truly capture the experiences of participants. This basically involves setting aside any previous assumptions or pre-conceptions that a researcher has prior to the research in order for him/her to fully understand the subjective realities of subjects and how they interpret it (commonly referred to as adopting a phenomenological attitude). As such, throughout the research process, I constantly had to bracket my own assumptions. One of the steps I took in this regard was to disclose my own positionality within this particular study and to also engage in journaling my assumptions in order to consciously set them aside.

However, I must admit that, complete bracketing or epoch was not seen as purely possible. I found Schultz critique of Husserl's phenomenological stance for being unrealistic of particular relevance here: (Schultz, 1970, p.56)

> how can I, in my attitude as a man among other men or as a social scientist find an approach to all this that is not by recourse to a stock of pre-interpreted experiences built up by sedimentation, within my own conscious life?

Secondly, following Heidegger's philosophy, the concept of the 'hermeneutic circle' is central to IPA. This notion assumes that interpretation is an iterative cyclical process where "the participants are trying to make sense of their world; the researcher is trying to make sense of the participants trying to make sense of their world" (Smith & Osborne, 2003, p. 51) and it underscores not only the notion of co-researching experiences. Whilst the participants tell their stories from their own subjective points of view and interpret them subjectively, the researcher on the other hand engages a phenomenological attitude by bracketing their own assumptions and preconceptions so as to interpret the data given to them by participants.

The result is a circular movement where both the researcher and the participant are actively engaged in sense- making of their world i.e. participants give the data and researchers uncover the meanings in the data. A key element of IPA is ideography, i.e. the need to illuminate individual cases hence in a sense, ideography also involves looking at a single case in detail (Smith et al., 2009). As such, my findings attempt to highlight individual experiences by placing focus on individual narratives supported by verbatim quotes. IPA also allows for

examination of convergences and divergences across cases and analysis of cases may produce patterns of meaning for participants who are called upon to reflect on shared experiences (Smith et al.*,* 2009).

Therefore, in my findings, I also discuss here my findings from mothers, caregivers and left-behind children found confluence or diverged. Following IPA guidelines by Pietkiewick & Smith (2012), I began by listening to the audio recordings a couple of times as well as reading the transcripts at least three times. As I listened over and over again and re-read the transcripts, I was also able to generate new insights into my data, some of which I may have initially missed. I did this for each and every case because the starting point for any IPA analysis is at the level of the individual case and identifying emergent themes for each and every case.

After methodically going through this first stage, I began to identify my emerging themes. At this stage, I did not restrict myself but merely jotted down whatever patterns I saw emerging from the data. Once I identified a pattern or theme, I would then jot it down and assign a descriptive phrase to the theme. My third stage involved a process of identifying relationships and connections between the emerging themes. It was at this stage that I grouped my themes according to their conceptual similarities and assigning a descriptive label to each category or theme. It was at this stage that I was able to come up with superordinate themes and sub-themes.

Through this process, I was able to eliminate some of the themes earlier identified on the basis of them either having a weak evidential base or they presented as mere repetition. I then looked at the cases and conducted a cross case analysis of the themes. The aim here was to identify the similarities and differences between and across cases. I was then able to come up with an analysis of each case in its own unique right and then looks for convergences and divergences across the cases. The last and final stage now involved authoring narrative accounts of the study.

I did this by writing about each and every theme separately and linking or marrying it with excerpts from the interviews and diaries. According to Pietkiewicz & Smith (2012), by using interviewee's own words to illustrate the themes, it retains the voice of the participants and also serves to illuminate on the emic perspective of the data (i.e. according to participant). After this, I then factored in my own analytic thoughts into the themes. In line with my phenomenological framework, I was then able to factor in my own interpretations as a researcher (etic perspective), thus fulfilling the essential concept of phenomenological analysis which is double hermeneutics.

From my interpretation, I was then able to bring in new theoretical insights, identify the weaknesses and also identify new areas for future research. These will be discussed in detail in succeeding chapters. One of the strengths of an IPA analysis lies in its flexibility. It allows the researcher to tailor-make their own way of analyzing without necessarily imposing a recipe of how one should go about doing data analysis.

The main idea behind an IPA analysis is to allow evidence of participants making sense of phenomena under investigation to come to the fore and at the same time also show evidence of the researcher's own sense making and interpretation (Pietkiewicz & Smith (2012). Despite the advantages I saw in using IPA, I was mindful of the fact that IPA focuses more on personal experiences and is epistemologically weak in analysis of the social and cultural contexts (Todorova, 2011) in which individuals experience their social reality. More so, IPA does not overtly emphasize social context which evidently was a crucial factor in analysing migrant domestic workers situated experiences in Botswana as well as those of caregivers and left-behind children in Zimbabwe

In other words, IPA as a methodological framework if it were to describe and interpret experience within the broader social and cultural contexts in which it occurs as this aspect would add to the quality of IPA. Smith (2011b), credited for developing IPA, is not averse to these factors and acknowledges that different IPA studies will focus on the social context and frame experiences within such context meaning there is room to 'change the recipe' as it were to suit any particular study. Therefore, my understanding from this view was that IPA is flexible and allowed for modifications to suit the present study.

I also found its flexibility at philosophical level, as an arm within the broader discipline of phenomenology that it was flexible enough to borrow ideas from the different phenomenological schools, i.e. Husserl, Gadamer, Heidegger etc. Furthermore, at analytical level, it can also be combined with other analytic methods hence I also borrowed some analytical insights from Polkinghorne (1995) by using his paradigmatic type narrative to gather stories and then using the paradigmatic analytic procedures to produce taxonomies and categories across the data base (p.5) in order to produce narrative stories in this study. I have also borrowed insights from Clandinin & Connelly, (2000) through their concept of burrowing, broadening, storing and re-storying.

As such, my analysis was not restricted to one particular way but is rather a hybrid framework utilized and borrowing relevant concepts from various models. IPA allowed me the flexibility

to include other forms of data in my analysis such as photographs hence allowing for a diversity of data to be included. Consequently, I ended up adopting a hybrid framework from my analysis which did not conform to one particular method exclusively but was an infusion of different analytic frameworks and data collection methods. I therefore also employed the process of narrative coding proposed by Clandinin & Connelly (2000) who suggested that researchers need to narratively code field texts to in order to find narrative meanings. They also called for approaching data with both faith hence echoing with radical phenomenological philosophy of Ricouer. Since my study utilized narrative inquiry, time, place and space are of equal relevance in the analysis of narratives (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Clandinin and Connelly's (ibid) analytic framework is based on three main analytical tools, namely broadening, burrowing, storying and re-storying.

In broadening, I began by just looking for the broader story, who the participant was as well as their social, cultural and historical settings in which the research took place so that I would be able to know the story teller and their circumstances (Mishler, 1986a). In the second stage of burrowing, I now paid detailed attention the data gathered, including paying attention to how participants felt and how their circumstances impacted on them. For the final stage of storying and re-storying, I then re-wrote my participant's narratives in order to illuminate on the lived experiences of participants. This aspect of narratives is important because storying is the most basic way through which human beings make sense of their experiences (Clandinin & Connelly, 1999, p.15)

Through this process, the researcher now pays attention to the experiences of participants. Individuals, by nature lead storied lives (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990) and I found this systematic method resonating well with IPA, hence my choice of it as an analytic tool. Consequently, with IPA as an analytical framework and Clanindin's concepts of broadening, burrowing and storying and re-storying, I was then able to bring out the main themes identified as well as re-tell participants subjective stories whilst also bringing in my own interpretations.

3.6.1.1 Justification for Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)

IPA as a type of phenomenology under the interpretive social science philosophy (ISS) was chosen for a number of reasons in this study. My research sought subjective narratives of the experiences of transnational mothers working as domestic workers in Botswana on their mothering practices and living separately from their children. In the same vein, the research

was also extended to Zimbabwe to get the narratives of the children left behind and their caregivers. I found that IPA, as propounded in its philosophical and methodical matters, best captured the lived experiences of my participants in the caregiving triangle I investigated.

IPA generally aims to capture the lived experiences of a particular group of people, who may be brought together by similar experiences. In this case, I was looking at domestic workers who shared the same dilemma of working in a foreign country having left their children behind. Likewise, the method also proved justifiable to use with the children whose common experience was being left-behind by their mothers in Zimbabwe and whose mothers were all domestic workers in Botswana. The method further proved to be a justifiable approach on the caregivers as well, whose common experience was that of looking after children whose mothers had since migrated to Botswana.

Whilst I acknowledge the fact that despite these similarly shared experiences, there may also be divergences as the empirical work revealed, IPA actually acknowledged similarities and differences between cases. Additionally, I also sought to analyse where my cases either converged or diverged in their experiences and I found IPA justifiable to use on these grounds, given that it adopts an idiographic phenomenological stance. I also found resonance on this point with intersectional analysis which partly underpins the theoretical framework for this study. Both allow for interpretation which takes into account not only similarities, but analysis of difference as well.

Note that in employing IPA in this instance, my analysis of divergences and convergences in my cases was not only limited to their transnational experiences only but also to my participant's understanding of their experiences. Bracketing or epoch is fundamental to IPA and as a researcher who went into the process with my own preconceptions and assumptions of how mothering and doing family ought to be, I found myself drawn to IPA. I acknowledge that all qualitative research approaches call for bracketing or reflexivity but the emphasis of adopting a phenomenological attitude, as emphasized by IPA, was a way of consciously keeping my preconceptions in check during fieldwork and analysis. I must admit that even though I consciously adopted a phenomenological attitude, there were instances when I found it challenging to bracket my own views and be non-judgemental.

However, the procedures resorted to in order to get myself out of such dilemmas is discussed in detail in the section to follow in this chapter on reflexivity. Moreover, because examination of human experience is one of the central tenets of IPA, I found it to be perfect for exploring

the care-giving triangle of transnational mothers and their left behind children. My aim was to get to the core or rather the 'essence' of their experiences, to bring their voices from the background to the fore through narrative story-telling and I found IPA most suited to my research aims and objectives.

In summing up this chapter, I wish to share my reflections on the research process for this particular study. It is my intention to share these as a way of assessing the entire methodological framework I opted for in this study. Hence, I talk about my experiences in the field transnationally i.e. in Botswana and Zimbabwe. I want to bring attention to the interactions I had in the field with the various participants, the ethical dilemmas I faced then and that continue to challenge me, to date. In addition, I also want to talk about my positionality in this study and how this fed into the research, influencing and counter-influencing the interactions in the field.

I do so, not merely for the sake of doing so, but rather in the hope that these reflections are ultimately my methodological contributions in transnational research. I have picked on four key factors I wish to discuss in relation to my reflections, namely my positionality, humanitarian relationships, translation issues in the field and trustworthiness of the data obtained.

3.7   My positionality in the study

By my own admission, while I went into this study with my own emotive and normative assumptions and beliefs on mothering but at the same time, these have in essence transformed over time. Initially, I entered the field with a staunch belief that women should never leave their children and migrate alone. Tied to that, I had the misconception that doing so was tantamount to child neglect and abandonment. Presumably, these personal positions can be accounted for partly by my own experiences as a transnational mother, some time back in 2007. Secondly, my cultural upbringing in a context where a woman's place is within her home with her children also accounts for my biased opinions. I therefore had to make sure that my bias was suspended when I entered the field.

My biases stemmed from my own personal experiences though. As a brief background, I was a migrant mother legally residing in Botswana with my own two children from 2007 to 2019. Due to my legal status, I was fortunate to be able to co-reside with my children. However, my initial emigration to Botswana occurred in the middle of the year towards the end of July 2007, when my one son was in primary school (grade 2) to be specific, and only seven years old. As a family, we made the realistic yet painful decision to leave him behind until the end of the

year so that he would complete the school year and commence his next grade the following year in 2008 in the new host country. Besides, following an assessment test in the new school, which he had undertaken mid-year of 2007, he had been accepted into the new school beginning of the following year to coincide with commencement of grade 3 in 2008.

As such, leaving him temporarily behind was the best option available at that point in time. Even though this was a short-term arrangement of less than six months, with frequent in-between journeys undertaken during weekends and school exit weekends, I vividly recall the difficulty I faced during that period, coupled the simultaneous processes of dislocation and relocation to an unknown country. Therefore, I have experienced transnational mothering albeit for a short time under different circumstances or conditions than those of migrant domestic workers. The conditions for my context of departure, the subsequent journey and arrival experiences as an accompanying spouse of an expatriate were markedly dissimilar to the mothers in this study. Yet I recall that period as one of the most difficult phases in my personal migration experience, fraught with negative emotions, guilt and frustration for leaving my child behind.

I could not wait for the school year to end so that I would be re-united with my son. His age at that time also did not make matters any easier as he was a mere seven- year old boy. Thankfully, my own mother and father assumed the role of 'de facto' parents during this period and performed the roles exceptionally well, giving me a sense of relief and reprieve, but nonetheless, my feeling of guilt and thinking I had abandoned my own son kept me unsettled all the time. My excessive regular calls and checks were received with patience and understanding from both my mother and father, but at times left me feeling blameworthy as I often worried that by constantly calling, I was giving the impression that I did not trust the caregivers enough to let them assume the mothering role without my interference.

I can also confess that it was a time when my own personal telephone bills were at their highest as I literally stayed on the phone, day and night just to know what my son was doing, how he was doing at school, whether he had had any asthmatic attack since my departure as he was an asthmatic then, and... and...and…. (endless check-list). In that sense, I can claim that access to modern communication technologies allowed me to maintain a sense of co-presence in my son's life. By extension, I can also argue that my social location as a mother with access to communication tools supports the common assumption that new technologies have eased the difficulties of separation, though in essence, it depends on one's location. Apart from the costs

of communication, my transnational costs were also further exacerbated by generously remitting money to the de facto parents to ensure that they all lacked nothing.

By so doing, I also found myself often overcompensating for my absence by buying all sorts of gadgets, food stuffs and clothing, half if not more of which my son rarely liked, neither cared for nor even used. Regardless, to do so even when I knew it was unnecessary, gave me satisfaction and a sense of comfort and in a weird way, reduced my level of guilt that I constantly felt. Due to the fact that co-resident mothering was no longer practical as a result of distance, I took on new strategies of mothering such as overcompensating and regular phone calls. When finally, schools closed in December 2007, I had long been waiting for the arrival of my son and had since ensured that his travel arrangements were in place. My son's arrival in Botswana in early December 2007 marked the end of my emotional distress and guilt I had endured for six months as a distant mother. For these reasons, I can attest to the fact that personally, it is not an experience I regard lightly or wish on any mother with young children, yet it is something that is so widespread and a growing phenomenon for many mothers globally.

Based on my personal experiences, I cannot claim neutrality in this study, given that it is a subject in which I was socially and emotionally embedded and one that has informed my subjectivities and biases to date on this matter. Consequently, it is my own experiences that eventually drove me to choose my doctoral thesis topic in the domain of transnational parenting studies. Necessarily, I have had to share my own story as a way of reflecting firstly on my own experiences and strategies of mothering that I employed during the period of separation from my own son. Most importantly, by sharing this is also a way of acknowledging my own subjectivities and also remain conscious of them in order to bracket personal perceptions.

Moreover, by sharing my personal experience, it was not only a way of recognising how my own norms, expectations and meanings of motherhood that inevitably shaped the research but to also acknowledge the fact that these norms are part of the co-constructed knowledge that emerged from my research. As Larson (1997) has argued, researcher subjectivity in narrative research is implied, thus leading to an inter-subjective connection between the researcher and the researched. The subjectivity of the researcher therefore requires what Hatch (2002, p.11) calls 'wakefulness' which called upon me, as the primary data collection and analysis instrument to continuously review and reflect my own position and where or how I was situated in the study, in order to separate my own subjectivities and personal feelings.

For that reason, I also used a field journal to document my daily reflections, my thoughts and actions and feelings during field work and this greatly assisted me in my own reflections. In the ensuing section, I discuss how my identity as a female, Zimbabwean legal resident in Botswana played out between my participants and me. When I identified my participants, there were a number of similar identities that I shared with them. For instance, my identity as a woman, mother, migrant, Zimbabwean national, Shona language speaker and Gaborone resident, were all identities that I had in common with the participants, in spite of differing legal statuses. At face value, that would appear to present homogeneity with this group.

Whilst I acknowledge the significance of these similarities in so far as they were enabling factors in entering the field and 'breaking the ice' as it were, with my participants, they were also significant differences that are worth noting as they also influenced the research in significant ways. Firstly, although sharing the same nationality and transnational label, I have lived in Botswana for close to a decade as a legal resident with official resident permit status. In view of that, I have never been forced to live in 'abject spaces' (McGregor, 2008) or live in the shadows hiding from the authorities. This factor played into the research process as I had to also ensure that during data collection, my participants had the power to choose where to meet and this was usually where they felt comfortable enough to remain hidden. Interestingly,

I found myself having to drive to some places where a lot of our discussions were held in my car, parked in some spaces I would never really have visited were it not for this research. The other interviews required me to drive to some 'hidden places' where I would pick them up and drive them back to my home where we would conduct our interviews and then drive them back to their places after this process. Opening my home for the research encounters also introduced power dynamics as it seemingly gave me the upper hand in my personal territory largely due to the fact that I was in my own zone. Seemingly, bringing participants into my home also made them feel comfortable as they were invisible to surveillance from the police, as opposed to conducting interviews in public spaces.

Furthermore, by virtue of being a transnational migrant myself, originating from the same country as the participants, it was fairly easy for me to establish rapport and get them to open as a person who was sharing a similar national identity. This was further enhanced by the fact that I am also a mother and in telling their narratives of mothering, that fact drew them to open up and they constantly referred to how I could understand what they were saying as I am also a mother. In justifying their migration, for example, they often did not go into too much detail

as they kept referring to how I as a Zimbabwean like them knew or rather understood what had happened to our country and ultimately, to their migration. They often assumed that I automatically knew their stories and therefore understood why they had left their children behind to live in Botswana.

Hence, the advantage of 'insider 'status I had enjoyed through our shared identity was not always positive for it is that same identity that led mothers to give vague information in the beginning, on the presumption that I knew it all, as a fellow Zimbabwean. Often, I had to prompt them to elaborate further, after realising they all assumed there was no need as we were from the same country. My job was therefore to convince them to tell their own unique stories in their own ways. However, on the other hand, as a researcher who can understand, speak, write and read Shona, (the majority Zimbabwean language), this factor worked to both our advantage as this was the medium of communication, they all preferred to use in their narratives and at the same time, it did not present a difficulty to me as I understand the language as well. Nevertheless, in the same manner that I recognise the similarities and differences between them and myself, they also recognised that and attempted to use that to their material advantages, especially after opening my home to them or driving around with them. That aspect led to the second dynamic I wish to discuss and that is the humanitarian encounters that were invoked in the field.

3.8   Humanitarian interactions during and after the field

When I conducted interviews which was sometimes in my home or my vehicle, I think that they immediately recognised how we have experienced different migration outcomes and instead of taking me as a student researcher, they then perceived me as a person who had more material resources than them and factored this into their narratives, albeit in subtle ways, like in their diaries for instance. I do not deny that they were situated in positions where they were enveloped in so many vulnerabilities and I acknowledge this fact. However, narratives of victimhood were dominant across all the participants in the study, possibly in order to draw sympathy and subsequently action from me regarding the provision of material resources.

It appeared their perceptions of me were that of an educated, privileged and superior migrant in relation to their own social and economic positioning. Even though I was getting information from them, at times I felt taken advantage of and powerless. Take, for example, the orientation I gave mothers regarding the use of diaries. It was meant to record their strategies of caregiving from a distance e.g. communication with their children or when they remitted money, etc.

Some, however, chose to use it for humanitarian appeal purposes. Mother E represents a typical example of this:

> I have a friend who hoards clothes here in Botswana and re-sells in Zimbabwe. She encouraged me to do the same and for sure, I think it is a good idea because what I am working as a house helper is not enough for my needs. I am really keen to explore this venture but where will I get the start-up capital. I think I am going to try and ask for this money from Mrs. Takaindisa, maybe she may help me (Mother E diary, May, 2017 (Note here that Mrs. Takaindisa is in reference to me, the researcher).

Interestingly, for this mother, she uses her diary to directly appeal for financial assistance and whether by coincidence or not, her child back in Zimbabwe employs a similar tactic:

> I am asking you Mrs. Takaindisa to help me with buying a bicycle for me which I can use to take me to school when schools open next term because right now, I am in grade 6 and if I continue to be late to school, I may even fail my grade 7 examinations. I am always praying to God asking if he could provide the means of finance to Mrs. Takaindisa so that she can buy me the bicycle. Whenever I am resting at home, I am always thinking of this (Child E2 Diary, 2017).

I found that my presence in the field opened up an avenue for all sorts of requests of assistance from me, hence I was seen as a source of material provision, an issue that has persisted to date as I write my findings, despite withdrawing from the field several months ago. Though not applicable to all of them, the majority of participants were persistently appealing to my humanitarian senses. For example, one of the caregivers spent the entire time thanking me for turning up because God has revealed to me how she was suffering and she now knew all her suffering was over because we had finally come to rescue her. In that case, the fact that it was her first interview which was guided by the SQUIN approach did not help matters because I could not interrupt her to correct that position or to appeal to her to bring her story back to the actual question. Hence, she devoted her entire time to outlining her poverty, and subsequently to thank God for having sent me to her.

For another rural-based child, he also adopted a similar approach from the moment I switched on the tape-recorder, despite having explained in detail my identity and purpose. Later, I asked him if he understood my role and he admitted that his mother had told him that he should expect some donors that were coming to interview him. Once more, I had to rectify this misrepresentation to the child. This did not change the course of his story and he was constantly appealing for help. Examples such as these are replete in my field interactions and I have therefore pulled out these few to illustrate the phenomenon. However, I think this obscured

some of the realities of migration because the narratives tended to be heavily concentrated around a discourse of misery and suffering and I think, in doing so, that may have prevented presentation of other realities lest they risk overturning the discourse of misery dominantly presented.

This inevitably led me to question if all stories of migrant motherhood were as bad and unbearable. I am in no way trying to downplay the emotional and economic dents I witnessed but I still feel a heavy focus on poverty in their narratives presented a challenge in my data – one sided narrative. As is discussed in the coming chapters, one of my findings revealed that there was very weak communication between mothers and their left-behind children due to resource challenges. However, I got the sense that the mothers had taken the effort to call home and alert the children and caregivers of my impending arrival.

Perhaps this communication was enabled when I made provision for airtime money for all the mothers in order for them to call their families in Zimbabwe to tell them about me, once they had given me consent to visit their families back home. Perhaps in my wild imagination, I pictured collusion of narratives, particularly where they converged around misery discourses and humanitarian appeals. Ethically, this has been challenging as the appeals have persisted to date as I write this thesis, challenging or at least questioning what it means for a social researcher to exit the field and raising questions of when exactly does a qualitative researcher exit etc. particularly when doing research with vulnerable groups.

3.9   Translation issues

In this section, I briefly reflected on the languages used during data collection and the translation issues that arose in this study. Earlier on in this section, I pointed out how my identity played into the research notably that it was fairly easy to be accepted by the participants on the basis of a shared nationality, language and gender. However, speaking the same language did not mean that everything I translated had equivalence. Most of my participants narrated their stories in the Shona language and in some cases, they would use a mix of both Shona and English.

Some of the diaries for instance were written in both English and Shona. Evidently, that meant that I had to translate from Shona to English for all interviews, making me solely responsible for making decisions on how best to express the findings. I had to re-write my participant's meanings and this introduced the possibility that my choices as translator were not the only possible interpretations (Temple, 2005) as there could be other possible translations depending

on who is interpreting. I also admit that through the process of translating from Shona to English, I ended up authoring a new text (Venuti, 1998).

In reflecting on why it was imperative for me to translate the texts into English, I was acutely aware of the politics of language in scholarly publications. No doubt, English remains privileged in academic circles. Palmary (2014) brings attention to these dynamics and has reasoned that academics who work with English have not considered the complexity involved in translating texts into English. As such, they give the impression that "the social world is produced and mediated in English and demands that non-English speakers conform to the linguistic norms of the English language, with English speaking writers reading the end of these translated texts as simply an authentic reflection of the original" (Palmary, 2014, p.576).

The fact that I felt obliged to translate narratives from chiShona to English, as opposed to merely writing the text in the original language demonstrates broader issues beyond this thesis i.e. the power relations at play in research and academic processes because the language at work (English) is reflective of whose language is regarded as more powerful because my participant's experiences have been represented within the cultural boundaries of the English language (Palmary, 2014), thus running the risk of representing non-English speakers as an 'infantilised other' (Burman, 1995; Valentin & Meinert, 2009, as cited in Palmary, 2014, p.577).

Translation experts have often argued that when people's words are translated into English that is a form of colonisation of meaning that removes all other contexts except the one that is provided only in English (Spivak, 1993; Venuti, 1998) purely because everyone is made to sound as if they speak perfect English by disregarding their original language. Based on the power relations in language in translation that privilege English as the dominant written, read and spoken language, I took the decision to translate from Shona to English, based on my considerations of who the final and ultimate audience of the research text would be. The final readers of the text, based on institutional and academic policy, will ultimately read the text in English.

The option of 'sending my readers abroad' advocated by Venuti (1993) by returning to the language and cultural context is not feasible in the contexts under which we learn and conduct our research, given how translation issues are mired in social power asymmetries (Palmary, 2014; Descarries, 2014) which de-contextualises the language in which the interviews were carried out, in this case Shona is less recognised and has been overtaken by English. Further to

this was the realisation that in academia, publishing is a normative expectation for researchers because the expectation is either "publish or perish" as she expresses it and this further casts the English language as the dominant language of science and knowledge production (Descarries, 2014, p.564).

For me, this realisation meant that I had to try and stay as close to the meaning as possible in my translations, even though this meant changes in the exact words used during the process. Sharing a similar language with them made this task relatively easier. However, that does not remove the fact that by translating, I may have possibly altered the original meanings of their experiences during the process of reproducing them in my own text.   I draw some level of comfort in that fact that as a Shona speaker myself, I was able to extract the key meanings in the stories to convey to the readers what the narrators were saying and from what contexts. Additionally, I was also quite aware of the difficulty of maintaining neutrality in my double role as researcher and translator.

3.10   Trustworthiness of data obtained

As my research was purely qualitative and situated in a phenomenological inquiry paradigm, subjectivity and bias were to be expected, as well as managed. However, what was critical is that I was aware of this as the researcher and hence, I was reflexive throughout the inquiry so as to present data in ways that would ensure that the data obtained was reliable and credible. With that in mind, one of my key aims was to ensure that my data was trustworthy from the beginning of the research process right through to the final production of the text.

Trustworthiness of data is crucial in qualitative research (Guba, 1981) as it is concerned with how the findings of an inquiry are worthy of attention (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In this inquiry, I attempted to apply trustworthiness in my data through four key criteria namely credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In imposing this criterion in my study, I employed a number of strategies that I have discussed below.

3.10.1 Credibility

Credibility is mainly concerned with whether a truthful representation of the phenomenon under inquiry has been presented and proven during the research process. (Guba, 1985). To ensure compliance to this, I employed triangulation - which is a method of using more than one method to collect data. It may mean a researcher triangulates on data collection tools, on sites, on samples or on methodologies, with the key aim of enhancing validity of the data. In this

research, I used more than one method to collect data, namely, narrative story-telling, semi-structured interviews, diaries and visual methodologies to collect information on the same topic i.e. transnational motherhood. In addition, the use of a multi-sited approach meant I triangulated the sites of data collection and related to that, I also triangulated the data sources by using three different samples (mothers, children and care-givers).

To further enhance credibility, I was involved in frequent de-briefing sessions with my supervisor who would often draw my attention to discrepancies or missing links in my analysis. Additionally, I subjected the findings to a peer review process to fellow academics through my department's seminar series. This was helpful as I got alternative ideas and suggestions and was also made aware of the flaws in the data. Furthermore, I made use of a journal which I used to reflect my thought processes, keep my biases in check and question my research process throughout my engagement with the informants.

Lastly, through all these processes, I was able to produce a thick description which detailed the whole study that I investigated which in turn, enabled me to make linkages and connections between my study and the already existing body of knowledge on my topic. Silverman (2000) sees this connection as a useful way of enhancing trustworthiness as one is able to address comparative issues.

3.10.2 Transferability

Lincoln and Guba (1985) conceptualise transferability as the extent to which an inquiry can be applicable to another situation, often referred to as generalisability in natural inquiry settings. They further assert that if a researcher is able to give detail of the context of his/her inquiry so that another researcher can determine if it can also be transferred to another context or situation, then that research meets the notion of transferability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In this study, I gave a contextual background of the study by giving a history of contemporary migration waves from Zimbabwe, the context in transit, as well as in the receiving country. By doing so, I was able to give a detailed context for readers to assess if this can be transferable. However, I do have reservations on whether transferability is a feasible concept in qualitative research. Nonetheless, my research tried to conform to the criterion as aforementioned.

3.11 Dependability

Positivist scientists have argued that if the same inquiry were to be repeated in the same context, using the same methods and informants, then similar results would be obtained (Shenton,

2004). The key component of this factor is that if the research were to be replicated with the exact same conditions at different times, it would produce the same results (Trochim, 2005). However, in qualitative research, the outcome would be different due to the ever-changing nature of phenomena (Marshall & Rossman, 1999).

Lincoln and Guba (1985) closely associate credibility with dependability because when one is able to demonstrate credibility, then to a larger extent, he/she can also succeed in demonstrating dependability. I ensured that I conformed to a detailed reporting process for my research. In this chapter, I have detailed the research approach chosen, the justification for such, I have also provided sufficient detail regarding the data collection process and have also continually reflected on my position whilst doing these processes. In that sense, I have been able to fulfil the criterion of dependability.

3.11.1 Confirmability

Lastly, I want to discuss the fourth criterion i.e. confirmability - how I also ensured conformity to it in this study. Although the strategies used in credibility may be similar or overlap between the two, they still serve to conform to both credibility and confirmability. Triangulation, in particular, satisfied both criteria and earlier, I have discussed what exactly I triangulated and at the risk of repetition, I just mention here that the processes of triangulation assisted in reducing researcher bias by ensuring data was confirmed through collection from a variety of sources, samples and sites. Miles and Huberman (1994) have also argued that one of the key criteria for confirmability is the extent to which a researcher admits his or her own preconceptions.

I have therefore managed to state my positionality in relation to this study and also used a reflexive journal to keep my biases in check when analysing data. Lastly, I have presented the text in a manner that allows readers to trace the processes of this study, thus producing an audit trail of my research process. In combining the four criteria, my aim was to enhance the trustworthiness of the data, an aim I believe I have fulfilled.

3.12 Ethical matters

Qualitative research by nature is intrusive because researchers delve into people's natural world where they experience their social realities (Patton, 2002). From this perspective, codes of conduct and due protocol should essentially be observed by any researcher in order to protect the rights and privacy of study participants. As a first step, I sought permission from the

university's non-medical ethics committee to conduct this research. After permission was granted, I adhered to four key principles of ethical research for all three groups of participants. However, in the case of children, I followed the ethical protocol with some methodical caution, given that I was dealing with children that I could arguably advance as vulnerable children, given factors of prolonged maternal separation, class positioning and lack of material resources.

As such, although my ethical protocol adopted similar principles for all participants, I did go a bit further with child protection at the forefront. While the New Sociology of Childhood model conceptualises children as agentic human beings capable of thinking and making sense of their world in their own rights or independently, I followed a specific ethics protocol in my research with them as part of my moral duty and obligation towards my participants. Christensen and Prout (2002) refer to the notion of ethical symmetry which presumes that ethical relationships between the researcher and informant is the same whether the study is conducted with children or adults. However, I was further guided by the ethics of caring, given the precarious position in which the children were situated, in relation to their mothers' positions in Botswana.

As such, I seriously took into consideration their vulnerabilities emanating from their poor socio-economic statuses, their prolonged and indefinite separations from their mothers and also the fact that the topic under investigation was an emotionally laden investigation which had the potential to arouse emotions that could negatively impact on these children's emotional states. Furthermore, I also had to move away from the assumed ethical symmetry (Christensen & Prout, 2002) on the premise that there were asymmetrical power relationships (Alderson, 1995; Mayall, 2000) present between the children and myself as an adult researcher, hence I had to take the ethical protocol beyond this assumption.

Consequently, I began by seeking written consent from their mothers working as domestic workers in Botswana. If permission was granted, I then sought similar written consent from the children's caregivers back in Zimbabwe. Thirdly, after getting permission from mothers and caregivers, I then sought assent from the children in written form too. In informing the children about the present study, I took into consideration issues of confidentiality, privacy, rights to withdrawal and protection from emotional or physical harm. Borrowing from Alderson (1995), I addressed a number of specificities in the design and conduct of this study. In addition to the normal ethical protocols of voluntary participation; protection from harm; confidentiality and

privacy, I also weighed in on my research purpose and the associated risks and costs involved for the children.

This consideration helped me to engage in an iterative process of not only constantly weighing the risks but I also reviewed my methods to incorporate child friendly methodologies. Thus, my decision to use diaries, photography and drawings with children was not without a basis but was driven by an ethical motivation to include all children and allow them to use those methods with which they were comfortable. I believe even from a moral standpoint, this was necessary to ensure that, for the children who participated, there was an element of flexibility of methods and at the same time, I genuinely wanted to make the process enjoyable and amusing in the process of engaging with cameras, for instance. Below I discuss the additional ethical principles that were applied to all participants.

3.12.1 Voluntary participation

After identifying participants, I provided them with an information sheet wherein I introduced myself, the topic and aim of my research and what the results could possibly be used for. The purpose of the information sheet was to describe the nature of my study to them in simple and easy to understand language. I also advised them that their participation would not offer them any incentives. In addition, I also sought permission to audio record them and use verbatim quotes. They were also advised of their right to either refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences.

3.12.2 Confidentiality

Although I could not practice anonymity in this study, I tried to maintain confidentiality of informants by using pseudonyms. In addition, I also ensured that all raw data obtained was secured in lockable cabinets and all transcripts and digital recordings were password protected on my computer. However, in spite of measures taken to ensure confidentiality, the task of doing so was not without challenges. Neither anonymity nor confidentiality could be guaranteed as there was a possibility that participants could identify themselves in their 'mother-caregiver-child' units. Due to the nature of the study, which was multi-sited in nature, I had to deal with family members attempting to obtain information about their significant others from me. Furthermore, both sides often requested my assistance in relaying messages to their family members on either side of the border as I became the de facto messenger for various family members between Zimbabwe and Botswana.

The challenge this brought about was in relation to how I had to constantly censure what I relayed in order to ensure that the messages I passed across were strictly limited to what I had been requested to do. This messenger duty had to be done without mentioning some aspects of what I had witnessed, particularly on the left-behind families, even though on the other hand, I may have felt strongly that there were some matters that transnational mothers needed to know what exactly was transpiring back home, yet I was sworn to secrecy. The ethical aspect of maintaining confidentiality was never simple in this study particularly given that there were different layers of confidentiality that were at play at the different sites.

Having to deal with family members in different sites trying to 'fish' for information from me about their significant others, to dealing with relaying messages from one family member to another across sites, to presenting only what I was told without giving away any further information was a daunting task in this study. Thus, I had to balance my views and constantly remind myself of the necessity of adhering to the protocol of maintaining participant confidentiality.

3.12.3 Protection from physical and psychological harm

It was also imperative that I protected my participants from physical, emotional or psychological harm, especially given that my study was delving into personal information, and there were high chances that this would summon some negative emotions or induce stress in the participants. Although it was unintended, I encountered that regularly in the field. My first step was to stop the interview process and the audio-recorder. Then I would check how the informant was feeling and also if they wanted to talk about it. From there, I would conduct some form of informal counselling as a way of showing empathy. I labelled it as informal counselling because I was not a qualified professional counsellor in the field.

For serious cases, I would offer them professional counselling. Only one participant took up this offer, although they did not follow through with the whole programme. The rest declined and always opted to continue telling their stories. In striving to reduce negative unintended consequences, I also allowed my participants to choose the location of our interactions, the times and the days, so as to ensure I would not add to their distress and to make them feel comfortable.

3.13 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the methodology used in structuring the present study. It has outline the paradigm underpinning the study, the sampling strategy and the methods of data collection. Most importantly, the rationale for the choices made in the design and approach are discussed. The analytic strategies used, mainly anchored in interpretive phenomenological analysis have also been discussed. In the following chapter, the results that emerged from the perspectives of transnational mothers are discussed in detail.

CHAPTER 4: TRANSNATIONAL MOTHERS – RESULTS & DISCUSSION

> By migrating, leaving their homes, children behind, they often must cope with stigma, guilt and criticism from others. Secondly, they work in reproductive labour, getting a wage and caring for other people's children is often not compatible with taking daily care of one's own family and all this raises questions about contemporary meanings and variations of motherhood" (Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avila, 1997, p.552-553.

The aim of this chapter is to present the findings on transnational mothering strategies and patterns of caregiving among Zimbabwean migrants working in Botswana as domestic workers and caregivers. I present empirical findings based on data drawn from individual narratives, semi-structured interviews and solicited diaries from a sample of 10 transnational mothers in question. Against the background of the traditional dominant ideologies of gender and motherhood which privileges co-present mothers (Hays, 1996), I show how normative fore-understandings of ideal motherhood have been challenged, transfigured and renegotiated in the context of migration, in particular the migration of women who are also are mothers.

In this chapter, I also talk about the centrality of idealised notions of motherhood revealed through participants' strong biases towards this ideology even though there were unresolvable tensions in their attempt to reconcile the roles of mothering and financial provider. As the results indicate, the pressure imposed on women through idealised notions of good mothering imply that even when transnational mothers remit funds, they are still expected to perform emotional labour through nurturing and caring (Dreby, 2006; Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avila, 1997; Parrenas, 2005). Consequently, notions of ideal motherhood had a far-reaching impact on participants, especially given that motherhood is an identity that is dominated by societal expectations and sanctions (Phoenix & Lloyd, 1991; Glenn, 1994).

My findings therefore point to a high level of conformity to the idealised discourses of gender and motherhood, despite the fact that in reality, the women in question were engaged in alternative forms of mothering because it was what suited their circumstances. Secondly, I also talk about structural vulnerabilities of participants as a salient factor that underpinned their experiences of motherhood and dictated how they practiced motherhood from a distance.

Key to this theme were three factors that engendered their vulnerabilities i.e. migration status and their deportability; the ambiguous role of extra-legal actors in migration governance and the limitations imposed by such barriers on their communicative capacities with their children

back home, in spite of the advancement of communication technologies in contemporary societies.

I show how mothers in this study are confronted by multi-layered power relations which they have to navigate at every stage of their migration journeys. The kind of motherhood that emerges in this context is one in which power inequalities are articulated through state and non-state actors who ultimately shape the nature of transnational motherhood that emerges with varying effects on the children left-behind.

After this, I then move into a discussion centred on micro power relations within the family unit - between transnational mothers and the caregivers back home as largely determined by financial power, as well the power of physical presence as determined by geographical distance. Between these two competing sources of power, I show how distant motherhood is a constant source of tension and power struggles between the migrant mothers and caregivers. In the midst of contesting power dynamics, I illustrate how silence and secrets emerge as mitigatory tools used to bridge the two tensions of power and manage conflict in transnational families. I then close the chapter with a summation of my main arguments and conclusion.

Before delving into the aforementioned themes, I introduce the main participants who are the focus of this chapter i.e. migrant mothers in order to illuminate their individual circumstances and experiences and to better understand their personal stories. The introductions to follow also allow for one to get glimpses of the lived experiences of each participant.

4.1   Introducing the participants

4.1.1   Participant A

Meet mother A, a single woman aged 42 in 2017, she left behind one daughter at the age of five. She left Zimbabwe in 2005, driven by the need to work and be able to afford school fees for her daughter who was about to begin school. She had no one else to help her and was forced to cross the border in search of opportunities. From 2005 until 2017 when I interviewed her, she admitted she has been living and working in Botswana as an undocumented immigrant and uses human smugglers to help her navigate into and out of Botswana. Of note are the multiple care arrangements that her daughter has gone through during her 12 years of absence where she has been under the care/custody of many caregivers.

For instance, during the course of her absence, her daughter had changed caregivers from her grandmother, to three different aunts, to her mother's brother and her other cousin's sister and

then back to her grandmother again. As a result of her status, she is only able to visit her daughter once a year in December for at least two weeks maximum. Mother A likened maternal absence to being dead in the eyes of the child. She reasoned that any left-behind child was typically an orphan and eventually, you drift apart as a result of prolonged separation. She also opined that being a distant mother meant you had no authority over that child and that you could never be a parent over the phone. She emphasised the importance of co-residence and her perception of motherhood was strongly driven by ideological notions of motherhood.

4.1.2 Participant T

Similar to mother A, mother T was 40 years old when we met in 2017 for the first interview. T is also a single mother following separation from her husband, she left her two children under the care of her elderly mother in 2007, at the height of the Zimbabwean economic crisis. There has been a sense of stability in terms of her children having only one constant caregiver until 2016 when her eldest daughter moved to live with her brother. Her younger son has been under the care of his maternal grandmother from the age of seven months to date. To date, her children still live with her mother. She left behind a daughter aged five years old and a seven (7) month old infant boy at the time of her departure from Zimbabwe. She also crossed into Botswana illegally and has been undocumented since 2007 whilst working and living in Botswana.

As such, she makes regular use of human smugglers to assist her to navigate borders into and out of Botswana, a scenario that has resulted in her being raped during one of her journeys via precarious routes. Her legal status does not permit regular visits and contact with her children. For T, she expressed her worries, particularly over her young son who she left when he was only seven months old. She spoke at length of the level of detachment and lack of affection from her son and how he adamantly refused to call her mother but instead preferred to address her as the mother of his older sibling. She was concerned at how her son addressed his grandmother as his mother and blamed her absence from home for this situation. She strongly felt that mothers needed to stay with their children.

4.1.3 Participant F

I also introduce mother F, a mother of four children, although during our encounters she chose to declare only three children. She left her children behind in 2007 in order to migrate to Botswana in search of livelihood opportunities following the heightened political and economic meltdown in Zimbabwe. She initially left her children under the care of her former

mother-in-law but decided to let her children live independently with her eldest child assuming the care-giving role after relations with her former mother-in-law turned sour. Like her previously introduced counterparts, her status as an undocumented immigrant prohibited her from frequently visiting, communicating and remitting to her children.

Similar to mothers A and T, she also uses human smugglers to smuggle her in and out of Botswana as and when necessary. Mother F strongly believed that children ideally should live with their mothers. She strongly opined that there would never be a person that could look after your children the way a mother does. In addition, you would never know your children and they would never really get to know you, as well. Unfortunately, her circumstances drove her to live separately from her children.

4.1.4   Participant M

Next, I present mother M, a mother who migrated to Botswana back in 2004. When I met her in 2017, she had turned 49 years old. She initially left behind three children with her sister and later had another daughter born in 2011, through a relationship she had whilst already living in Botswana. She then took the child back home to be taken care of by her oldest daughter. When her relationship with her sister broke down due to the ill-treatment of her children, she moved her children from her sister to her elderly father and when he became frail, she then decided that her eldest child was old enough to look after her siblings. Consequently, she sought a place where her children could live alone. Her stay in Botswana had been both as a documented and subsequently an undocumented migrant, although even when she was legally resident in Botswana, it was through a permit obtained under false circumstances.

By 2017 when we met, she was now undocumented and like her counterparts, relying on the services of human smugglers to navigate across Zimbabwe and Botswana. M expressed deep feelings of regret for having left her children when they were so young. She also regretted that her children had matured in her absence and perhaps lacked proper guidance as her eldest daughter ended up conceiving out of wedlock. Her son also dropped out of school during her absence, purportedly due to an eye-sight problem which she believed was caused by the ill-treatment her son received from her sister, who was the original caregiver.

4.1.5   Participant B

Mother B was 36 years old when we met in 2017. Similar to the preceding narratives, she also left Zimbabwe at the height of the crisis in 2008 after hearing that she could make a decent

living in Botswana. Her mother also encouraged her to migrate based on the good stories they had heard about Botswana and offered to sell her goat to raise her bus fare. She left her two children then with her mother and four years later, she conceived another child in Botswana and after birth, went to leave her third child with her elderly mother in the rural areas. Since her departure, her children have only had their maternal grandmother as their caregiver. She described herself as a 'border jumper' (her description) since day one and has never had a passport.

Her legal status has been an obstacle since her arrival and as such, she is unable to remit frequently. She admitted to rarely visiting her children and almost never communicating with them through telephone or otherwise. Human smugglers, in her case are also a necessity to help her in cases of either visiting home or when she has been deported. Although hers was a case of prolonged maternal absence, she bemoaned her absence from home and attributed her children's behavioural problems to her absence. Like most of her counterparts, she also judged herself strongly against the dominant discourse of mothering. Her narrative was thus fraught with regret for being an absent mother.

4.1.6 Participant J

Next, I bring in mother J, a widowed mother of two children. Her story is very similar to her counterparts as she also left Zimbabwe during the most tumultuous time in 2007 to escape the economic hardships. Her primary motivation was to come and work for her children. She initially entered Botswana legally using her real passport, wherein she was given some days to be in Botswana. However, after those days lapsed, she too became an undocumented migrant since 2007, a status she maintained up until 2017 when I met her, hence, she also relies on the services of human smugglers. She originally left her children under the care of her sister and later shifted them to her mother, following the death of her sister in 2010.

She has been deported numerous times but still manages to sneak back into Botswana, thanks to the human smugglers. Although in reality, she is a distant mother, she expressed that living apart from your children was not ideal because children need their mothers. She expressed her pain at seeing her daughter cry every year when she visits. She noted with deep sorrow and regret how her daughter cried every year without fail, whenever they had to separate.

4.1.7   Participant N

Next to be introduced is mother N, a 49-year-old mother to one daughter whom she left under the care of her sister when she came to Botswana in 2007. Her primary motivation for moving was to come and work for school fees for her child who was soon begin schooling since she was a single mother, following a divorce from her husband. Unlike her counterparts who are undocumented, this mother has been lucky to be under one employer since 2007 and due to the stable nature of their relationship, her employer has been able to acquire both a work and residence permit for her, although it is one that has been obtained by false pretence and does not even reflect the nature of the job she is actually doing. Her legality makes it easy for her to move freely in Botswana as well as cross in and out of Botswana through official designated routes.

She is also able to frequently communicate with her daughter through the phone when she is not at school. Her perceptions of mothering were also strongly driven by hegemonic discourse which place the emphasis on a mother who stays at home, taking care of her children as a good enough mother. However, her socio-economic circumstances had compelled her to resort to alternative motherhood i.e. distant parenting.

4.1.8   Participant E

I now bring in mother E, a fairly young mother of four children who became a parent at the age of 13. She left Zimbabwe in 2006 to come and work in Botswana following two early teen pregnancies which resulted in the birth of a daughter, followed by a son, within a short space of time. After these two children, she says her family gave up on her and told her to start working for her children and that is how she came to Botswana. During the course of her stay, she conceived two other children following a marriage to a man she met whilst working in Botswana. However, the marriage dissolved in 2017. Initially, she left her children under her mother's care but had to shift them to her sister, following the death of her mother in 2012.

Currently, three of her children are with living with her sister whilst one has remained under the contested custody of her ex-husband, following her separation in 2017. She is undocumented and also uses human smugglers to move between the countries. When asked about her perceptions on motherhood, she reasoned that she had to leave them behind so that they would survive and get access to education, but she would have preferred to live with her children if she had had a choice.

4.1.9   Participant C

In the case of mother C, she decided to migrate to Botswana due to economic hardships in Zimbabwe in 2007. She initially entered Botswana legally and then lapsed into irregularity after the expiration of her visa. Since then, she has stayed undocumented. She originally left her one son under the care of her sister after the death of her husband. However, her son opted to stay with his paternal aunt and moved himself into this aunt's home where he has been ever since. Her status prohibits her from frequent visits, but she regularly communicates with her son. Her son's aunt takes care of his school fees whilst she also assists with his other needs. In trying to make sense of her transitional mothering status, she reasoned that being away was not ideal for the proper upbringing of her child because you would literally become a stranger to your child and vice versa. She also emphasised the need to guide and discipline your child as an important reason for co-resident mothering. However, if she had a choice, she maintained that staying at home with your children was the best option.

4.1.10 Participant K

Last, but not least, I introduce mother K, a 37-year-old mother of two children. This mother presents a unique case, in particular for her 17-year-old son as at 2017 when I met her. She was a single mother and had left behind her two sons. For this research, only her eldest son was included. Her motivation for migration were to increase opportunities for her livelihood and that of her children. However, unique to this case is that she had left her older son when he was still in grade 6 (11 years old) living alone at her parent's rural homestead, without any adult caregiver per se. At the time of our encounter, her son was now in form three and had been living as a lone child since he was in grade six. She argued that she had no choice except to 'adultify' her child in order to work outside Zimbabwe.

Like the other mothers, she was also an undocumented migrant and had initially started off in South Africa and decided to move to Botswana. Her reason for this move was to gain more disposable income from the strong position of the Botswana pula against the relatively weaker South African rand. Although she bemoaned her working conditions in the receiving country as being typical of modern-day slavery, she still maintained in her narrative that she was better off being an undocumented domestic worker in Botswana as opposed to being at home. Motherhood for her meant being able to provide for her son.

She thus reasoned that maternal absence in her case was necessary for her to be able to fulfil financial obligations i.e. to feed the family. On the contrary, maternal presence meant she

would starve to death with her children. Her narrative, similar to preceding stories, illuminated the irreconcilability of two conflicting roles faced by transnational domestic workers in Botswana – that of fulfilling financial obligations whilst meeting care expectations and obligations simultaneously.

Having introduced the participants, the following section discussed the main themes and sub-themes in detail, paying attention to the salient meanings of motherhood and nuanced implications of participant's perceptions of motherhood on their everyday lived experiences. The main themes, namely, structural vulnerabilities; conformity to idealised notions of motherhood and transnational family power relations are discussed extensively with a view to unpacking everyday realities of distant motherhood that are underpinned by strong ideological positions in an increasingly globalised world.

4.2   Structural vulnerabilities

4.2.1   Legal status and deportability

In the previous section, I have introduced my participants by way of brief backgrounds. This is in line with Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis' (IPA) commitment to ideography. In addition, it also serves as a way of situating the narratives to follow within the frame of the transnational mothers' pre-migration backgrounds which are imperative in understanding their experiences of motherhood. In this section, I therefore talk about the main themes that emerged from migrant mothers and then connect their subjective experiences to the broader macro-institutional factors in order to illuminate the notion of structural vulnerabilities faced by migrant domestic workers in Botswana.

I analyse their experiences through a multi-dimensional theoretical lens that encompasses structural vulnerabilities; transnational theory; intersectional theory, new communicative technologies and the notion of extra-legality and counterstrategies of undocumented migrants. To begin this discussion, I adopt the definition of structural vulnerability as a "positionality that imposes physical/emotional suffering on specific population groups and individuals in patterned ways… it is a product of class based economic exploitation and cultural/gendered or racialized discrimination" (Quesada, Hart & Bourgois, 2011, p.3). As an analytical standpoint, I argue that the way motherhood is experienced in this study is underpinned by multi-level power relations and dynamics that confront transnational mothers in executing their motherhood obligation.

I also argue that differing layers of power relations are found at both micro, meso and macro levels and together they contribute to shape the kind of motherhood that emerged from this study. Transnational mothers had to confront and deal with issue of power and tensions at family level and at a state level, where they were met with repressive laws and policies and economic downturns. Therefore, I analyse motherhood though the notion of legal violence (Menjivar & Abrego, 2012), in order to capture the injurious effects of immigration law and policy on undocumented migrant mothers in this study. In addition, they were also confronted with power contestations in dealing with various extra-legal actors to negotiate on matters of entry, exit, employment, arrests and accommodation. Their social and class positions were thus key in locating their experiences of transnational motherhood.

From a macro-level perspective, Zimbabwe underwent the worst economic and political crisis of its independence history in 2007/2008 which marked the exodus of many Zimbabweans, both professional and unskilled in search of greener pastures (Batisai, 2017; Crush & Tevera, 2003; Crush & Chikanda, 2012; Bloch, 2008; McGregor; 2008) with most who left, adopting migration as a family survival strategy. As such, my discussion from an individual as well as broader structural angle, based on their sending context is done not only to differentiate on hat may have led women to migrate, but also to show the inter-relationship and fluidity of the public versus private sphere dichotomy in the era of globalisation to indicate how these factors impose structural vulnerabilities on these particular participants.

In as much as motherhood and families are often thought to be in the private domain, the way motherhood intersects with structures and institutions outside the family domain (public sphere) be it at the economic, political or global level, justifies my reasoning to include this factor beyond the individual migrant. All participants began by explaining when, how and, most importantly, why they decided to migrate to Botswana. The reasons ranged from a combination of factors but mainly centred on the political and economic situation in Zimbabwe prevailing at that time, as well as their own personal circumstances, such as being widowed, divorced or being a single mother.

Although I did not target this particular demographic in my sample, I must reiterate that all the participants in this study turned out to be single mothers. As such, it was not surprising that matrifocality dominated. All mothers migrated due to poverty in search of better lives for their children. None of their children remained behind with a father figure in Zimbabwe nor were the fathers active in their children's upbringing, suggesting the gendered nature of care.

Furthermore, driven by their need to fulfil material obligations towards their children as single mothers, all the participants were left with no option except to resort to illegality in order to cross the borders using clandestine routes or extending their stay beyond the official permitted time.

Consequently, these mothers have lived and worked in Botswana as undocumented domestic workers for an average of 10 years. In spite of their daily precarity, they had managed to sustain their migrant way of life for many years. As a result of their low socio-economic positioning in Zimbabwe, their post-arrival circumstances did not change much due to them being undocumented. Being undocumented condemned them to a life of precarity in the jobs taken up as well as the manner through which they subsequently engaged services of human smugglers in order to sustain their livelihoods.

For these mothers, this context of departure is a substantial matter for consideration for it not only shapes their in-transit experiences but also determines the nature of their transnational mothering practices as precarious mothers and labourers on arrival in Botswana. It is this context that I refer to as pre-migration and in-transit stages as the first crucial transnational social fields (Boyd & Grieco, 2003) and the indications here illustrate that mobility is not only about leaving one's country and arriving in another, but the 'in-betweenness' is also crucial to understand migration outcomes.

I therefore maintain throughout the thesis that in order to fully grasp the experiences of transnational mothers, one has to begin by looking at the structural and micro factors originating from the sending country (pre-migration), the factors confronting them in–between (in transit) as well as post arrival, in this case Botswana, in order to appreciate their experiences and how these ultimately shape and inform their mothering practices from a distance. In the final equation, although this all occurs in the host country, the effects of immigration and migration governance are 'transnational' as they are exported back to the left-behind children in the form of deprivation, prolonged maternal separation and poverty.

Legal status thus emerged as the greatest threat to the fulfilment of their mothering mandates. Therefore, it was not surprising that the impact of Botswana's immigration policy on transnational domestic workers and their illegal status was brought up by every mother as a major obstacle to their transnational livelihoods. Its recurrence positioned it as a major theme which clearly captures the implications of irregularity on the mothers and their families. Additionally, I discuss migration irregularity in relation to how it is produced, sustained and

perpetuated through various state policies and extra-legal actors who work against formal immigration policy legally enacted by the state by offering alternative mobility services to undocumented migrants.

By so doing, my aim is not to focus on legality and informal players in the migration industry but rather, to illustrate the linkages of how this has a direct bearing on motherhood of the migrant women concerned and its impact on the children left behind and caregivers in Zimbabwe. The subsequent effects are discussed in relation to how their families have been re-shaped as a consequence. As the results show, mother-work and its outcomes are predominantly determined by women's immigration status in the receiving context and the multiple extra-legal actors in the migration industry in Botswana. In detailing their motherhood experiences, these mothers constantly refer to their statuses as a critical factor in determining how they dispense their financial and emotional obligations.

Many of the mothers had migrated to Botswana during the period of heightened political and economic downturn in Zimbabwe in 2007/2008. Whilst mother N was the only one with a valid work-permit, I still considered her as irregular because her valid residence and work permits had been acquired falsely with the assistance of her employer. She was presented as a farmworker and given a permit to work as a 'herd-girl' on a farm so her papers were acquired illegally after her employer paid someone who owns a cattle farm to provide supporting documents for her application to immigration.

As such, she was able to enter/exit Botswana legally through the official borders of both countries. Although the term herd-girl may at face value sound demeaning, I have used the term in this instance as that is the officially stated term on the permits to describe a worker who herds cattle on a farm in Botswana. The rest of the mothers were undocumented. Not only did their irregular statuses keep them in constant fear of deportation but presented the real danger of regular arrests, detention and deportation. Consequently, this left remarkable dents on their already limited finances, the bulk of which they channelled towards paying human smugglers for travel and bribes to officials when threatened with arrest.

Ultimately, they were then forced to remit less, often leaving their left-behind children in poverty and the caregivers in various financial dilemmas. Due to being irregular, they lived and worked under precarious conditions, condemned them to lowly classified jobs or 3D jobs (dirty, dangerous and demeaning (Anderson, 2000)) and severely limited communication with those back home. This marked the decline of physical contact with their children back home in

Zimbabwe. Furthermore, their status also exposed some mothers to exploitation and abuse by their employers. As a consequence, this also landed their children back home in a perpetual cycle of poverty, maternal deprivation and a lack of basic needs.

The following testimonies serve to demonstrate the consequences of living as undocumented transnational mothers in Botswana. Most of the mothers blamed their status for affecting their mothering negatively, leading them to believe they had failed to fulfil their motherhood obligations. Mother B's excerpt below is a good illustration of this theme:

> Our problems here are too many to mention, like the problem of Botswana police. They always conduct 'stop & search operations' and we don't have any legal papers. So, in my case, I end up waking up as early as 4a.m. to walk to work. Because if police arrest you, they will deport you back to Zimbabwe (Mother B, 2017).

The sentiment above exemplifies the women's day-to-day lived experiences. Incarceration followed by deportation means a lack of income, it means having to gather resources to re-enter Botswana through illegal means and most importantly, it also means that she is unable to remit to her children as she has to deal with her deportation first in order for her to re-enter Botswana, usually using dangerous routes which expose workers to danger and violence. Ultimately, being arrested and deported, for her thus compromises her ability to mother from a distance.

In mother A's case, she expressed her wish for the economy of Zimbabwe to normalise because of the constant threat of deportation in Botswana. Interestingly, she points out that if she is deported back to Zimbabwe, there are no work prospects for her back home, and she will simply have to return to Botswana. Such sentiments present her migration as a state of stuckness, a forced mobility invoked by economic hardships and lack of opportunities back home.

> If only Zimbabwe could come right, maybe we could go back home and rest because this side, the police are after us, they arrest us and then deport us in these trucks, [*magumbakumba]*'. From day 1 to day 31, you are forced to stay indoors because of fear of the police and you also know that if you go out and then get arrested and eventually deported to your home country, there is nothing for you to do at home (Mother A, 2017)

The results of the study were indicative of structural vulnerabilities that mediated upon distant motherhood and in the process, altered family relations across the different geographical locations. The findings suggest that structural barriers in Zimbabwe and Botswana influenced how mothers performed and defined their motherhood from a distance (Fresnoza-Flot, 2009). In keeping with this finding, Smith and Guarnizo (2008) have postulated when that

marginalised people cross borders, examination of micro and macro factors that mediate individuals' experiences are called for as such factors arbitrate individual outcomes.

Similarly, Boyd and Grieco (2003) have also called for an analysis of migration outcomes that takes into consideration the sending context and an individual's pre-migration circumstances, hence my empirical conclusion also positions the economic context of Zimbabwe as a major factor in structural vulnerabilities of participants. Furthermore, this study also positioned participants as migrants who had embarked on a kind of forced 'transnationality' (Raijman et al., 2003; Bernhard et al., 2008; Horton, 2009) due to conditions in Zimbabwe coupled by immigration policies and barriers of re-unification with their families imposed in Botswana. The intersection of their class positioning with immigration policies produced negative consequences which impacted negatively on fulfilment of their familial obligations.

For mother F, deportation invoked feelings of shame vis-à-vis those back home, in particular, the caregivers. Dreading the embarrassment of going back home empty-handed, mother F always chose to re-enter Botswana the moment she is released from custody at the border, as opposed to going back home as her return would be judged as a failed migration project. Care-giving in Zimbabwe is not offered for free but also carries expectations of reciprocity which further pressurises mothers to try and live up to unrealistic expectations of financial provision.

> Like in my case, I am undocumented here and I am always getting arrested and deported. When I get deported, usually I don't have any money and I am forced to make a U-turn at the border rather than going home because I will not be having anything to take home. If you go home, then the caregivers will be disappointed with you for coming empty-handed so this means I would rather return to Botswana through the forest although there is a high chance that once I am back, I can still be arrested and deported again (Mother F, 2017)

Mother J uses the discourse of bad luck to try and make sense of her frequent arrests and deportations. Her attribution helps her to rationalise why she is often under police custody. When she is detained at the police station for weeks before actual deportation takes place, this process initiates suffering for her children back home because she has no income when she is incarcerated and therefore cannot remit funds. In this case, I therefore suggest that her migration project can be deemed to have failed, given that the reason for her migration was a survival strategy which faces obstacles along the way due to her irregularity.

Essentially for transnational mothers, remittances, frequent communication and physical visits form the core of factors against which the success or failure of a transnational parent can be

judged. Failure to fulfil this for mother J means she in turn, fails to fulfil her motherhood expectations due to circumstances beyond her control.

> When I came here in 2007, I worked for 3 months and then my visa expired because we are given a 90-day visa in any given year here so I continued to work here illegally as I no longer had a valid visa. But in my case, I don't know whether it is because of too much bad luck or what, because every time there is a police raid, I am one of those you will always find inside the police trucks and I usually get detained at Broadhurst police station for two weeks or so before I get deported (Mother J, 2017)

Although she is by no way an exception as most of the mothers described similar experiences, I use her narrative as it is able to best take the reader through her day-to-day lived experiences as an undocumented migrant mother as these illuminate on obstacles she faces in mothering her children from a distance.

> Hmm, like these days it's really tough, you may plan to go to the shops or plan to send money home through Western Union after you get paid. Like what happened to me recently when I was on my way to Western Union, I just saw the police car stop right by my feet and they asked me to get into their car. In the car, they just drove around with me aimlessly and then asked me to give them two hundred pula (P200-00) so that they could release me. I had P1200-00 on me and gave them the P200-00 they had asked for so now I had less money to send home and it now means that whatever you had planned is no longer possible as the money is now less (Mother J, 2017).

From this excerpt, there is a chain of events that unfolds for mothers like mother J in Botswana that filters across the borders right back to the doorstep of children and family left behind in Zimbabwe. Significantly, when a transnational mother is confronted with corrupt officials, as described in the narrative above, they may evade arrest and deportation but still lose their hard-earned money by paying a bribe in exchange for release. In mother J's case, she had to pay a bribe with part of the money that she wanted to remit home in exchange for her freedom, taking away from her children's resources.

This experience not only captures the essence of how motherhood is done under an undocumented status but also how motherhood can fail or suffer set-backs due to one's migration status in the host country. For mother M, her undocumented status means she is restricted in the places she can patronise in Botswana. She chooses invisibility as a strategy to stay indoors at her employer's premises under the radar, away from surveillance in order to avoid arrests. Interestingly, she has internalised and accepted the derogatory label by identifying herself as an 'illegal' in her own words.

A significant strategy for survival in Botswana was to resort to invisibility especially given that participants predisposed to all sorts of exploitation/abuse from their employers or human

smugglers who knew they had no recourse to police because of their migration statuses. Accordingly, migration status gives insights into how migrant mothers redefine motherhood (Fresnoza-Flot, 2009). In essence, deportability ultimately shaped mother-child relationships as it determined the frequency of physical contact, communication and remittances flowing from mothers to their children.

Consequently, an illegal status amounts to a higher likelihood of failure to fulfil women's self-imposed motherhood and breadwinner obligations. Her narration, below, sums up the constant distress associated with illegality:

> You know in 2013, God heard my prayers and I secured a work permit but now it expired last July and my application for renewal was rejected. I even appealed but I was not successful with the appeal so now I am an [illegal]. So, it is all stress for me, I cannot even leave the house freely to attend church or just to go to the shops because of my status here. "Right now, even as you move around, you are constantly looking all sides to check for police, so now I appear like a thief as I am always wary of being arrested by police because this is not Zimbabwe, my own country. Your eyes have to constantly wonder around so that you may be able to readily detect and escape the police (Mother M, 2017).

The above extract suggests that migrant mothers also believe in the invisible hand of God as a factor that determines their destiny and that their fate is determined by a higher. For instance, she believes she managed to secure a work permit in 2013 because God was kind to her. However, upon renewal, the permit application was rejected and to mother M, that signals rejection from God. She places God in the centrality of her narrative which suggests her surrender to a higher force as she herself is not in control of what is happening to her in Botswana. She therefore attributes her presence in Botswana as God's plan for her life.

Additionally, the exploitation or abuse they encountered remained invisible to the public eye given the fact that they were engaged as domestic workers in the private realm (in private homes), their jobs remained hidden in the private domain as 'under the table occupations'. (Hondagneu-Sotelo 2005, p.172). Imaginably, if transnational mothers face difficulties of freely moving around in Botswana, then cross-border mobility presents even greater challenges, hence they minimise going home and, in the process, unwillingly deprive their children of physical contact.

The state emerged complicit in regulating intimate relationships in ways that highlight the myth of the public/private dichotomy (Palmary, Burman, Khatidja & Chantler, 2010) justifying the necessity for a feminist intervention that can challenge the assumed distinctness between the state and the family (Palmary, 2006; Silvey, 2006; Anthias & Yuval Davis, 1989). My findings

came out as conceptually aligned to Palmary et al. (2010) who have argued that the role of the state in shaping families is under-theorised and calls for further rethinking, a position I find myself strongly resonating in line with findings of the present study.

Essentially, migration statuses hinder mother-to-child intimacy leading to emotional disconnections and failure to give motherly care, even in times of crisis, such as a child's illness. This scenario was a common finding raised by most participants:

> At times you receive a message that child is ill, it's not easy to rush back home to attend to your child because you are in another country and the main point here is how did you get to be in that country? So, you know that for you to go home there is already a high risk of detention at the border and again you now have to think of how much all this will cost you to go and attend to your ill child (Mother A, 2016).

A message regarding an ill child is a scenario that presents a tough choice for these mothers. It means one has to do a cost-benefit analysis of whether to go home and risk arrest as well as incur costs of smuggled entry, or to remain hidden. This suggests that immigration policies have spill-over effects that reach beyond the migrant to affect children left-behind" (Aranda et al., 2014) and is an alternative kind of motherhood that stands in sharp contrast to the hegemonic ideology of motherhood which values physical presence of the biological mother yet on the contrary, hegemonic discourse of mothering is the preserve of a few privileged women.

As such, mothers dependent on transnational migration for survival have no choice except to resort to alternative forms of mothering and substitute ways of experiencing motherhood, signifying that "mothering is neither a unitary experience for individual women nor experienced similarly by all women" (Arendell, 2000, p. 1196).

> Again, you are always thinking of the police, you will always be scared so for you to go back to Zimbabwe to visit your children often is not practical because for you to go home, even if you succeed, like now at the border when we go back, the immigration officials will take our money so you actually end up arriving in Zimbabwe empty-handed. Then to return again is yet another burden because we are illegal, so you will never win in this situation (Mother B, 2017).

As mother J below similarly narrates, when a child is sick back home, in addition to assessing the costs of treatment and normal travel costs, the mothers also need to have a budget for paying human smugglers. In the end, most mothers do not go back home when their children are sick due to prohibitive costs and instead opt to send money for children's treatments. The role

played by human smugglers and other actors in this particular transnational motherhood also begs interrogation because further to structural barriers imposed by the state, there are further vulnerabilities imposed by extra-legal actors in this migration process. There was a need to interrogate the roles of other players i.e. competing powers in migration governance that were responsible for producing different legal and social responses to these mother's mobilities.

Harsh immigration policies subject the mothers to constant surveillance with the aim of deportation. This factor then restricts mobility whilst prohibiting frequent communication and physical visits. Furthermore, her labour market position as an unskilled labourer entails unregulated low wages which further impinge on contact with children back home, even in emergencies.

> Even when you are told there is an emergency it home, you just have to ignore it, not because that is what you want but because that is what you have to do. You will not have the money nor the time to return home. You do not want to be dealing with smugglers often as they can bury you in the forest. Besides, the employers here are slave-drivers, they will not even want to hear about your emergencies because they can't do anything for themselves. All their dirty work has to be done by Zimbabweans, most of them cannot even wash their own underwear so they do not want to release you. (Mother J, 2017).

The mere fact that these mothers knew they were highly deportable subjects (De Genova, 2002) who had to go to negotiate their own informal means of entry and exit in and out of Botswana was enough to keep them away from visiting their children. For example, mother K lamented her failure to go back home since 2016. When I interviewed her, it had been more than a year since she had been home. Her case was unique as the son she left behind lived alone without adult supervision and he had begun living alone when he was in primary school at grade six level. This child's case essentially challenged popular discourse and assumptions of what a child is. Instead, it was the socio-economic circumstances of this family that led to this arrangement while the mother pursued her livelihood in Botswana.

Consequently, the case gives merit to the social constructionist perspective on childhood as what a child is or is not, is not necessarily about age but a social construction that differs from society to society, depending on social factors such as one's social positioning/class or cultural dimensions (Norozi & Moen, 2016), hence rebutting the notion of a universal childhood. Given that the actual lived reality of this child sharply contrasts to the idealised nuclear family child who lives with both mother and father in the family home or at the very least, an adult caregiver, mother K's places her faith in God's power to sustain and protect her lone son. In her narrative

she perceives God as a sustaining higher force in the face of difficult circumstances as she has no other choice:

> But the life we live here is very difficult, like right now, since I came in 2016, I have never gone back home to visit my child plus my passport already expired. If I think of travelling back home, I have to think of how I will go to Zimbabwe and how I will return here again because I don't have any valid papers to live here. So, in the end, you will see that it's actually better to just stay here illegally and continue to work (Mother K, 2017).

Narratives so far suggest that these mothers live in a zone of liminality, suspended in both space and time. As aptly described by Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila (1997), these mothers are 'neither here nor there'. Their narratives represent a sense of being stuck in what Turner describes as people who are similar to those that have been stripped of their social status, but at the same time, have not yet acquired a new status. As a result of this liminality, the mothers in this instance emerge in a 'limbo of statuslessness' (Turner, 1977). Furthermore, at global level, it is necessary to take cognisance of how maternal practices intersect with global neo-liberal forces as well as other structural factors at national level and immigration policies in order to understand practices of motherhood by domestic workers (Carling, 2005).

Although motherhood is widely conceived as an element in the private sphere of family and household, maternal practices intersect with external conditions and these practices are also shaped by globalisation (Freeman, 2001). As a result of these intersections, there are strong linkages that emerge between maternal strategies, familial obligations, and globalisation and immigration policies. Furthermore, when reproductive roles of women intersect with external conditions such as globalisation, state policies and economic conditions, then it stands to reason that idealised motherhood cannot be the only form of motherhood or the 'holy grail' for all mothers. Therefore, the assumption that motherhood is universal is rather utopian, as motherhood is contextual at the intersections of class, gender, nationality and many other factors, hence different experiences for different women.

Even though hegemonic discourses of motherhood and gender remain dominant, motherhood is not a unitary experience and hence many variations of mothering exist, based on context, culture and geography (Millman, 2013; Yuval-Davies, 2006; Arendell, 2000). For example, one mother opened up about her experiences of being raped whilst in transit from Zimbabwe, following her deportation. Immediately the authorities handed her over to the Zimbabwe immigration office, she and some other deportees sneaked back into the forest to begin yet

another harrowing journey of re-entry into Botswana. She met her fate when she was accompanied by some human smugglers to cross the border clandestinely.

The same human smugglers she had paid, took turns to rape her and two other women right in the middle of the forest where they had no chance of escape. Although she is aware that her children are unhappy because of infrequent visits, her illegal status renders her powerless to do anything about it and the incident of rape left her even more vulnerable and afraid. However, she quickly withdrew the statement and instead narrated how she had seen two of her fellow travellers being raped but she herself had been lucky to escape the thugs just as she was about to be raped. I immediately felt that she had done so out of shame and fear of being stigmatised. Her rape experience brings to focus the violence that migrant women experience as a result of their statuses. Her experience also presents a paradox in the sense that human smugglers are essential to undocumented mothers as they facilitate their kind of motherhood yet on the other hand, the very same helpers can also be their violators, physically and emotionally.

The mothers in question know that the smugglers are dangerous but on the other hand, they need them as they are their main access to Botswana where they facilitate their livelihoods. Beyond the psychological and symbolic violence that they go through as a result of constantly living in fear of police, they are confronted with physical violence as they negotiate their entry and exits in and out of Botswana. It appears that violence forms part of their everyday lives as transnational mothers. On this basis, I therefore argue that through the imposition of restrictive policies which excluded migrant domestic workers from working legally in Botswana, the authorities unintentionally produced fertile room for informal actors and human smugglers to benefit from the commercialisation of migrant illegality.

Moreover, the mothers refrained from seeking help through formal protection systems lest they risked being visible to law enforcement agents. An illegal migration status grossly impinges on one's ability to mother from a distance, bringing in tensions between mothers and their children yet although their capacity to care is diminished, their children harbour their own set of expectations:

> My children are not happy because I only manage to go home once a year in December but sometimes, I can even go for two years or so without going home. But I cannot go to Zimbabwe often to check on my children, I am an 'illegal' here so I cannot travel through the normal borders. I have to cross the border through the forests where you can meet [magumaguma] -thugs who can kill you or rob you anytime (Mother T, 2017).

The foregoing narrative. Illustrates how families are central in the making of the state and the regulation of borders. Moreover, through the creation of restrictive immigration policies, physical contact and reunification remained remote possibilities for the mothers in question yet conditions were not sufficient to act as disincentives for migration. The findings revealed that migrant mothers still managed to navigate these barriers, albeit at great personal costs, the case in point being the rape of one of the participants for example. A common finding from all the mothers I interviewed, exposed a common pattern i.e. they were only able to afford about two weeks maximum of co-residence with their children during the December holidays. This would explain why most mothers felt they were detached from their children and some of the children were more familiar and comfortable with their caregivers. The constant competing demands placed on mothers suggested that they had to prioritise financial obligations before caregiving and emotional obligations due to the impossibilities of fulfilling both obligations simultaneously. As transnational mothers, they practiced partitioned parenthood (Contreras & Griffiths, 2012) because their mothering is partitioned during the times that they are absent, over time, bonds are broken, resulting in significant emotional distance between mothers and their children back home.

Immigration laws (made in the public sphere at macro level) directly intrude into the private realm and in the process, shape and transform family relationships. Mothers felt that, as migration prolongs, so do children left-behind become emotionally detached from their mothers. A further consequence is that Botswana's immigration policies and state policing of migrants have served to create multiple dependencies in both the sending and receiving countries by transnational domestic workers. I argue that these dependencies, though costly are necessary for the practice of transnational motherhood in this context. Firstly, the policies have led domestic workers in Botswana to develop heavy dependencies on informal migration channels through the use of extra-legal actors as they act as enablers of their mobilities.

The second type of dependency is one that is specific to their home context in Zimbabwe where the mothers depend on caregivers or 'other-mothers' to care for children in order to enable them to migrate. These dependencies, social, psychological and economic in nature, emanate from stringent migration regulations which do not offer migrant domestic workers the opportunity to migrate legally with their families nor allow them to enter and leave Botswana through formal border channels. By implication, these dependencies in turn compel transnational mothers to seek the assistance of caregivers to whom they can entrust the custody of their children and also engage the services of human smugglers who, for the right price,

facilitate illegal entry, exit and re-entry while simultaneously exposing them to danger and violence during transit.

Seemingly, transnational domestic workers hence remain stuck in revolving cycles of dependencies which in turn, alter their mothering strategies and how they experience motherhood on a day-to-day basis. Their prolonged absence in turn, reshapes familial roles as responsibilities of care are shifted to other mothers or older children in the families. Mother M likens her experience to serving a jail term. She reckons she is living in jail, yet she still endures since migrating to Botswana in 2005. Her endurance attests to the self-sacrifice narrative that was commonly expressed by mothers in my study. Moreover, all mothers, except one, were live-in domestic maids. That meant they had entered into private informal working arrangements with their employer. As such, their labour was regulated in the private homes of their employers their hours of work, living conditions and wages were not regulated:

> Um, the way employers overwork us here in Botswana, even a donkey does not work like that and is it not a fact that even a donkey will get tired at some point? To tell you the truth, I am serving a jail term here and the only difference is that it is not as real as an actual jail but nonetheless, it is a jail because it is like a secret jail as it is not everyone who knows about it. I now know that hell is not far, it is close by and it is right here on this earth, it's not far and I am living it (Mother M, 2017).

The narrative also captures the essence of what the mothers constantly referred to as sacrifices. Self-sacrificing motherhood means one sacrifices and accepts that the reality that they are likely to be confronted with any of these risks anywhere between the borderlands, and in their spaces of employment. These risks were not taken blindly though as they accepted what they have to endure in order to be able to carry out their motherhood obligations, suggesting motherhood was about provisioning for their children, at whatever costs to oneself. Consequently, in my view, this unique kind of transnationalism opposes the celebratory paradigm espoused by Basch et al. (2004) where transnational migrants are seen as simultaneously embedded in both the countries of origin and of destination.

These mother's kind of transnationalism involved exposing oneself to exploitation and danger, to the possibility of rape, murder or robbery while in transit, or in the destination country. Furthermore, the nature of their transnationalism is one that had no guarantee of successful financial gains or reunification with their children in the near future. . It is on this salient point that my empirical findings locate a critique of the transnational approach for failing to adequately present the alternative side of transnationalism by highlighting the plight of poor

undocumented migrants. An additional weakness is evident in its failure to take into account the devastation on family units while irregular migrants are in transnational circuits.

Moreover, it is dominated by its focus on the activities of the migrant in his/her social fields and little on the day-to-day activities and experiences of the stayers. In its original form, the theory does not adequately theorise undocumented immigrants who, in the current world order, are a large population of global migrants. The kind of transnationalism, espoused by Basch et al., (2004), appears to fit well with skilled or rather well-resourced migrants to a greater extent and fails to recognise that for many others, the need to become transnational is driven by poverty, rather than choice. Findings suggest a transnationalism of the poor and deprived as being one that is characterised by incessant poverty, emotional pain and dire consequences for the migrant mothers, caregivers and children left behind. Furthermore, it is this specific type of transnationalism that positions migrant domestic workers as perpetually living under conditions of liminality.

To say that the mothers were simultaneously embedded, either politically, economically or socially in Zimbabwe and Botswana would not be truthful. Their main activities centred on staying invisible with very minimal engagement back home. They therefore engaged strategic invisibility (Lollar, 2015) by disengaging from public spaces. For example, sustained regular contact is a pre-requisite for one to be truly transnational (Portes, Guarnizo & Landolt, 1999) and yet I find no such evidence with my participants. The fact that transnational theory is heavily dependent on freedom of movement across borders poses a further misfit with the sample I studied, against their background of irregularity. From my theoretical standing, transnational theory, though relevant to my study is not adequate to examine transnational motherhood in the present study.

The transnational paradigm as a theory does not take into account irregular migrants and their circumstances of migration and consequently, the kind and frequency of linkages these types of migrants maintain in their countries of origin, be it political, economic, cultural or social. In addition, transnational theory works on the assumption that simultaneity would entail migrants who were actively rooted in both the sending and receiving countries. By doing so, it failed to account for alternative borders that are created beyond the formal border controls. It thus failed to theorise on the border as a hindrance to simultaneous embeddedness (Basch et al., 1994) of irregular migrants. In essence, the borders the mothers use in this instance, represent sites of

violence, abuse, fear, rebellion, lawlessness, resistance and liminality/in-betweenness and vulnerability.

As a theory, it does not appear to espouse the de-territorialised independent migrants because regular involvement in transnational activities applies to the minority of migrants and is thus not unique to the majority (Landolt, 2001; Guarnizo, 2003). It is for this reason that I find resonance in Vertovec's position that the term 'transnationalism' has been applied too loosely (Vertovec, 1999a). Portes (2003) reasons that there is a need to expand on transnational theory by establishing a typology of transnationalism and the conditions that are unique to each set of conditions. I have no doubt an irregular status is a strong mediating factor in the practice of simultaneous embedment in more than one transnational social field (Glick Schiller et al., 1992b) for many migrants so are the parallel governance structures that run extra-legally alongside formal state policies in Botswana.

Perhaps, as argued by Morawska (2011), migration could be conceptualised as structuration in order to illustrate the interplay between structure and agency in transnational social fields. In this study, it is the economic conditions in the sending country that have sustained forced transnationality of the mothers in question, hence this should also be factored as a major driving force of migration as opposed to casting migrants as free agents across nation states. In this respect, the conditions in Zimbabwe have made it impossible for child bearers to be child carers, as they have had to leave their homes for their livelihoods. Separation of mothers and children is thus a survival strategy whose necessity has been brought about by factors discussed above.

Inevitably, in this prolonged process, families have had to transform, some have been destabilised and familial relations have been significantly altered in response to broader structural processes in the contexts of origin and settlement at the intersections of globalisation and neo-liberalism dynamics. The migrant at the centre of it all has to confront power dynamics brought about by these structures at formal and informal levels, within a very restricted agency. The centrality of the state remains key and celebrating mobility of transnational migrants remains a necessary cautious approach for migrants lacking proper migration statuses.

4.3   Non-state actors

I illustrate that non-state actors are equally influential in shaping the experiences of transnational families in this study. I focus on what has been broadly termed as parallel governance structures which are essentially non-state actors who also perform state-functions

(Broeders & Engbersen, 2007). I aim to show that the nation state does not monopolise the legitimate means of movement (Torpey, 1998) by illustrating the role of non-state actors in enabling distant motherhood. In this study, beyond the confines of the law, there were deeply entrenched parallel governance structures through which immigration policies were countered and resisted.

Although illegal, these posed significant challenges to official immigration policies through the enactment of parallel borders and alternative border routes. This evidence supports the argument that Botswana's immigration policies had created a high degree of dependency by migrant mothers on human smuggling services as an avenue through which their livelihoods depended. The efficacy of extra-legal actors in sustaining and perpetuating irregular migration is quite crucial given the fact that undocumented migrant workers in this study had been living and working in Botswana illegally for more than ten years. It has been argued that women are playing a critical role in the global economy, in particular, their roles in the global care chains but they remain obscure and invisible because of their undocumented statuses (Sassen, 2000). Yet women are the main actors in these structures, and they form part of what Sassen (2000) has referred to as counter-geographies of power which are in essence, part of shadow economies.

Often seen as shadow organisations, parallel structures are actively involved in transgovernmentalism which has been defined as "non-state actors that create transnational networks in which these networks can either derive power away from the state or presuppose the state" (Weiss, 2008, p.8). Sassen (2000) refers to these human smuggling structures as "cross-border circuits whose goal is for profit-making, but most significantly, they are developed on the backs of the truly disadvantaged, suggesting that profit margins exist at the back of the licit economy" (Sassen, 2000, p.503). Using parallel governance structures as a theoretical lens, I adopt the position that extra-legal actors are informal and illegitimate profit-making institutions (Broeders & Engbersen, 2007).

Salt and Stein (1997) have pointed out that migration is irrefutably a business that is comprised of a system of institutionalised networks that include a set of individuals and agents who all flourish through the commercialisation of state borders as migrant smuggling makes a profitable business (Bilger, Hoffman & Jandl, 2006). Against this background, I argue that the role played by human smugglers and other actors in transnational motherhood, begs further interrogation, given that further to structural barriers imposed by the state, there are other

vulnerabilities as well as advantages imposed by extra-legal actors in this migration process. Taken together, these actors stand as a competing power that runs their own system of migration governance alongside the official state policies and practices.

I argue that their counter-practices cannot be taken lightly, especially given that they are responsible for perpetuating undocumented migration of Zimbabweans in Botswana. Significantly, they shape the experiences of mothers and their left-behind families, producing a unique kind of motherhood to suit those who lack a legal status. Against an unfriendly mobility regime, migrant domestic workers invoke counter-strategies by resorting to using foggy social structures which have been defined as "social structures that emerge from efforts by individuals and organizations to avoid the production of knowledge about their activities by making them either unobservable or indeterminable; or, put another way, the practical production of fog" (Bommes & Kalb, 2002 as cited in Engbersen & Broeders, 2009, p868.). Extra-legal actors illustrate that migration management is not entirely in the hands of the state as they are constantly deriving the power to regulate migration away from the state. In this study, there is a multiplicity of actors who do not necessarily remain the same but change over time, often to include new actors who also jump on the bandwagon to profit from undocumented migration.

Non-state actors include, but are not limited to, human smugglers in both the sending and receiving contexts operating within the two borders, public and private transporters, police officials; private immigration consultants, state immigration officials themselves, employers, landlords, villagers that live in the vicinity of the Botswana border and most importantly, the actual undocumented migrants. Taken together, these actors shape motherhood experiences as they determine the frequency of visits back home since it takes considerable effort and significant financial resources to cross the borders:

> I will be honest with you; I last visited my children more than two years ago. What is the point of going home and paying human smugglers who can turn against you in the forest? It is better to send the little money you get and just forget about seeing them. That is the portion that God has given us. Again, you cannot visit them empty-handed and the smugglers also demand all your money and even your cell-phone. You go home when you have something to show, in our case, we cannot afford it. (Mother B, 2017).

It is imperative to appreciate that migrant mothers resort to parallel structures as a way through which they fulfil normative gender expectations of the 'good mother' image (Fresnoza-Flot, 2009) especially given that care functions are a crucial strategy in their gender identity (Collins,

1994; Glenn, 1994) as it is essentialised as a female vocation/calling (Hoang, 2016). Take mother K for example, who lamented her failure to go back home since 2016. An illegal status grossly impinged on the respondents' ability to mother from a distance. The solution was therefore to resort to human smugglers in spite of the known possible dangers of doing so:

> But I cannot go to Zimbabwe often to check on my children, I am an 'illegal' here so I cannot travel through the normal borders. I have to cross the border through the forests where you can meet [*magumaguma*] -thugs who can kill you or rob you anytime (Mother T, 2017).

The accounts discussed below paint a picture of mothers who are faced with a single choice for survival. Their only available channel to enter Botswana is through precarious routes with the assistance of human smugglers despite the associated risks:

> I ended up getting arrested again and was deported back to Zimbabwe but I didn't have any money to go back to my home so I immediately made a U-turn at the border and came back here through the forest route. We then met some [*magumaguma*] who wanted to rape us, we had to fight them off and I eventually managed to return to Gaborone (Mother T, 2017).

These findings support the fact that while migration regimes are introduced by states to manage immigration and curb irregularity, the existence of parallel regimes of migration has significant impact on governance and the security of migrants. Furthermore, I argue that as states tighten immigration rules, they appear to have the opposite effect by channelling those rejected through official legal systems to shadow structures. Instead, they become more successful in delivering undocumented migrants right into the pits of danger as opposed to curbing irregularity.

Arguably, the state indirectly boosts criminality at the borders and opens up more opportunities for profiteering by organised crime players, to the detriment of migrants' safety and protection. Ironically, what then becomes more visible as criminal is the migrant who is termed illegal and consequently criminalised, as a result of such an identity which in turn, serves as a hindrance to mothers in effectively fulfilling their maternal obligations. The state, in its quest to control who enters and who is to be excluded, emerges as the actual creator and reproducer of undocumented migration (Koser, 2000; Duvell, 2008; Castles; 2004; Broeders & Engbersen, 2007), as it is through these restrictions that migrant smuggling rings have been born in order to counter the obstacles formed by immigration policies (Koser, 2010).

In this study, the participants had been working as domestic workers in Gaborone for an average of 10 years thus they were still succeeding in circumventing the system over and over

again and yet they were still enduring under these statuses, due in large part to the extra-legal structures operating in Botswana. This highlights the lack of the effectiveness of the state in dealing with undocumented migration. Significantly, the state has sovereign and territorial power but territorial power is shared with shadow structures who effectively derive power away from the sovereign state (Weiss, 2008), making Botswana's migration governance a hybrid system run by the non-state actors parallel to the nation state.

The power state and non-state structures exercise over undocumented migrants is enormous to the extent of affecting even those that stayed behind. The manner they engage in their transactions with undocumented mothers directly influences how often a mother will physically visit her children and even communication, because the costs of being smuggled are costly and yet a priority in fulling their motherhood obligations of providing material care. As such, other needs such as communication, take on secondary importance for the mothers. Despite the costs and risks involved in using human smugglers to cross borders, these mothers continued to rely on them as the only alternative that can allow them to practice the kind of motherhood available to them.

The existence of undocumented migrant mothers in Botswana would not be possible without the assistance of human smugglers, nor would their specific way of mothering be possible. Even though human smugglers are quite significant in the actual crossing of borders, they are not the only player in this business. I label it a business because there are chains of networks created with the aim of profiteering from undocumented migrants. The main vulnerability of being undocumented is precisely what extra-legal actors' prey on and benefit from. Consequently, I do not limit myself to the informal actors who specialise in granting these mothers illegal entries and exits. I also include their employers, their landlords, their transporters, like cross-border buses and private car owners, and interestingly, state actors such as police officials, who choose to act on behalf of the state or to pursue financial gains, by extorting from undocumented migrants.

Significantly, drawing from the experiences described by mothers of their interactions with the police, I found the role played by police officials rather ambiguous and also highly complicit in taking state power because they were at liberty to act officially as a state resource to monitor and arrest undocumented migrants or to act as extra-legal actors when they met with a "jackpot" as one mother labelled it. A jackpot meant that if you were unlucky to be spotted by a police officer, you effectively were a jackpot because you presented them with an opportunity to make

money. Therefore, police officials could act on the side of the state or become non-state and the deciding factor in this scenario was usually based on whether a migrant was carrying some cash on them when they were arrested.

As the mothers expressed, cash could save you from being arrested and deported. The very fact that police officers could choose to abrogate their official duties or switch sides, as it were, provided interesting insights which question the hegemonic state. I illustrate below, by way of three excerpts, how state officials were also a key resource in enabling transnational motherhood in instances when they chose to act extra-legally for profit:

> The other time I got arrested and paid the policeman like this week. As if that was not enough, the following week, I was arrested again by different police officers. I had just left my employer's house and did not have a single cent on me. The policeman took me to the station for booking. Lucky enough, God was there for me that day. The police officer who I had paid the previous week recognised me. He actually laughed saying; you again, why can't you run like others, learn to run, now you are back again. At least he remembered my money, he actually released me and told me to run when I see police. I was so happy that day and I went straight home (Mother J, 2017)

> Where we live here in Oodi, the police always come to our house. If you are arrested and you tell them you have money at home, some of them are not shy. They will actually drive you to your place and wait while you take money from your house. The problem is some of them keep coming back to ask for money once they know where you live so it is better to always move with money and never ever show them where you live. There is this one policeman at Broadhurst police, that one I like him. I paid him once and every time he bumps into me, he does not ask for more, he just greets and tells you to go home. Even when I see him from a distance, I don't even run anymore, he is a good person (Mother E, 2018)

> These guys hate Zimbabweans, they don't want us here anymore that's why there are so many raids these days, you cannot even move. Lucky for me, the lady I work for has a brother who is a policeman. So, when there are planned raids, he actually comes or calls to warn me in advance. He will tell me the days when raids are planned and that I should stay indoors so at least when he tells me, I also send messages to others so that we all remain in hiding (Mother T)

The foregoing narratives serve to demonstrate migrants, through their encounters with police officials over the years, have somehow managed to also create some form of social capital for themselves with some state police officials. It also illustrates that some state officials also benefit financially from the shadow economy of migration in Botswana in instances where they choose not to enforce official laws. Although the Botswana state focuses on controlling the borders, the transnational mothers in this study did not perceive borders as barriers, but rather saw the crossing of the physical borders as viable opportunities for their survival, courtesy of various informal actors. Their primary intention was not to question state authority.

Rather, they sought to ensure sustenance of their livelihoods by using extra-legal actors by circumventing mobility barriers through their transnational practices (Nagengast & Kearney, 1990) as a necessary key strategy for fulfilling their mothering and care duties. Furthermore, I also reason that through their transnational practices, Zimbabwean migrant domestic workers in Botswana have helped create informal profit-making institutions that rely on migrant illegalities as a livelihood strategy in Botswana. This makes both undocumented migrants and extra-legal groups somewhat similar in the sense that they are all engaged in livelihood strategies although their relationship is premised on uneven power relations.

From the perspective of profiteering, it stands to reason that both parties need each other and as the state tightens their policies, so do they also become more creative in evading the state. Arguably, the shadow migration system has sustained undocumented migrations for prolonged periods and hence enabled the specific kind of transnational motherhood emerging in this specific context to endure. The fact that migrant mothers in this study have managed to reside and work in Botswana unofficially for sustained periods validates this argument – that extra-legal actors enable them to practice as well as sustain their kind of motherhood, albeit at great personal costs. On this basis, it is therefore in order to conclude that human smugglers acting in direct opposition to formal immigration laws in Botswana serve as an effective mothering strategy for transnational mothers.

The whole chain of actors in undocumented migration networks form their own territory or shadow state deep in the forests and bushes that stretch between the borders of the two countries and imperatively, they act as enablers of transnational mothering for women, who would otherwise not be able to do so in the absence of this profit-seeking chain. Accordingly, whilst the state wields both sovereign and territorial power, it does not mean territorial power is solely in the hands of the state. Many other players hold the same power over undocumented migrants because extra-legal actors in the migration industry create parallel borders that eventually mimic ungoverned spaces. Clunan and Trikunas (2010, p.275) have argued that "ungoverned spaces are not merely areas lacking governance rather they are spaces where territorial state control has been voluntarily or involuntarily ceded to or shared with actors other than legally recognised sovereign authorities".

Moreover, even though their strategy of engaging human smugglers appears as acts of defiance, in reality, they are strategies employed out of desperation in a context of restricted choices and opportunities and motivated by the needs for basic survival. The mothers in this study provided

informal employment and business to players in extra-legal structures supporting Sassen's argument that the structures which she refers to as counter geographies of globalisation are developed on the backs of the truly disadvantaged (Sassen, 2000). Yet again, their unique kind of transnationalism opposes the celebratory paradigm espoused by Basch et al. (1994) where transnational migrants are seen as simultaneously embedded in both the countries of origin and of destination.

The transnationalism in this study is characterised by painful motherhood that even questions the term I may have passively assumed, without interrogating what exactly is meant by transnational motherhood or to what extent were the mothers truly transnational in this study. As far as I can argue, these mothers were only transnational in so far as they lived separated by borders from their families for prolonged periods. The novelties associated with being simultaneously embedded and de-territorialised stood out as romanticised concepts sharply contrasting with the day-to-day lived experiences of my participants.

I admit I owe huge intellectual debt to extant literatures on transnationalism, where I borrow significant theoretical insights. However, as I have already alluded, my findings beg for a serious re-thinking around the discourse of undocumented transnational migration in order to question what and where exactly are undocumented migrants embedded and, if they do practice simultaneity, what kind of transnationalism do they practice, to what extent and with what consequences on families left behind. The role of both state and non-state actors in producing and sustaining class inequalities remains key in interrogating transnational activities of undocumented migrant mothers, in my view.

4.4   Structural limitations of communication technologies

In this section, I use new communication technologies, encompassing a wide array of virtual tools and digital media as a lens through which to further understand key aspects of transnational motherhood, mainly how mothers' practice emotional care from a distance through the use of new communication technologies. I talk about transnational communication as a key mediation tool to mitigate physical absence vis-a-vis participants' lack of financial resources to purchase airtime and cell-phones. Given the class locations of participants, communication was difficult with their families back home. Although class is directly linked to the maintenance of relationships in transnational families, it was really difficult for the mothers in question to reinforce relations because of other statuses as undocumented.

The mothers in this study could not afford to give their children cell phones and they also lacked the resources to buy airtime for their own cell-phones. Much literature has begun to focus on transnational communication and how it mediates the pain of separation. However, migrant domestic workers in Botswana are unable to sustain meaningful communication with their left-behind children and caregivers due to the costs of communication. For clarity, I adopt a broad meaning that transnational communication is the flow of ideas, information, goods, money and emotions (Parrenas (2005, p.317). I found that transnational mothers' social positioning (their legality) strongly mediated their communicative capabilities, making communication with their children and caregivers infrequent.

This was also a significant factor in determining their simultaneous embeddedness (Basch et al., 1994) as communication across border was limited and even absent in some instances. The narratives revealed that participants' access to communication technologies, coupled by literacy issues in using them was directly tied to the class positioning. It would therefore be remiss to decontextualise their class and social positioning or de-historicise their context of origin and the accompanying historical processes that had produced their identities (McGregor, 2008) as disadvantaged 'intersectional subjects' (Nash, 2008). Through intersectional theory (Crenshaw, 1989; Yuval-Davies; 2006; Mahler, Chaudhuri & Patil; 2015), the class positions, coupled with their gender, nationality and legal statuses (social locations), showed that participants were not in a position to form networks of solidarity (Baldassar & Merla, 2014) across transnational spaces with their families.

I did not find strong reverberation with most studies that view new technologies act as assisting devices that are helpful in easing the pains of separation between parents and children. The environment in Southern Africa suggests a significant difference in this particular regard when compared to other migrant sending contexts (such as Asia) where technology consumption is generally higher and affordable compared to developing countries where telecommunications infrastructure has traditionally remained uneven (Vertovec, 2004, p.223). As a result of the mothers lacking money for airtime and sometimes selling their cell-phones when in financially tough situations, their patterns of care therefore intersected with class, education, and legal and employment status.

Ultimately, this impacted on mother-child intimacy, thus producing a different kind of motherhood that was not synchronised with idealised notions of motherhood. This leaves the much-celebrated globalisation opportunities through communication technologies as distant

realities for the transnational families in this study. Consequently, maternal unavailability through communication technologies should not be seen as a matter of choice in this context but rather as a result of limited resources and access as the way communication technologies are utilised within transnational social fields is determined by the level of resources (Mahler, 2001) and class which imposes limits on both transnational actions and transactions (Phizacklea, 2003).

Accordingly, I argue that the development of global communication technologies, though positive, should not be over-glorified at the risk of de-contextualising the environment in which transnational families practice their family rituals. Moreover, technological management of family relations (Parrenas, 2001) cannot replace nor ease burdens of maternal absence. A few excerpts are given below to illustrate the point that access to modern communication technologies are also classed. In this study, it intersects with the mothers' legal statuses in Botswana, their skills, nationality, class, to mention but a few. Although globalisation has benefitted many, it has also left a lot more behind as shown in this study.

The mothers in my study would hardly speak to their children or have conversations with them. Limited resources also meant that when they managed to call home, it was usually characterised by short and precise conversations directly with the caregivers on important issues, especially remittances. When I questioned mothers on the frequency and mode of communication with their children was almost nil communication with their children:

> With my children, I don't want to lie to you, it is very rare for me to speak to them, and I just communicate with the people that are looking after them. Like now, since I came back from home this January, I have never spoken to the children, I only speak to those living with them because they will be at school and also the person who has a phone is the caregiver. With the caregiver, I don't call all the time, I usually call when I am working and when I get paid, and that is when I call. I can't call often because I usually do not even have the money to call them anyway (Mother T, 2017).

> My communication when I call is firstly with the caregiver because she is the one who has a cell phone that has WhatsApp as well. So, I first chat with her and then ask her to pass the phone to my son so I can also chat with him but it is always through the caregiver's phone (Mother C, 2017).

> Regarding communication with my children, I don't even want to lie to you, it is very rare to communicate with them, Once I recharge my phone with airtime, usually five pula (P5), it is usually so that I can speak to my mother and none of my children have a cell-phone, only my mother (Mother B, 2017).

Literature on transnational migration has predominantly suggested that progression in communication technologies has lessened the burden of mothers' separation from their children

due to the advancement in communication tools. As reasoned by Levitt, (2001, p.22), "new technologies heighten immediacy and frequency of migrant's contact with their sending communities and allow them to be actively involved in everyday life". Unlike other societies where technologies, such as Skype, allow transnational families to create spaces of transconnectivity through on-going emotional streaming that aims to sustain interaction across temporal geographic distances (King-O'Riain, 2014), that was not the case in the present study.

Others have reasoned that communication technologies have made it possible for people in far-flung locations to see and speak to each other every day without incurring any costs over and above the initial costs of the telecommunications connection (King-O'Riain, 2014). This presents 'communicative opportunities' (Madianou & Miller, 2011) with emails now fostering communication ties as phones, letters and cassettes have been relegated to the past (Baldassar, 2008) while texting has also become a major communication tool in transnational families (Uy-Tioco, 2007). Although this may hold true in some contexts, the overly celebrated communication advantages are indeed context-based because there are other factors that mediate the celebrated advantages, notably class, education, employment, skills, etc.

As argued by Parrenas (2005), transnational communication is determined by one's social location in the multiple and intersecting axes of social inequalities, an argument Palmary (2018) lends support to as she references information and communication technologies in Southern Africa as often weak, hence likely to shape transnational parenting. In this study, the benefits of communication technologies were virtually limited or non-existent. This affected the level and frequency of communication and eventually, impacted on mother-child intimacies.

Since families went for long periods without communicating, coupled by the fact that mothers only visited their children at least once a year in December for a few days, the way these families relativised (Bryceson & Vuorela, 2002) across borders was too minimal and eventually led to isolation and lack of familiarity, particularly between mothers and their left-behind children. There was also a clear 'care-divide' gap that is evident, as shown by those who have the privilege to access communication technologies and use them as mediating tools in their relationships with their families, as opposed to those who lack such opportunities (Madianou & Miller, 2012). Consequently, the three main issues that mediate transnational virtual presence, namely, access, cost and literacy cannot be discounted and are further compounded

by asymmetries that are characteristic of the relationships between migrants and those who stayed behind.

That is mainly due to the fact that they are differentially positioned in relation to their access to communication technologies in their transnational social fields (Carling, 2005). The findings of this study hence strongly resonate with this position. Accordingly, I concur with Freeman (2001) that motherhood practices are not in isolation but emerge out of a set of external conditions that are shaped by globalization. In addition, some families do not become transnational out of choice but directly as a result of policies in the receiving country, exacerbated by their own economic circumstances in their country of origin and ultimately shaping new family formations and caregiving arrangements (Bernhard et al., 2005; Menjivar, 2006). Therefore, new family forms, though directly regulated in the private sphere, emerge out of a combination of factors in the public sphere at local, national and global levels. Furthermore, the reshaping and reconfiguration of motherhood in this study cannot only be attributed to formal state and global factors. Instead, motherhood in this context emerges at the intersections of a of a hybrid migration governance system comprising of stat and non-stat actors. As a consequence, mothers are faced with complex arrangements of force and choice in pursuing their livelihoods illegally i.e. they choose to become undocumented in order to fulfil familial obligations.

Nonetheless, this complexity cannot be looked at in simple terms as both elements of force and choice interact with each other to produce undocumented transnational mothers. What I further see as fundamental here is to appreciate the significance of how the transnational mother's illegalities are collectively shared across the borders with those that stayed behind as it distresses both the mothers as well as the children left behind (Horton, 2009). Precisely because of their irregular statuses, migrant mothers remain suspended but at the same time, the devise ways of making sense of their liminal statuses as the only available means through which they can pursue livelihoods, in spite of the hostile nature of the spaces the inhabit in Botswana. I discuss their liminality through the concept of transitory dwelling places in the following section.

4.5   Liminality and transitory dwelling places

Based on the findings of the study, a fundamental element tied to the illegal status of mothers is the notion of liminality which was necessarily part of their everyday realities. Liminality often refers to a "state of betwixt and between - it is temporary and transitional. Permanent

liminality refers to a state of being neither-this-nor-that, or both-this-and-that" (Bamber, Allen-Collinson & McCormack, 2017, p.154). I found this concept suitable in order to locate migrant mother's experiences of distant parenthood. The women I encountered in the field were living in a state of ambiguity, in-betweenness and uncertainty (Beech, 2011) and were bounded in both space and time (Turner, 1982).

In spite of the narratives suggesting the condition of liminality, pain and disruptiveness that often go hand in hand with living in liminality (Beech, 2011), findings showed that liminality, though invoked through a set of structural obstacles, may not necessarily be an all negative experience for migrant mothers. This position resonates with Tempest & Starkey (2004) who suggested that liminality can invoke creativity and provide a sense of freedom. Findings of this study also support Shortt's concept of liminal spaces as such spaces may eventually become meaningful to them (Shortt, 2015). Even though the participants were liminal beings, over time their liminality became meaningful to them in Botswana because of what it meant for them to be in Botswana.

Shortt (2015) perceives liminality in relation to space as that which eventually becomes meaningful to workers. "When liminal spaces are constructed by workers as vital and meaningful to their everyday lives, they cease to be liminal spaces and instead, become 'transitory dwelling places' (Shortt, 2015, p.633). Shortt used this concept in relation to formal organisational spaces but I also found this conceptually aligned to my study in examining experiences of participants in the present study. However, in contrast to Shortt's formal organisational spaces, in this instance, spaces of migrant domestic workers refer to multiple spaces such as informal border routes, employers' places, private homes, human smugglers, transporters, etc., meaning that for migrant domestic workers, these spaces can be anywhere and everywhere they inhabit, in pursuit of their transnational livelihoods in Botswana.

Therefore, transitory dwelling spaces are meaningful to migrant mothers as they directly link to the sacrifices they have made for their children's livelihoods. I do not discount the negative experiences of the liminal spaces they occupy and by extension their liminal experiences, but rather take the standpoint that liminal spaces have multiple meanings as they are subjectively lived. In the participant's liminal spaces (which I take as a whole, to be Botswana), there are a lot of both positive and negative lived experiences. However, within these experiences, no matter how bad, they have endured as undocumented migrants because of the meaningfulness of the spaces in Botswana as 'transitory dwelling spaces' (Shortt, 2015).

They are transitory dwelling places for them as overall, such spaces remain as those through which their livelihoods are dependent, no matter how negative their experiences. Their children and families back home also depend on these transitory dwelling spaces, humble as the earning maybe. In essence, those spaces, be it inside the employer's premises, in detention, in a deportation truck or anywhere, mothers make sense of their liminality as essential to their family livelihoods, hence the sacrifices they make to use dangerous routes or endure all forms of exploitation and violence.

Furthermore, when people temporarily inhibit specific dwelling places, it permits the development of what Casey (1993) has termed "creative strategies of resistance" because the spaces where 'resistance' work is done are those spaces that are meaningful to the resisters, in this case, transnational mothers. Henceforth, they resist conformity to immigration laws and policies because the place (Botswana) where they are working informally and against formal immigration policies is meaningful to them and necessary for their survival, especially given the lack of opportunities in Zimbabwe. A discourse of resistance from the margins is thus perceived as a survival tool and the bottom line remains their livelihoods hence though not their primary intentions, mothers were resisting regimes of power and in the process, reconstituting Botswanan places and spaces of dissent whilst actualizing new ideas (Hjorth, 2005).

Resistance of immigration policies did not qualify in my view, as criminal activities but as economic activities, as a result of the meaningfulness they have attached to the place (Courpasson, Dany & Delbridge, 2017). I therefore view structural vulnerabilities emanating from an undocumented status due to restrictive immigration policy which in turn, imposes spatial limitations of mobility, produces families that depart sharply from the traditionally defined notions of family. Based on prioritising nuclear family forms, mothers in the present study recreated creative ways of doing family from a distance, in response to their circumstances and context and in doing so, parallel governance structures played a significant role in their mothering strategies.

They accordingly had to reshape their family practices, juggling both breadwinning and care-giving roles from a distance and struggling to reconcile both. With the foregoing, in the following section, I now move to discuss the second emergent theme of transnational family tensions between migrant mothers and their caregivers from the perspectives of the mothers in question.

4.6 Transnational power relations and conflicts

At the beginning of this chapter, I spoke about structural vulnerabilities as situated within a set of multi-layered power relations that confront mothers in this study. However, the power dynamics they had to navigate at the structural macro-level were directly linked to dealing with state and non-state structures and infrastructures. In this section, I talk about power relations at micro-level, at family or household level, where I discuss power relations and dynamics between transnational mothers on one hand and caregivers of their left-behind children on the other, with children in between. Migration has reconfigured family structures, thereby bringing about new care arrangements that have invoked new power dynamics essentially centred on money and emotional attachment.

I argue that geographical distances exacerbated power dynamics and conflicts in families leading to constantly shifting power balances between transnational mothers and caregivers. Transnational mothers were confronted with financial power dynamics that caused strains in their relationships with caregivers. Below, I discuss these tensions and the strategies that were used to avoid conflicts.

4.6.1 Financial power relations

My findings suggest that transnational family tensions between migrant mothers and caregivers back home mainly stemmed from two sources of power dynamics. The first source of power or disempowerment for mothers was underpinned by their financial power – the ability to remit sufficient amounts frequently. Secondly, the other source of power was derived from physical presence and appeared to be the power that caregivers of left-behind children had over absent mothers. Below I show some excerpts that suggests tensions between these two centres of power in transnational family relations.

It emerged that caregivers expected mothers to remit more than they usually received and the money they sent home was often regarded as insufficient for the upkeep of the left-behind children. Findings revealed that remittances or lack thereof brewed conflicts between the mothers and caregivers back home. When mothers failed to live up to these financial expectations, tensions arose:

> I have not been able to pay school fees for my children and send money for my mother to feed them, so my mother got fed up and she ended up telling me that it was better for me to come back and take my children, but I cannot do that. I cannot take my children; I have nowhere else to place them… I don't even know where I would begin (Mother T, 2017).

The excerpt given above by mother T suggests tensions with her mother because of her failure to remit financial resources, suggesting that without money, transnational mothers were judged negatively by caregivers as ineffective mothers. In this instance, the caregiver expresses her disappointment by issuing a threat to her daughter to take her children back. Subsequently, if migrant mothers fail to fulfil their motherhood duties, tensions are unavoidable:

> The way I live here is not normal, I don't even have decent accommodation, I do not have food to eat and the jobs are hard to come by, this market is too dry and I am always wondering around aimlessly. But I can see that my own mother who is taking care of my children is not happy so she is complaining. It's like when she speaks to me, she is telling me I am not doing anything for my children and she is failing to understand that I am really trying my level best here but I am failing (Mother T, 2017).

Remittances signify a crucial form of care for transnational mothers and usually underlie a mother's decision to migrate (Millman, 2013). Similarly, mother E describes her feelings of distress over her sister's attitude towards remittances. She felt she was being cornered by her sister so that her remittances can stretch beyond her own children to include caring for her sister's family. Her narrative reveals suspicions over her sister's intentions with her remittances revealing tensions over decision-making of financial resources in the household:

> My other 3 children are under my sister's care and she has her own 3 children too but the place they are living is my late parent's home but still, when I get paid here, I send money at the end of the month but sometimes my sister will tell me that the money I am sending is not enough. Like the school where my daughter attends, it's a college school and I have to pay $45 every month and then $20 for the other one but like last month, I sent my sister $84 for food and school fees but then she was still complaining that the money was too little because food was too expensive. Now this makes me wonder exactly how much things have changed in Zimbabwe because even after paying the fees for my children, why can't she also add money from her husband's salary and buy groceries, what will be wrong with that? It now looks as if she expects me to look after her family, from her husband to herself and their children so I don't understand what is happening exactly (Mother E, 2017).

In the above, the tensions that play out were to do with who controls the financial resources and prioritises what is to be done for the children. Hence, although the mothers had the power when they were still holding the money in Botswana (before remitting), that power seemed to weaken once the money changed hands and was now in the possession of caregivers. Consequently, caregivers could distribute resources as they deemed fit, regardless of the absent mother's priorities or preferences.

Similarly, mother A's narrative below provides an interesting dynamic of how motherhood is deemed successful only if it is accompanied by prioritising constant flows of financial/ material resources to the caregiver. Hailing from a big family, this particular mother has other siblings

who are also transnational migrants. She narrates how her own mother weighs which of her children remits more and based on such judgement, the love and care she subsequently gives to her left-behind grandchildren is directly linked to that financial aspect.

> So, my mother who is my child's caregiver also has other grandchildren under her care. So, here is what happens in such a case; when grandchildren are many, granny will now assess to determine which mother brings in more and so you will see that this child whose mother brings in more is the one she will also love more. So now it depends on the type of relationship you have with your mother because there are so many issues which affect this set-up (Mother A, 2107).

As mother A's story reveals, her mother's perceptions of good mothering are influenced by the extent to which she remits back to the caregiver, essentially rendering these remittances the currency of love and caregiving (Tilly, 2007). It would appear that in this care-giving arrangement, that perceptions of mothering are not necessarily determined by physical co-presence but rather through the mother's ability to provide financial care from a distance but most importantly to the satisfaction of the resident caregiver.

For mother F, her transnational mothering strategies were fraught with frustrations because her instructions regarding the money she remitted to the caregiver were never followed through. She ended up having to remove her children from the care of their grandmother. Her story serves to show us that even though she was absent in the day-to-day lives of her children, nevertheless, she attempted to exert her authority from a distance despite the fact that actual power to distribute financial resources lies with caregivers once they receive monies. Geographical distance from the home renders the absent mother powerless to make decisions regarding the resources she remits.

This further demonstrates that even without financial power, physical presence in the family is an advantage to caregivers that gives them power in transnational families. Hence, we see a shift in power that follows the trail of the remittances illustrating that in this relationship, power is not necessarily concentrated in the hands of one person, but shifts according to where the resources go. Instead, the power now shifts into the hands of the co-resident caregiver who now distributes financial resources according to her own priorities and not the mother who is far away from her children:

> Like when I would send money and instruct them to buy uniforms for the children and pay schools fees, I would only discover when I visit home that the children had not been attending school and they would not have any school uniforms either. I would then ask and they would tell me that the money I had sent them was not enough or they will have used the money for other things. These issues would always cause my blood

pressure to go up because I am always stressed as a single parent living without my children. I then decided to remove them from the care of their grandmother and they started living on their own, with my older daughter as the caregiver as she is now older (Mother F, 2017).

Significantly, the findings reverberate with Parrenas (2010) who warned against romanticising kinship relationships though normative thinking of assuming that transnational families are born out of collective family units. Sometimes, such relationships can be fraught with tensions and disagreements as a consequence of migration. Care relationships therefore occur within a complex set of power dynamics between those that left versus those that stayed behind. Consequently, two key sources of power i.e. money and physical presence can manifest in serious familial tensions as they are constantly opposing each other across the different geographical space. In order to mitigate these tensions, most mothers had to use silence and secrets as mitigatory weapons to deal with these tensions with care-givers back home.

4.6.2   Silence and secrets

As has been established in the findings so far, the obligation to care for other people's children has the potential to strain relations between women across nations (Parrenas, 2005). Thus, in order to mitigate this, mothers used silence as a strategy of conflict management. Mother A serves as a good example of one who saw value in using silence as a strategy where they were clear signs of tension and discord with the caregiver's patterns of caregiving to her daughter. She was at pains to explain how her mother who was the caregiver to her daughter would not even think of giving her daughter a few dollars to purchase sanitary pads.

Again, what is evident is that she secretly harbours some expectations which she wishes her mother would fulfil with regards to her remittances. I would even argue that she does not see the caregiver's style of parenting as good enough for her daughter. She however chooses to employ silence as a strategy because she fears that if she voices her concerns, she may risk being asked to leave with her daughter. Her account below brings to the fore power dynamics that are at play between transnational mothers and caregivers over who actually has the power to determine how remittances are used in the household.

Silence then works as a way of avoiding any possible repercussions and conflicts between the caregiver and the transnational mother, making it a strategic weapon used to manage relations in the care-giving triangle and to maintain peace:

> Like for me, my mother is old and even for us when we grew up, we never had access to sanitary pads. So, the money that I send home, my mother is not able to give my

daughter some money for her to buy sanitary pads because she did not raise us using pads, so she would rather save that money than buy pads. But then for me, with the way I understand hygiene, this pains me to think that she could not even give my daughter just $2 so she can buy pads. But you cannot complain or raise these concerns because if you do, you may hurt her and what if she tells you to pack and leave with your daughter (Mother A, 2017).

When mother A mentioned that she herself grew up without access to sanitary pads, I deduced that her mother's failure to give her daughter just $2 for sanitary pads as a generational difference that is also further compounded by power dynamics to do with the control of financial resources. The narrative suggests that as the money moves from one hand to the other, so does power shift in the same direction. Migrant mothers' lack of power over monies they remit is one of the consequences created by migration – a situation that could be avoided were the mothers in question physically present in their homes.

Although she resents her mother for failing to provide "just a few dollars" for her daughter's sanitary pads, she hides this resentment and instead opts to stay silent rather than appear to become confrontational with her mother. Furthermore, the notion of silence as a peace-keeping strategy in care-giving arrangements is not only a strategy used by mothers but even left-behind children in some instances as described by mother M. It appears both mothers and children use silence as a strategy to prevent victimisation by the caregivers, suggesting that caregivers wield some powers emanating from their physical presence, which leads mothers and children to be silent as opposed to being confrontational. As such, family issue in transnational families are usually swept under the carpet to avoid or minimise conflicts:

> My daughter once told me a very painful story. She said "mum, we are really struggling here, we do not get food and we go to school hungry and when we come back from school, there will be no food and we only eat once a day in the evening. But when we come back from school, we are expected to go to the gardens to water and weed the vegetable garden, a garden whose vegetables we are not even given to eat. After she told me this, my daughter swore me to secrecy and said; "mum, no matter what, what I have just told you about how we live should remain a secret between us, I do not want you to change your facial expressions or show anger or even ask them because if you do, when you go back to Botswana, you are going to leave us here again and we will be made to pay dearly for telling you, please don't even show that you know this (Mother M, 2017).

Mother M further narrated that after her daughter pleaded her to be silent about this ill-treatment, she also went along with this plan in order to protect her children after she had left. Even though she cried and was pained by this situation, this mother narrated how she had to put on fake smiles in order to ensure that the caregiver did not get to know that her child had reported the maltreatment of the caregiver. Silence was thus necessary for the mothers to bridge

the gap between the two competing sources of power i.e. financial power (through remittances versus physical presence (through caregiver's proximity to the left-behind children).

Likewise, mother M expresses similar sentiments with regards to the mistreatment of children.

> The ill-treatment my children received got even worse and my son would be made to go out to the grazing fields to search for lost cows and if he failed to find them, he was not allowed to return home so he would usually be out searching for cows until around 2a.m. or so searching deep in the forests and bushes. My sister would tell my son that he was the herd- boy so he had to find those cows and so he would not attend school. So, my children resorted to neighbours for help and ask for phones so that they could call me directly. They would be crying and begging me to return home so I would just tell them that I was not yet settled but once I was settled, I would come home to fetch them (Mother M, 2017).

From the narratives above, mothers presented a picture of powerlessness from two practical angles. Firstly, even though they were aware of the treatment children were receiving at the behest of their caregivers, they could not raise the issue with caregivers for fear of reprisal on their children. Secondly, they feared that if they protested to the caregivers, the repercussions would be profound as the caregivers could possibly take it out on the children by ill-treating them. The notion of strategic silence to maintain a false sense of harmony within the family unit was employed by transnational mothers as a way of sustaining the care-giving provided to their children, and also to shield their children from repercussions by the caregivers during their prolonged absences.

Out of necessity, transnational mothers have to rope in 'other mothers' (Schmalzbauer, 2004), usually their kin-relations. However, kin relationships are also sites of conflict, especially where such relationships are characterised by lack of financial resources or conflicting positions on distribution of limited financial resources and parenting styles, compounded by generational differences between the mothers and caregivers. By virtue of the nature of my study which was multi-sited in its approach, the various family members across the different sites in Zimbabwe and Botswana shared some secrets with me that were unknown to their other family members, thus turning me into a family secret repository.

They also swore me to secrecy which further compounds my argument that secrets were a mitigatory tool to manage uncomfortable or rather unsettling transnational family relations. Geographic distance accentuates differences in resources and decision making between those who send remittances against those who receive them (Schmalzbauer, 2009) hence ultimately shared motherhood proved problematic for both parties and sometimes to the detriment of the well-being of left-behind children. Yet on the other hand, material dependencies of caregivers

on migrant mothers further puts pressure on mothers to conform to kin expectations, with high social and emotional costs on the struggling mothers who have to begrudgingly deploy strategies of secrets and silence in order to maintain peace for the sake of the children left-behind. In the final equation of transnational family relations, it then appears that physical presence is more powerful or has more value than mothering from a distance and remitting.

4.6.3   Disciplinary power

I have explained the tensions and competing powers in transnational families purely from the perspectives of transnational mothers as driven by financial remittances and how the accompanying power shifts as the resources move across the two geographical spaces. However, the conflict and tensions narrated by mothers go beyond remittances by bringing in the issue of left-behind children's discipline as a source of conflict and tensions. Mothers appeared to think that one of the essential roles of motherhood was to ensure that children are well-disciplined. However, due to the geographical distance between them and their children, most mothers felt that they had lost control of this essential component of a good mother.

The tensions arising out of the care arrangements in question also showed that some mothers differed with their caregivers in their child raising methods. Accordingly, the power to discipline and make decisions about the left-behind children appears to be determined more by the caregiver and not the not the mothers, due to their non-residence status in the family. This is so despite the significance of the money migrant mothers earn, suggesting that physical presence appears to give greater family power regardless of resources remitted by absent mothers. For example, mother F's story reveals her frustration at leaving her children in the care of their grandmother because, in her opinion, no one cared to discipline her children while she was absent:

> By leaving my children with my ex-mother in law, I could tell that my children were suffering and they were abused. My children were turned into household slaves and this affected me badly. When I would call to speak to my children, there were so many complaints and I then began to realise that by leaving my children behind, no one cared for them or for their discipline. Like what happened is this, after I came here, one day I received a call from the caregiver to inform me that my son was now too ill-disciplined and had decided to become a '*[chigure]* a traditional masquerade of ritual dancers]* and that he was no longer attending school. This really pained me because I was not there with them and that is why they had no discipline, no one was bothering to monitor my children's behaviour. I then decided to remove my children from the caregiver and got a place for them to rent by themselves, with my older daughter as their caregiver as she was now older (Mother F, 2017).

From the preceding story narrated by mother F, there are two underlying implications of how and what she perceives motherhood should be in her narrative. Firstly, she openly states that her children had no discipline because she was not living physically with them showing that motherhood to her means living with your children:

> When you are far away, you can never have a proper relationship with your children and they will do anything they feel like because you are not there so your children grow up with no discipline and at the same time, no one really cares about them (Mother F, 2017).

If she was there, she would mould her children to behave well because she cares enough for her children as opposed to her caregiver. Evidently, although she has had to choose between the ideal (living with her children) and the circumstances (mothering transnationally in order to ensure survival of her children), her transnational status has not altered the fact that she subscribes to normative ideals of mothering or intensive mothering (Hays, 1996) where co-presence is valued as the ideal form of mothering that brings the best outcomes for children.

Secondly, mother F believes that disciplining of children is primarily her responsibility as a biological mother. She thus exhibits signs of self-blame and guilt for the poor disciplinary outcomes of her children. Her migration therefore leaves her in an ambivalent position. Further to this, sources of tension also arose between mothers and caregivers over different ways of mothering between the two. Results showed that in some instances, mothers felt that their children were not getting the kind of mothering that they desired for their children. As such, it also led to conflict and power dynamics playing out between the two, with physical presence taking precedence in determining how children were mothered.

For example, mother A migrated so she could provide for her daughter's education but when she looks at how the caregiver mothers her child during her long absence from home, she is unhappy about the lack of encouragement regarding her daughter's education. She felt that even where a child strayed, she would not have any right to question the caregiver about the behaviour of a child because it was wrong for a mother to be absent from home in the first place. She also pointed out how being absent minimised your rights and authority as a mother and whatever goes wrong is basically a mother's fault because of her choice to be absent from her home:

> When a child is under the care of an elderly caregiver like my mother, she can behave anyhow she feels like or return home anytime she feels like and my mother can lose control of the situation. But you then cannot take your mother to task over that because you, the real mother of the child is absent from home (Mother A, 2017).

The grandmother (caregiver) on the other hand, is strongly rooted in traditional gender beliefs that prioritise domestication of the female child, hence she encourages her granddaughter to perform domestic chores, a matter that makes the transnational mother unhappy because to her, mothering means she should prioritise education over domestic chores:

> Like for me, another issue is that I left my child with my mother who is now very old and that generation only knows that people should go to the fields to work when it's plant or harvest season and also to perform household chores. So, you will find that most of the time, my mother will be encouraging her to wash dishes, do domestic chores or to go with her to the fields (Mother A, 2017).

Mother A further narrated that the care-giver of her child (her mother) was not in a position to parent or guide her child adequately, particularly in her academic life. She therefore casts doubt on her mother's capabilities as she does not prioritise education. She however confided that she would never raise this with her mother, illustrating yet again the use of strategic silence in managing transnational family relations:

> Another issue is this, for my mother to value education it is not a priority, it is now different with my generation where I would not even want to see my child having to live the life that I live now so those are other challenges. And again, I gave my mother the burden of starting child raising all over again by leaving my child, my mother raised me already and now she has to raise my child again, it's not good at all (Mother A, 2016).

> My child is a girl and she needs to be encouraged to study and behave because the she is now a teenager but the problem is that my mother is old and she cannot do all that, although she can try here and there but as you know, a child will not listen and again my mother is not able to spank her because she also fears to go to that extent so it is always better if you the mother are present because if a child strays, you can then take a stick and discipline your own child. (Mother B, 2016)

The issue of discipline was a significant issue, judging by the participants' constant references to it. The narratives also exposed different child raising styles between mothers and caregivers. For example, mothers wanted children to be focused on their education whilst some caregivers prioritised household domestic chores. As one mother revealed, although her sister complained to her that her child was lazy, her mother felt that was not true because she always told her daughter to study after school and not do housework. In essence, whilst the caregiver was instructing the child to help with household tasks of cleaning and cooking, her mother on the other hand, was telling her to ignore those instructions and instead focus on her studies:

> My sister always tells me she has no problem at all with my daughters as she comes straight home after school and is not like other children who will be flirting with boys on the streets. But she complains that my daughter is lazy and does not help with house duties. I just tell my sister okay I will talk to her. The truth is that does not worry me

because my child has to study so whenever I see her, I tell her that she must do what she has to do first and that is her studies. I tell her she must not spend too much time doing household duties (Mother E, 2018).

Overall, findings suggest that although transnational mothers may derive power from monies they remit as well as their statuses as mothers, in the final analysis, their lack of real power is due to the distance between them and their children which is exacerbated by their inability to retain and sustain frequent visits, leading them to lose control and authority over their remittances and left-behind children, whilst shifting power to the resident caregivers, albeit unwillingly. As such, caregivers are those who ultimately decide what is important for the child on a day-to-day basis and not the absent mothers. Furthermore, how remittances are utilised as well as how left -behind children are treated or disciplined are all areas in which the resident caregiver has more power and control.

The power that the caregivers hold force mothers to make strategic decisions about managing family conflicts through silence. This is also aggravated by their limited and also limited communication and physical contact with left-behind children. Given that care practices in transnational families are based on the circulation of objects, values and persons across geographical distance (Leifsen & Tymczuk, 2012), when such resources, such as remittances, fail to circulate, the already fragile care structure is severely disrupted as remittances are the main currency in transnational families which can easily affect the 'relativising' aspect of families as it relates to how transmigrants maintain ties to specific family members (Bryceson & Vuorela, 2002).

4.7   Subjective meanings of motherhood

In this section, I talk about the everyday experiences of mothering versus idealised notions of motherhood, in order to show mother's subjective meanings of motherhood. I discuss specific points which show how participant narratives presented a disjuncture between the ideal and their actual circumstances of mothering. Accordingly, the stories told show the constant tensions and unnecessary pressures that hegemonic ideologies place on mothers who are considered to be mothering from the margins (Carpenter & Austin, 2007). Consequently, the findings indicated high levels of conformity to gendered expectations of motherhood by participants.

As such, participants judged themselves against unrealistic expectations of motherhood and often expressed feelings of guilt and regret for their failure to live up to the expectations of

being good enough mothers. As observed by Goodwin & Huppartz, 2010, p.2), "women may know she is a hegemonic form, and be aware of her part in the reproduction of gender inequality yet remain very much subject to her". Yet in spite of the mothers' accounts resembling strong biases and preferences towards ideal motherhood, these women still embarked on migration, signifying that socially constructed normative traditions are not fixed but can be transformative in response to historical, social and economic circumstances. My central argument identifies with DiQuinzio (1999), who brings attention to the visibility of women in many other arenas outside of the family.

Therefore, I argue that women should not be solely defined by a singular maternal role when in actual fact, their maternal identities extend beyond the home to encompass economic provision, and other roles. The geography of doing family is therefore not restricted to the home arena only but incorporates other arenas outside the home which function to ensure family sustenance and survival. Moreover, even when mothers migrate, caregiving continues to be their primary responsibility, even from a distance (Asis, 2006). Yet, in spite of being engaged in distant motherhood, this did not alter their beliefs regarding who should be primarily responsible for their children's up-bringing.

Mother M described the consequences of being an absent mother when she spoke of her daughter getting pregnant in her teenage years and her son's failure to complete schooling when he dropped out of school during his primary schooling years. Consequently, she felt that her migration had not benefited her in any way as its objective of improving her children's lives had not been realised:

> Of course, currently I am still working but to be honest with you, there are no benefits and I can see that there is nothing I have achieved at all. Even though some of my children are now grown up now but my daughter ended up getting impregnated by an unemployed man because I was absent due to poverty and at the same time, my son did not complete his schooling because of the eye problem he developed, even up to now he does not have a very good eye-sight. My son ended up choosing to quit school because he said there was nothing, he could see on the classroom board, so in grade 7 he quit school and this really haunts me (Mother M, 2017).

All the mothers expressed regret being absent in their children's lives, however, their narratives were fraught with justifications of why they had to migrate and sacrifice. Driven by feelings of inadequacy as mothers, they were forced to counter the bad mother label and the pathology that so often accompanies this label, given that motherhood forms the core of women's identity (Phoenix & Woollett, 1991; West & Zimmerman; 1987; Phoenix, 2011; Glenn, 1994). These mothers felt their transnational status portrayed them as absent mothers who had abandoned

their children hence their narratives were largely justifying why they were absent from their homes.

Moreover, the disciplinary problems mothers faced further justified their stances. They thus tended to associate maternal presence with positive behavioural outcomes for children whilst maternal absence was seen as producing negative outcomes for their children. The significance of a mother was portrayed by reifying traditionally defined gender roles of child-raising which further validated co-presence as an essential component of successful mothering. Consequently, migrant mothers, by virtue of their transnational status, felt like they were socially deficient in their reproductive roles.

Similar to M, mother B's son had also decided to quit school at primary level whilst her teenage daughter had also fallen pregnant. In her opinion, a mother's absence meant children would lose control and discipline. Furthermore, she acknowledged the impossibility if instilling discipline from a distance hence valuing co-presence. Her narrative resonates with Phoenix (2011), who observed how being a transnational mother may in effect be a penalising circumstance for some women, as a result of the gendered ideology of mothering which throws more weight on maternal physical presence and less weight on economic provision.

Mother B regretted her absence from home and saw her mobility as a disempowering factor (Craig & O'Dell, 2011), signifying a disjuncture between the ideal and her actual reality:

> A mother is precious, so precious such that when you are absent, it affects the children and they lose control and discipline. Like my second child was in grade 7 and then my mother called to tell me that my son had decided to quit school so he had dropped out. I told my mother I was coming that December to sort it out……From my side, I am powerless because I cannot control my child over the phone so that is how my son quit school and he is now just idle at home (Mother B, 2017).

She assumes that her presence would mean her son stayed in school. Her reference to a mother as being precious points to the significance she places on a mother's duties and responsibilities towards her children. Her response shows her motherhood values are rooted in normative understandings of motherhood:

> I realise that perhaps if I was at home, I would have been able to convince my son to go back to school because no matter how tough life can be, a child must go to school but because the child has no control in my absence, he now began drinking beer and smoking even though he is under-age. He will soon be turning 14 years but I can already see that his behaviour is not commensurate with his age group. Now I question God because I have a 5-year-old child and I always wonder if I will be home by the time, he gets to grade 7 and if so, whether I will be able to control him. This is too painful to me (Mother B, 2017).

In an effort to conform to dominant discourses of motherhood, my participants were driven to perform or rather to act according to the dominant gender script (Butler, 2008) hence their orientations towards co-resident motherhood. Maternal identities and roles are produced and reproduced through ideological discourse (Kiguwa, 2004) and even when mothers migrated, these identities were reinforced and did not change despite being absent from home. Significantly, I also noted that as single mothers, they shunned this status because to them, not having a husband was not ideal. This showed that they were drawing such sentiments from the broader social context, where nuclear families are romanticised as the best form of family. For instance, mother B assumed that her mother and children would not be suffering if only she had a husband:

> The issue of burdening my mother is too sore for my heart and I can't even say that mother is not looking after my children well, no, not at all but she herself is too old and also needs to be looked after and if only I was married, at least I would have a husband that would be helping me and I could then be the one living with my mother and taking care of her in a decent home as well (Mother B, 2017).

Firstly, she assumed that having a husband would make life better for her family despite the prevailing economic situation in Zimbabwe with over 90% unemployment. Secondly, in reality, marriage is not necessarily synonymous with being financially well off, not to mention that even where one may be married, it does not necessarily mean that they will be married to one who is financially responsible for the family or necessarily a breadwinner. The assumption driven by dominant ideologies therefore drove participants to overvalue nuclear family models, whilst undervaluing their realities as breadwinners and nurturers for their families.

Consequently, even under conditions of migration, definitions ascribed to good mothering versus that of a bad mother merely function to regulate women (Phoenix & Woollett, 1991) yet such definitions fail to reflect the diversity of women's experiences of motherhood that are based on context and one's socio-economic positioning i.e. class, gender, education, race and so forth because realistically, practices of motherhood are malleable and responsive to one's circumstances, as evidenced by their migrations. In spite of this malleability, women themselves remain highly complicit in perpetuating unrealistic expectations of motherhood that are hegemonically driven. It is essential to question gendered ideologies of motherhood given that socio-economic circumstances for some women simply do not allow women to mother intensively or exclusively.

Consequently, circumstances that lead to alternative forms of mothering need to be equally acceptable as variations of motherhood, rather than pathologised. From this, I conclude that

motherhood is not a homogenous experience for every woman but is a social construct that is not static, but revolves constantly in response to one's personal circumstances. I extend my argument by pointing at the necessity of looking at motherhood through an intersectional lens as shaped by class, race and gender, factors which ultimately differentiate women's lived experiences of motherhood (Glenn, 1994; Collins; 1994; Phoenix et al., 1991; DiQuinzio, 1999; Crenshaw, 1989; Yuval-Davies, 2006; Palmary et al., 2010).

The experiences of motherhood are class-based yet mothers in the present study remained fixated on unrealistic expectations of motherhood, were constantly driven to defend and validate their kind of motherhood against a background of dominant discourse of doing gender and motherhood. However, even though their maternal identities were influenced by hegemonic motherhood which pushed participants to be constantly negotiating their maternal identities and, in the process, reifying hegemonic motherhood, in essence, they were engaged in alternative forms of mothering which is what was realistically aligned to their class-based circumstances.

4.8 Unfamiliarity and lack of intimacy

Another major finding from this study relates to the lack of intimacy with their children due to their absence. Predominantly for those children who were left behind in their infancy or younger ages, a sense of unfamiliarity is ever present when the mothers visit the children, usually only once a year in December and for an average of two weeks or less. Indications from narratives reveal that prolonged absences of mothers engendered weakening of intimacy with their children.

The following accounts demonstrate this finding:

> All I can say is that my relationship with my child changed completely, I remember when I left her, she was 5 years old and when I got on the bus, she really cried and then as the years went by, she would see me board the bus and actually wave me goodbye meaning that she was no longer attached to me and she now knew that she could survive in my absence, she now knew that she could live with other people because I have been away for too long (Mother A, 2016).

The fading attachment as exhibited by her child is suggestive of differences in how children construct motherhood versus how the actual mothers construct their mothering roles; in this case the child's construction of motherhood is not based on the biological relationship with her mother only but on who is a constant presence during her mother's absence i.e. her

grandmother. As absence prolongs, this is evidence that then children form and develop other attachments.

> But there are so many disadvantages of living separately from your children because the relationship with your children is compromised and the children grow up with no discipline. Again, they grow up without really knowing you, what you like or dislike and I also do not know my own children, what makes them happy or unhappy so these absences affect our relationships and its stressful (Mother F, 2017).

On the other hand, Mother A likens her absence and physical separation from her child as very similar to death. For her, absence assumes the same weight in meaning as death and she admits that she has failed as a mother as she has not been able to accord her child her time due to prolonged absence. Her narrative below displays the irreconcilable differences between hegemonic ideologies of motherhood in opposition to her lived reality:

> It's not an easy decision to leave your child behind; it's the same as a dead person, even if you are told you can speak to a dead person, it is pointless because the dead will not hear you. This causes your child to misunderstand you such that when you go home, the child has very little time for you, she cannot give you all her time because you also have failed in giving her much if any of your time (Mother A, 2016).

Expressing the same theme as other mothers, mother B explains how her son and daughter never considered her as their mother. Instead, these children got accustomed to the grandmother and sister as their actual mothers, due to her absence. Whilst presented a sorrowful realisation for mother B, it should come as no surprise that children may form attachment bonds with their caregivers in cases of maternal absence and this may attract some level of discomfort or even envy from their absent mothers. This echoes other studies whose findings show that in the absence of mothers, children sometimes develop strong bonds with their caregivers and hence develop strong attachment bonds with them (Parrenas, 2005; Dreby, 2007; Akesson et al., 2012). The following narrative from mother B further expands the essence of this theme:

> My own children have grown accustomed to my absence. Like my second born, he is now 15 years old and he only got to know that I am his real mother not so long ago when he was around 10-11 years old. He thought that my mother was his actual mother since I left him when he was barely 5 years old. As for my daughter who is my first child, she used to think that my older sister, who is now deceased was her real mother. Even after my sister died, when I went home, she would point to the graveyard as her place where her mother had gone to (Mother B, 2017).

What is common in the foregoing stories is how family relations change or are altered as a result of migration. Consequently, the geographical barriers imposed by migration affect intergenerational relationships (Parrenas, 2010) by reconstituting mother-child relationships. A specific case comes to mind here – that of mother T who, reeling under the pain of

unfamiliarity with her child, requested me to personally ensure that I would tell her son that she was indeed his mother and encourage him to address her as 'mother' instead of being very indifferent towards her:

> Please Mrs Takaindisa, when you go to my home, please tell T that I am his mother and also encourage him to call me mother… You know when I visit, he just greets me and never talks to me. But you must see him with his grandmother, they are like a trouser and a belt, always together. And can you believe it he does not call my mother [*gogo*] but calls her mother, even when I am there imagine. Until I leave, he will simply avoid talking to me and even when I tell him I am going back to Botswana, he does not show any emotion… he simply says okay. Please make him understand that I am his real mother (Mother T, 2017)

It appears to hold true that relational closeness tends to wither if care at a distance is not complemented with return visits and moments of physical co-presence (Leifsen & Tymczuk, 2012), especially given that mother's limited resources and undocumented statuses were major obstacles to communication, hence the children in this study were not well privileged to experience what has been termed as 'present-absence' (Pertierra, 2005). Consequently, family relations were restructured to suit these less-than-ideal circumstances thereby limiting communication mainly to the few days they visited their children. Under such circumstances, the relationship dynamics between mothers and their children were likely to be impacted negatively, leading to unfamiliarity and lack of intimacy between them.

4.9   Chapter summary

The main themes I presented were structural vulnerabilities, transnational family tensions, transitory dwelling places and subjective meanings of motherhood. As the study suggests shifts in family re-configurations and roles, the challenges of motherhood associated with role shifts and distant motherhood, particularly against a society that culturally associates co-resident motherhood with good mothering, the battle to balance both care-giving and economic roles left mothers feeling inadequate and guilty due to the irreconcilability of the two roles. The research demonstrated that family structures are diverse and so are new family forms. On that basis, judging mothers based on just one ideal fails to take into account that women mother from different standpoints "within specific historical contexts framed by interlocking structures of race, class and gender" (Collins, 1994, p.56).

Accordingly, in conceiving motherhood, it is better understood by taking into account the social locations of women which ultimately determine a woman's maternal practices and strategies of mothering (Collins, 1994; Glenn et al., 1994; Schmalzbauer, 2004; Parrenas, 2005; Zontini,

2006; Fresnoza-Flot, 2009; Yuval-Davies, 2006; Boccagni, 2015)The mothers in this study had to perform distant motherhood against a set of multiple structural obstacles, key among them being their status as undocumented migrants who strive to provide for their families whilst working towards maintaining invisibility in order to avoid detection. The different layers of power that confronted them shaped not only their motherhood, but also childhood and caregiver experiences of those they left behind.

Consequently, they had to sustain their motherhood roles by depending on human smugglers and other parallel structures which were costly, but necessary for their continued livelihoods. In spite of the structural barriers that constrained them to mother effectively from a distance, they still desired idealised motherhood over any other alternative form of mothering. As such, they constructed unrealistic expectations of motherhood based on hegemonic gendered ideologies of child raising and childcare. Through a transnational communication lens, this study had also shown how class and social locations of mothers mediate on communication capacities between transnational family members hence also putting some emotional distance between family members across different transnational social spaces.

Most importantly, although new communication technologies are celebrated as part of the globalisation wave, the realities of my participants also showed how globalisation has left many others behind, casting mothers as those who exist at the margins or the backstage of globalisation. The study has shown the difficulties of maintaining frequent visits, communication and keeping up steady flows of remittances with undocumented statuses. From that angle, it can be concluded that it was their statuses that hindered mother to child intimacy and prevented re-unification. Precarity meant these mothers remained in limbo / liminality whilst striving to balance both productive and reproductive roles of motherhood. Lessons drawn from the findings begs us to be more open-minded about motherhood by accepting that there is no singular form of motherhood but variations which arise based on one's socio-economic positioning.

Traditional notions of motherhood prescribe the lives of mothers as revolving around the needs and demands of children only, yet in contemporary society, mothers have other roles to fulfil outside their homes for the sustenance of the very same children that society demands them to be always present for. Ideal motherhood is hence utopian and alongside it, there are other alternatives that run parallel to ideal motherhood. Even though to a large extent, society imposes difficulties on mothers due to normative socio-cultural ideologies, it also appears that

the strongest advocates of hegemonic motherhood are women themselves as their narratives perpetually reified a particular kind of motherhood as the best way to mother children. Generally, by shunning transnational motherhood, despite the fact that it was their everyday reality, they were to a large extent, complicit in essentialising co-present motherhood.

By and large, I also believe that my status as a middle-class migrant in Botswana with a nuclear family set-up living with my children played into my interactions with participants during fieldwork. To some extent, this appeared to be a key factor with participants assuming that I would pass judgement on them as bad mothers. Undoubtedly, although unintentional on the part of the mothers, this factor fed directly into the narratives I was given by participants. As such, when their identities as distant mothers intersected with traditional normative notions of good mothering, this complexity left them feeling insecure leading them to engage in identity work during our interactions in order to suit and justify themselves as good self-sacrificing mothers.

Identity work has been referred to as the "ways subjects form, maintain, strengthen or revise constructions of self in relation to the claims and demands issued on them" (Essers, Doorewaard & Benschop, 2013, p.1645). Interesting to note was how participants did not challenge nor reject idealised notions of motherhood, given that they were engaged in alternative forms of mothering but instead, they constantly sought to validate themselves and justify why they were not co-present. They subjected themselves to harsh self-criticism due to the pressure to conform to unrealistic expectations of good motherhood. Moreover, the way participants constantly reified traditional notions of mothering may have also been influenced by their own up-bringing.

The type of motherhood that participants had experienced during their childhood had a carry-over effect into their present perceptions of motherhood and family. Hence, most of them made reference to the fact that their own mothers had managed to raise them full-time and essentially never left them i.e. in nuclear family set-ups yet they were now failing to do the same for their children. This showed that motherhood is learnt and constructed through a process of socialisation. It can then be argued that the manner in which they were raised had a generational impact on how they perceived motherhood under their present-day circumstances i.e. their meaning-making processes of motherhood were passed on or learnt from their own mothers.

By comparing the ways they were raised by their own mothers to how they were now raising their own children, participants heightened their feelings of being inadequate mothers as they

were raising their children from a distance. They were in constant engagement with their own childhoods and thus felt inadequate about their form of mothering. For example, transnational mothers who left their children with their grandmothers, feelings of regret were more evident because they felt guilty for making their mothers, who were now elderly, go through the cycle of child-raising grandchildren again.

Consequently, although the decision to leave may have been motivated by individual as well as factors at macro-level which were beyond their control, this did not stop transnational mothers from comparing and judging themselves against the ideal motherhood. As posited by Arendell (1999a), hegemonic discourses invoke women to internalise and in turn reify them, an assertion that strongly echoes with this study. Accordingly, their narratives were in my view performative in nature (Butler, 1994) so that I, as their audience would perceive them as good mothers, especially given that they were aware that my own mothering was one that was in conformity with the socially acceptable way of doing motherhood.

In this instance, although the lived realities were markedly different from the reality of idealised motherhood, the mothers still sought to give a resemblance of mothering that would at least cast them in a good light hence, by presenting a picture of self-sacrificing frequent remitters and communicators, they were striving to conform to the 'intensive motherhood model' (Hays, 1996) lest they be seen as deficient in their reproductive roles as absent mothers. Arguably, their narratives displayed indications of what Goffman (1963) termed 'passing' which he used to describe how a person with a stigmatising label consciously manages information in an attempt to partially or hopefully fully pass as normal or acceptable by society's norms and values.

Their immediate audience (myself) was in their eyes, morally virtuous because I represented the 'ideal mother' and this fact may have driven them to present narratives of self-sacrifice and victimhood that would reasonably cast their own mothering closer to the 'good mother' ideology. This observation appears to resonate with Ruddick (2001), who argued that mothers remain subjected to social regulations which then puts pressure on women to conform to particular standards against which they are judged and in turn, also judge themselves against.

By being 'passers' (Goffman, 1963), the mothers in this study were trying through their narratives, to fit into those discourses which they themselves saw as culturally and socially desirable (Miller, 2005) because they viewed their own dispositions as transnational mothers as devalued social identities (Goffman, 1963). Hoang (2016) has argued that gender and

motherhood ideologies transcend national borders and still regulate women's lives beyond their borders and as a result, migration tends to produce ideological paradoxes between the two roles of breadwinner versus motherhood role i.e. the productive vis-à-vis the reproductive role.

Based on the foregoing observations, the study established that there is no universal motherhood model. Thus, for women who are privileged enough to mother in nuclear settings, equating their motherhood to be a form of superior motherhood is misleading and denigrating women who mother from the margins (Austin & Carpenter, 2007). Hereafter, when migrant domestic workers leave their homes and children, it ought to be accepted that they have in mind their children's livelihoods and sustenance, humble as the gains of this kind of maternal employment may be, without which they would be unable to survive, given that their states of origin have failed to provide them with opportunities that allow them to work in their own countries in the first place.

It is the conditions in their origin country (Zimbabwe) which led me to conclude that even though they may loosely fit into the true meaning of being transnational, the findings of the present study show that their migration is indeed forced transnationalism (Horton, 2009). The key missing link in their motherhood is support in child-care and raising from the other parents i.e. the fathers of children they left behind, who due to patriarchy, do not appear to be sanctioned as harshly for absence in their children's lives. In the final analysis, I argue that doing family does not entail doing so under one residence. Instead, migration, though it separates families is actually a strategy of doing family, but from a distance in order to fulfil both reproductive (care) and productive roles (financial).

The geography of family is therefore not limited to one location nor confined to the home. As this study unpacks, doing family can be done from multiple geographical locations and how family is done is based on class, race, gender (Crenshaw, 1989; Yuval-Davis, 2006; Palmary et al., 2010; Parrenas, 2005). The thesis also argues that it is states that are central in the making and regulation of families through policies that regulate how families relate across borders. However, in this thesis, I argue further beyond the state as being central in the regulation of families. Hereafter, I also argue that in the Botswana context, parallel governance structures work effectively to sustain distant motherhood for undocumented domestic workers.

As such, their efficacy in perpetuating and sustaining illegal migration in Botswana cannot be underestimated, given that it is these structures that have allowed participants to live with their illegal statuses for average periods of ten years or more in Botswana. Although the main actors

in parallel structures are the transnational mothers themselves, I have also argued for a more holistic approach which takes into account the complicities of a wide range of other informal players in maintaining and sustaining undocumented migration. As it currently stands, the state criminalises migrants and appears to turn a blind all other players.

Furthermore, I have also argued for these counter-geographies of globalisation (Sassen, 2000) of extra-governmental activities (Weiss, 2008) to be conceptualised as on-going symbiotic relationships based on uneven power relations between undocumented mothers and all the extra-legal actors involved which are purely profit driven but even more crucial, developed on the backs of the most disadvantaged (Sassen, 2000).

Transnational mothers need extra-legal actors in order to be able to continue mothering from afar and at the same time, these actors also need these mothers to continue informal profit activities, making it a relationship of dependence. I therefore argued that both actors are involved in livelihood strategies that have been created by state structures and infrastructures, making it difficult for migrant domestic workers to enter and work legally in Botswana. I showed that although the spaces they inhabited in Botswana were liminal spaces or inhospitable dwelling spaces (Shortt, 2015), mothers had to endure because these were spaces that were meaningful to their livelihoods. For the mothers, their livelihood strategies are driven by the desire to fulfil their familial maternal obligations of care whilst for extra-legal actors, they are driven by the profit motive.

However, the question of whether the state is indeed in control of its borders and by extension, their sovereignty, is one that is beyond the scope of this thesis for now. Nevertheless, it is a key question that requires further interrogation as a crucial component of analysis in transnationalism of undocumented migrants from Zimbabwe into Botswana. Furthermore, the study also looked at transnational communication through an intersectional analytical lens and established that class and social location were mediating factors in transnational communication. Although the bulk of previous studies hail new communication technologies as mediation tools that have eased parent-child separations in an increasingly globalised world, my findings were not in congruence with this position.

Issues of affordability of airtime and cell-phones for all family members in addition to mothers being undocumented meant the meagre resources they got could not accommodate prioritising communication with their families back home. In turn, this factor also engendered unfamiliarity between mothers and their children and possibly increased tensions with caregivers, due to

infrequent communication. Class could not be ignored in shaping transnational communication in the present study.

Lastly, and purely from a methodological perspective, the narratives showed that stories are associated with multiple and situated versions rather than as singular truths as they represent different layers of interpretation and representation (Burman, 2003). The mother's stories demonstrated how narratives are inevitably linked to the broader socio-cultural context in which they lived, and via story-telling, was relived. Hence, in this analysis, I constantly paid attention to broader structural processes within which individual motherhood was occurring as a key influence in the nature of the narratives I got. I had to pay attention to the context under which certain stories were told, how the stories were narrated and for what purpose.

CHAPTER 5: CHILDREN'S RESULTS & DISCUSSION

> "To involve all children more directly in research can therefore rescue them from silence and exclusion, and from being represented by default as passive objects while respect for their informed and voluntary consent helps to protect them from covert, invasive, exploitative or abusive research" (Alderson, 2000, p. 278).

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter has focused on the experiences of mothering from a distance of Zimbabwean transnational mothers working as undocumented domestic workers in Botswana. The main themes derived from this cohort have centred on the role of state and extra-legal actors in engendering structural vulnerabilities that ultimately shape their motherhood, transnational power relations between migrant mothers and the care-givers, liminality, conformities to hegemonic motherhood and unfamiliarity due to prolonged absences. However, not all themes were unique to mothers, hence as I go into this chapter, it is imperative to acknowledge that there were consistencies in some of the themes expressed by transnational mothers and left-behind children.

Hegemonic discourses of motherhood were central in both mothers and children's thinking. The desire to have their mothers live in proximity to them was shaped by dominant ideologies of gender and motherhood that privileges co-habitation, influenced and shaped their perceptions of motherhood in the sense that they all felt a mother should be present to live with her children. Firstly, transnational mothers felt that by mothering from a distance, they were neglecting their children and also that these children would stray, due to lack of effective discipline. Coincidentally, left-behind children also felt that their mother's absence left a gap in their discipline and other areas of their lives, such as having a mother as a confidant.

Both parties felt that discipline was a key duty that should ideally be the responsibility of the biological mothers. Furthermore, they felt that a mother's love could not be surpassed by anyone and there were certain things that only a mother could do and provide for her children. From the children's narratives, a pattern of what a mother is or should be emerged that centred on certain key descriptions. Subsequently, a mother was cast as a unique individual, a moral compass, disciplinarian and confidant for her children. Children expressed that they had no one to share their challenges with, in the absence of their mothers.

From this likeness, it was evident that mothers and children's thinking was regulated by ideological discourses of motherhood and gender which indirectly pathologise alternative

childhoods, hence illustrating the power of hegemony and its effects on families that run parallel to mainstream ideologies. However, to say the children's thinking was entirely influenced by hegemonic discourses of motherhood does not present the entirety of their thinking. I found that although children's thinking was influenced by gender discourses that did not mean their thinking remained static but changed over time. As it emerged, their thinking was also influenced by their appreciation of maternal migration as a livelihood strategy upon which their lives were dependent.

Eventually, children, though feeling abandoned and wishing for nuclear-type of families were compelled to rationalise and accept their mother's migration as a livelihood strategy. Ultimately, this type of rationalisation from children also converged with their mother's rationalisation of perpetuating their illegal stay in Botswana as domestic workers because it was a dwelling place that was directly linked to their livelihoods. Consequently, children were able to appreciate the need for their mother's absences because it is what facilitated their material needs. This commonality of mothers and children rationalising maternal absence in spite of their bias towards nuclear-based families also shows the malleability of hegemony when personal family circumstances call for it.

Even as such rationalising does not change their perceptions of family, it illustrates the actions they are willing to take for survival of their families even though this goes against their beliefs of what mothering should be. This chapter now shifts its focus away from adults to illuminate on the experiences of left-behind children. Crucially, in this chapter, I examine children's reactions on maternal separation and the substitute care arrangements in place, I also focus on children's agencies in the context of their social and economic context and how they construct meanings of motherhood and family under constricted circumstances. Importantly, the data also reveals how childhood has also been reconfigured in the context of migration.

In the next section, I present detailed findings that were unique to left-behind children's narratives whose mothers had migrated to Botswana for domestic work. In order to achieve this, I interrogated children's experiences of maternal physical separation and their perceptions of motherhood. Childhood generally refers to the early part of one's life course although childhood varies considerably across time and space (James et al., 1998). Accordingly, I focus on left-behind children's interactions with their mothers on one hand, and their caregivers on the other, in order to understand their experiences of maternal separation and their subjective perceptions of motherhood. I take into account their in- situ care arrangements in order to

understand their perceptions of being mothered by 'other mothers' (Collins, 1994; Schalbaumazer, 2004). The findings presented in this chapter emanate from a triangulation of data sources i.e. diaries, narrative and semi-structured interviews, as well as visual methodologies (photographs and drawings) with ten children and reveal meanings children attach to motherhood through these various methods.

Emerging from my standpoint that left-behind children in Zimbabwe have been invisible in scholarship (Dobson, 2009), I illuminate experiences and meaning-making processes of left-behind children as a consequence of maternal separation in the context of feminised migration for care-work. Throughout the chapter, I interrogate how children construct family, motherhood and childhood in line with their lived experiences. The main themes derived from children's narratives focus on their financial and care expectations of motherhood. The findings reveal that children harbour financial/material expectations as well as care expectations which are underpinned by their preference for co-habitation with their mothers. Their views and expectations on their mothers once again bring to the fore the challenge of mothers to fulfil both obligations simultaneously.

The second theme draws attention to the ambivalence left-behind children feel over their mother's migration. In this theme, children's negative and positive feelings towards maternal migration are discussed in relation to their desires for co-resident motherhood but, at the same time, in terms of them trying to come to terms with and rationalising this migration. In relation to this theme, I also discuss the lack of transnational communication and how it amplifies children's feeling of ambivalence towards their mother's absence. The absence of communication further exposes outcomes on the left-behind child at the intersections of mother's legal status, gender, nationality and class. In other words, the local experiences of children are shaped by factors that go beyond the local to encompass meso and macro-structural factors at national and global level in sending and receiving countries in which their migrant mothers navigate for their livelihoods.

Essentially, childhood experiences are context specific at the intersections of the local, national and global nexus in the specific environments in which children experience their childhoods (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Parrenas, 2005; Fresnoza-Flot, 2009; Harney & Baldassar, 2007; Schalbmazbeuer, 2004; Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avila, 1997), suggesting the necessity of locating children's narratives within a broader analytical frame of local, national and global influences shaping their childhood and significantly shaping the kind of motherhood they received.

Childhood experiences are contingent upon resources and contextually different (Parrenas, 2005; Burman, 2008; Palmary & Mahati, 2015; O'Dell, Crafter & de Abreu & Cline, 2018).

Thirdly, I discuss paternal absence and the rationalisations children make of these against a background of maternal absence. I discuss this theme in terms of children's perceptions of what a father is to them. Findings reveal that children's thinking is aligned to gender ideologies which delineate between masculine and feminine duties with the father as the perceived bread-winner and the mother as a co-present care-giver and nurturer for the family. Findings reveal that children's feelings of ambivalence over maternal absence is also amplified by paternal absence suggesting that fathers are viewed as key in children's lives with specific roles that they are expected to play.

Fathers are viewed by children as significant, and, since fathers were not part of their life, the children were drawing on an imagined fatherhood – essentially what they imagined fatherhood could or should be. I also discuss the notion family-care circulation in transnational family set-ups. In this theme, I demonstrate how the present study overturns the often taken for granted assumption that casts children as care-receivers. Instead, I show that children are also care-givers in their families, often taking the roles of household income generation as well as caring for their younger siblings and elderly care-givers as dictated by family circumstances. This finding also exposes the questionable notion of a universal child that is constructed on the basis of a middle-class nuclear family as being in need of adult care.

Tied to this theme is also the notion of reciprocity and expectations in transnational families. Although my results show that care is given out of gendered obligations of kinship, they also show that care is not given neutrally but is fraught with expectations hence children express a sense of guilt for their mother's sacrifices, prompting them to feel that they should reciprocate these sacrifices in future. Whether this will materialise or not, caregiving relationships are underwritten with subtle and silent obligations and expectations of reciprocity.

My final theme focuses on left-behind children's coping strategies which they deploy in response to prolonged maternal absence and infrequent contact. My findings show a range of coping mechanisms to which left-behind children resorted. Doing so were not only means of coping but indirectly, ways of expressing sadness over what the children felt was loss of their mothers. With the foregoing in mind, I now introduce the participants though brief profiles after which I discuss and analyse the main themes that emerged from this cohort.

5.2   Introducing the participants

In dedicating this section to giving brief introductions of the children who participated in the present study, I adopt the view that a synopsis of their lives serves to give an insider perspective of these children's experiences of separation which takes into account length of separation as well as their changing perceptions of this phenomenon across distance and time.

Child E1: She was 15 years old when I met with her working towards 16. Her mother left her when she was around five years old, during which time she had lived with at least three care-givers

Child E2: He is a younger sibling to child E1 and he was 11 years old when I met with him. His mother left him originally under his grandmother's care when he was just under a few months old. He wanted his mother to return because she often had no money when she was in Botswana. Like his sibling, he had also been through multiple care-givers.

Child J: Was 15 years old at the time of fieldwork and lived under the care of her grandmother. Her mother had left her when she was five years old. She felt living apart from her mother was a kind of punishment from God as children always need to be with their mothers.

Child T: He was just even months old when his mother migrated to Botswana. When I met him, he was 11 years old, working towards 12. He emphasised the need to now live with his mother as they had been separated for too long. However, the one he addressed as 'mother' was his grandmother and not his actual mother, despite being told numerous times to address his mother appropriately.

Child N: She is a girl who was 15 when I met her, working towards 16 years. She was left by her mother at the age of five. The only child who owned a mobile phone and whose material expectations were fulfilled such that 'people would not believe that she was just a child of "a general worker"' as she put it. However, she resented her mother for leaving her because of the experiences she faced under her caregiver and she displayed a high degree of ambivalence towards her mother's migration.

Child B: I met B1 when he was 16 years old, working towards 17. His mother also left him with his grandmother when he was about six years old. He had opted to drop out of school in grade seven because his mother had consistently failed to pay for his fees so he did not have any hope that his mother would ever be in a position to pay for his education and so he decided

to 'cut his losses' as he expressed it instead of being constantly embarrassed at school for failing to pay educational fees.

Child B1: He was 14 years old at the time of our meeting. His was a unique case because his own father had died when he was young. His aunt had adopted him and subsequently migrated leaving him under the grandmother's care.

Child B2: He was 12 years old and younger brother to B1. Both had been adopted by the aunt after their father's death. Hence the person they referred to as mother was not their biological mother but their paternal aunt. The two brothers expressed that they lacked basically everything and life was difficult.

Child K: He was a 16-year old boy who lived by himself at his mother's family homestead. He had lived all by himself since he was around 10 years of age. He feared living by himself but also understood the importance of migration as their only source of livelihood. He reasoned that his mother's return home, though good, would not serve them in the long-run as they would have nothing to eat. However, his main worry was his mother's failure to pay his educational fees for all his high-school years hence he was in debt and feared what the school would do. He also felt displaced living at his mother's homestead and felt it was not right. Rightfully, he reasoned that as a man, he needed to live on his father's side where he truly belonged. He was steadfast in this conviction and swore that one day, he would just have to live and go to be with his people (paternal relatives).

Child C: He was 13 years old when I met him and lived with his paternal aunt. His father was late. He was initially left under his mother's sister at the age of five but after a few months, he had visited his paternal aunt and decided not to return to his original caregiver. After he did that, the mother felt it was his way of showing where he preferred to live, and he has lived under the care of his aunt since then.

The following section now details the main themes that came through from children's narratives.

5.3   Expectations of motherhood

In this theme, I talk about children's subjective expectations of motherhood which I broadly categorise into two as care expectations (reproductive) and material expectations (productive) in order to reveal the tensions between productive and reproductive roles of mothers from the perceptions of their children. These are important as they revealed the diverse meanings and

perceptions of motherhood from the perspectives of left-behind children. Crucially, the expectation I discuss do not necessarily present as separate needs but are interrelated given that financial expectations (through remittances) are a significant form of expressing love and intimacy in transnational families.

5.3.1   Financial and material expectations

In almost all the narratives, children raised issues that focused on hunger, health, school disruption, dropping out of school and child labour.   Through these issues, children were expressing needs and desires that they expected their mothers, as the main breadwinners, to fulfil. Children's hopes were pinned on migration of their mothers but on the other hand, their emotional needs were not being fulfilled. Findings illustrate that expectations harboured by children towards their mothers (the family's breadwinners) centred on the fulfilment of their material needs (financial). As a result, the narratives to follow revolve around children's hopes and material expectations from their mothers and their accompanying frustrations when mothers fail to fulfil them. These expectations can be summed up as comprising material needs i.e. food provision; educational provision and decent accommodation.

Their expectations are amplified by the children's awareness that that mothers are migrants and, in a sense, that is a salient factor in raising their expectations as migration is often glamorised and presented as an all positive experience with positive outcomes, yet in reality, that is rarely the case, especially for undocumented low skilled migrants. For example, even though the term adultified is a contested term, child K was arguably an adultified child in so far as he lived all alone at the family homestead but had no means to communicate with his mother:

> When I run out of food, my mother will not be aware of this because I do not have a cell-phone to communicate with her and this troubles me Child K, 2017)

Child B1 also narrated along similar lines:

> Our mother left us without any food when she left and up to this day, we are still suffering, even to get basic food daily is a challenge. Our grandmother really tries to source food for us but it is so difficult, aaargh (Child B1, 2017)

As he continued his narrative, child B1 explained that even though his mother migrated years ago and is still absent, her migration seems not to have paid off, because they have to "scramble" for everything. His narrative reveals those expectations he assumes his mother should fulfil yet his mother's absence has not rendered the family any benefits, causing his

grandmother (his caregiver) to also suffer in the process. The migration project may then not make sense in this instance because it is not linked to benefits this child expected in the first place:

> We do not even have clothes to wear, we scramble to get basic food and we do not even have blankets to sleep, even enough rooms for sleeping, we don't have so I sleep in the kitchen with my grandmother and she has to do piece-jobs so she can feed us (Child B1, 2017)

Similarly, Child B1 also complemented this narrative by taking photographs of his home dwelling where his photograph showed one small room, which as he explained to me, was the main dwelling he shared with his grandmother and other siblings. Below is a photograph which expresses his desires to have a decent dwelling place built by his mother. Building a decent dwelling was one of the promises his mother made to the family when she originally migrated.

Figure 2: Photograph of single dwelling family homestead – Child B1

Child E1 is a 16-year-old girl based in urban Harare. Similar to child B1, her narrative expressed what their mother was failing to provide for them from a distance. Issues she raised mainly centred on her lack of food and clothing and being asked not come to school due to non-payment of fees. She wrote this in her diary:

> On the 19th of June 2017, it was very cold and drizzling. I had to brave the cold and go to school even though I did not have a jersey. When I got to school, we went straight for assembly and I was the only one without a jersey. Everyone began to ask why I was not wearing a jersey because it was freezing cold. Everyone was just staring at me and I began to feel so uncomfortable. I even lost concentration in class and I even recall my teacher, Mr. M mentioning that he had called me 3 times in that class and I had not even responded yet I did not remember this at all. So, after the lesson, he called me and

started asking me questions about my family but I failed to answer and began to cry. He encouraged me to work hard and he then gave me a jersey to wear. I promised to give back his jersey when my mother bought one for me (E1 Diary- June 2017).

By pointing out that she would return the jersey when her mother purchased one for her, her narrative shows that she expects her mother to provision for her material needs.

I cannot even be given sanitary pads and even if I need pads, I actually think I will be wasting money because the money my mother sends us is not even enough to cover our needs. We even go to school without any jerseys and I sometimes think maybe if my mother was here, she would see how we are suffering but anyway, maybe it is better she remains there so she can continue to work for us (Child E1).

She further used photography to reveal her unfulfilled expectations by showing her current pair of worn-out school shoes which her mothers had since promised to replace but was failing to do so. She explained that when it rained, her only pair of shoes would suck in all the water and mud, not to mention the physical pain she had to endure daily walking in such shoes to school daily. Her photograph below tells her story:

Figure 3: Child E1 - Photograph of worn -out school shoes

Child E's younger brother also substantiated this theme further. The narratives of these two siblings converged to expose material expectations from their mother and he also diarised as follows:

> In June this year, it was really freezing cold and we were going to school without any jerseys and when we got to school, you wouldn't be able to hold a pen and write because the fingers would be frozen. As if that was not enough, when you got to school, you would be questioned why you were not putting a jersey on in this weather and then get sent for punishment. Because it was freezing, I would not even be able to hold a hoe to weed the school grounds as that was my punishment. And those days, my mother was saying she had no money and one day in June, my sister came back home crying because she had also been questioned why she had no jersey (Child E2 Diary – June 2017).

This child further pointed that out the promises that his mother was continuously giving him:

> On the 14th of August on a Saturday morning, we had tea and boiled maize as a meal to cover the entire day. My aunt and her husband both said they had no money for food. At the same time, my mother in Botswana was saying she would only try to get money the following week but there was absolutely nothing in the house, not even cooking oil or mealie-meal. When it was now evening, I was now very starved but we had already been told there was nothing to cook on that day, we all just sat staring at each other until it was bedtime and we went to sleep on empty stomachs. Come midnight, I woke up feeling so hungry with my stomach rumbling. I woke up and just sat, wondering what to do but I had no idea at all. I just woke up as I could not sleep anymore because I was starved. (E2 Diary, 14 August 2017)

Key to child E's story is my observation of how his personal diary allowed him further space and privacy for telling his experiences and expectations that still remained unfulfilled by his migrant mother and subsequently affected his academic performance.

> On another school day, I went to school on an empty stomach and when it was break-time, while others were eating their food, I had nothing to eat and again, at lunch time it was the same. After lunch, I went back into class but I could no longer hold my pen because I was too hungry such that when my teacher was teaching, I was feeling so weak and powerless and my stomach was constantly rumbling. The teacher continued with the lesson but I was just feeling sleepy until it was time to go home (E2 Diary, 2017).

Yet another important desire tied to children's expectations was the provision of decent accommodation. Specifically for the two siblings, it was easy to understand why this was an enormous issue for them given that children E1 and E2 lived together with other sibling cousins and three adults in two rooms in an informal shack, making their total extended family of sixteen (16) members, a scenario that was similar to child B1, who had also raised a similar issue. He lamented that he was still sleeping in the small hut they used as a kitchen with his grandmother, despite his age. He was sixteen (16) years old at that time and during our second

interview, he drew attention to the fact that his mother had migrated ten years ago and left them with the promise to expand their dwellings, a promise that had not been fulfilled to date.

Although he carefully chose his words in order to appear as if he was not blaming his mother, his undertones suggested that he still had expectations of decent dwellings to be provided by his mother. He repeatedly said "I wish to live in a beautiful house".
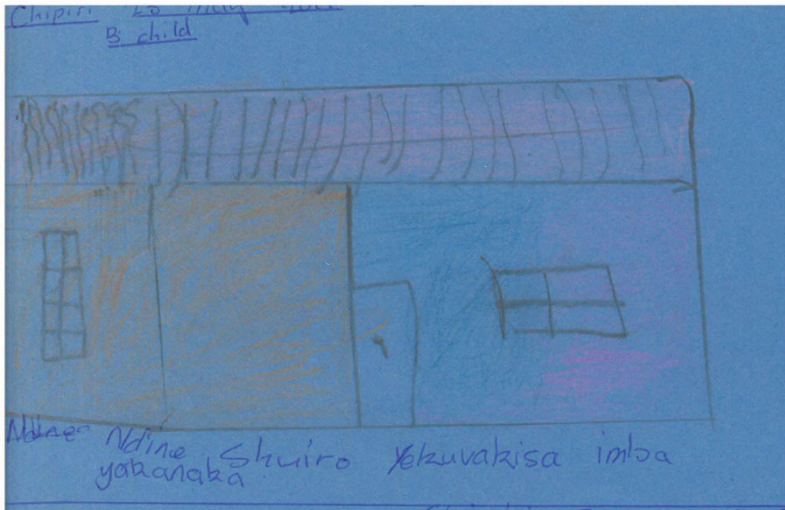
Figure 4: A drawing from his art book depicting his wishes to live in a decent house- Child B1

Comparable sentiments were echoed by siblings E1 and E2. Although they were urban based, their accommodation was a shack dwelling, partitioned into two small rooms and another incomplete detached small dwelling they used as kitchenette. Both children lamented the conditions they lived under and wished this situation would change for them in future. Using the disposable cameras, both siblings took almost similar pictures to demonstrate their present living conditions:

Figure 5: Photograph of child's E home- shack dwellings – Child E2

Child E2's sister (E1) likewise photographed her home dwellings and its surroundings to narrate her day-to-day life. Like her brother, she also wished that one day, her mother would be able to build the family homestead:

Figure 6: Photograph of home dwelling – Child E1

The children I came into contact with, illustrated through their drawings and narratives the material basics they were lacking despite their mother's migration. In so doing, they were actively pointing to specific expectations they had of their mothers, expectations that were essentially material/ financial in nature. A third and equally important expectation that children made reference to was on their educational experiences. The children spoke of constant disruptions they faced at school, with another eventually choosing to drop out of school.

Children expected their migrant mothers to provide for their education and in cases where the mother failed to do so, children pointed out that they ended up spending more time at home than in school due to suspension for non-payment of school fees/ lack of school uniforms, etc. Child B1 serves as an example in this case. When I asked him why he had dropped out of school during standard 7, he responded that he had decided to drop out of school because his mother had for years been failing to pay his school fees. His reason was also corroborated by his grandmother, the caregiver who explained that when his mother failed to fulfil his expectations of honouring his educational fees, the situation drove him to drop out of school permanently.

Yet another child spoke of how his mother had never paid school fees for him and he was now worried about his case being referred to the school district council for debt collection. The non-availability of school fees for child K was a challenge for this child and he often referred to this dilemma during my interactions with him. This child realised that his mother was unlikely to pay his school-fees and he did not hold any high hopes on this matter, hence signalling his lack of hope in the family's migration project.

> At school, my fees were last paid when I was in form one and right now, I am in form three and my school fees is still outstanding yet very soon I will be in form four and will also need examination fees. I really doubt my mother will be in a position to get me that money. My mother just tells me she will see what she can do to pay my school fees debts (Child K).

Child E makes reference of her expectations after prolonged absence from school following her mother's divorce from her step-father. Hence, when her mother arrives from Botswana, she is hopeful that her fees will be paid, only to get disappointed to learn that her mother is not able to. Although she feels let down because she had automatically tied her mother's arrival to her expectations of getting financial resources, she again realises that she has no power to change her present circumstances, pointing to her lack of agency in matters directly related to her education:

> After coming to Harare, we spent a whole month without going to school and when our mother came from Botswana, I thought she had come with our school fees. Instead, she had her own problems and she told us she was going back to Botswana to work for our school fees so that we would be able to go back to school. This pained me but there was nothing I could do about our situation. I still remember we once stayed a full-term at home without going to school (Child E1).

Likewise, Child J, another urban-based 15-year-old child, has a very similar story to her counterparts. She describes how a lack of resources to pay her fees leads her maternal grandmother to work at her school in lieu of her fees:

> My grandmother comes to my school to work in the school grounds, weeding or cutting grass so that I may not be suspended from school for non-payment of fees and sometimes I go to school without eating anything (Child J)

Child J expressed concern over her elderly caregiver as she felt that it was not right for her grandmother to work piece jobs in order to look after her. She implied that instead, she expected her mother to pay her school fees as opposed to her grandmother. Similar echoes also emerged from child E2 again, an 11-year-old boy with reference to his education following his mother's divorce from his step-father:

> It was on a Thursday, the 16th of October 2016 when this man told my mother that he no longer wanted to see us in his house and so we should go back to our shack where we came from. …….. We then packed our bags and came to Harare to live with my mother's older sister. Our aunt received us well and we narrated to her the painful life we had lived with this man. But we spent the entire term at home, not even going to school. We just stayed at home while other children [that] were going to school (Child E2 Diary, 2017).

When I met child E2 in May 2017, he also explained that at that time, he was in a dilemma as his fees had not been paid and he was going facing yet another suspension from school:

> Right now, I am going to be suspended because my school fees have not been paid. And my mother, aargh, she is not really sending money these days because she says it is difficult for money to come by these days so it's a tough situation (Child E2).

The material expectations harboured by children showed that even though frequent remittances do not necessarily equal physical presence of the mother, they however mitigate some of the effects of maternal absence. When children lack basic needs as in this case, maternal absence is felt more intensely as children come to terms with the realisation that their expectations will not be met. In this study, the intensity is exacerbated by the fact that most children had lived separately from their mothers for an average of ten years, since 2008 in most cases, and in addition, their fathers were also absent in all aspects of their lives. In the long run, these circumstances presented as double losses to children i.e. maternal and paternal absences.

5.3.2   Care expectations

It also emerged that material expectations were also accompanied by emotional labour expectations. Therefore, in this section, I talk about reproductive emotional labour and children's expectations of intimate care from mothers. The children's perceptions of

motherhood revealed four main characteristics of what they though a mother is or should be. This particular section converges with transnational mothers' perceptions of motherhood. Although speaking from different perspectives, findings show that children, just like their mothers, value the physical presence of a mother as opposed to living separately, a view that is directly aligned to ideological gender discourses of motherhood.

Firstly, a mother was perceived as someone very special who could offer a kind of love that could not be offered by anyone else. Secondly, a mother was perceived as a confidant i.e. as someone with whom children could share their most personal issues in confidence. Thirdly, children also perceived their mothers as a person who could offer a sense of belonging for her children, something that was not felt due to a mother's absence. Fourthly, a mother was also seen as a moral compass who could guide her children towards good behaviour whilst her absence from home was seen as a void when it came to issues of morality and discipline.

Even though literature largely suggests that transnational families' ability to sustain and mediate absence is defined by the flow of remittances, home visits and regular contact with those left behind (Bonnizoni & Boccagni, 2013), this was unfortunately not the case in the present study. First and foremost, the children's accounts exhibited a remarkable absence of transnational communication from mothers and their children despite the fact that transnational communication is considered the most important channel of mother-child/parent-child bonding in transnational families (Dreby, 2006; Wilding, 2006; Huang & Yeoh, 2012; Parrenas, 2005; Baldassar; 2007; Baldassar et al., 2008; Bonnizoni & Boccagni, 2013).

As a result of physical absence and irregular communication, it was not surprising to find that most of the children expressed strong desires to be physically close to their mothers and their subsequent resentment towards them for such absence. Even though most of them reasoned that co-presence with their mothers would threaten their livelihoods, they still aspired to live with their mothers. Child J was a 15-year-old girl at the time I met her in 2017, her mother had left her behind since 2007. She spoke about how she missed her mother every single day for the past ten years since separating from her:

> Sometimes when I see a mother and her child walking together, I feel really jealousy. Each and every day I wake up, I pray to God that one day, I could wake up and see my mother sleeping besides me and sometimes I ask myself, what wrong have I done to deserve this kind of punishment to live without my mother while she is out there? (Child J Diary, 2017).

Even though this was her way of expressing how much she wishes to live with her own mother, the underlying nuance is indicative of her preferred mode of mothering hence her envious feelings towards those children who lived with their mothers. Child E1 also shared similar sentiments and was wary of the fact that when she faced challenges, she had no one to talk to since her mother was absent. Despite living with her aunt, she did not see her caregiver as a potential substitute to share her problems with but instead, lamented the fact that she had no one to talk to.

Her line of thinking also aligned to mainstream ideology of co-resident motherhood. Even though she rarely communicated with her mother, she still felt her absence deeply and felt that her mother was the only person she could connect with emotionally to help her through her life challenges:

> I wish my mother was here. Sometimes I face challenges but I cannot be open about it because I am not comfortable to do that, but if my mother was here, she would be the one I would tell my problems and then she would also guide me accordingly (Child E1).

Likewise, Child N expressed her fears of permanent separation from her mother. She told me that she always lives in fear of losing her mother to death before she gets a chance to know her. Although she is acknowledging the unfamiliarity between her and her mother, she does not want to imagine losing her mother before they get a chance to know each other:

> Then one of the worst fears I have is to just receive a message whilst I am at school and be asked to come to my mother's funeral, a funeral of someone you never got a chance to live with, hmmmm, that scares me such that I don't even want to think about it. So, I just pray that I finish school as soon as possible then I can get a chance to spend some time with her, know her better than I do right now and she also gets to know me because, hmmm I don't really think she knows me at all (Child N).

Similarly, child T, a rural based child whose mother left him with his grandmother when he was just seven months old also expressed his wish to get a chance to at least live with his mother:

> I was thinking I should now live with my mother because since I was a baby, I never stayed with her and now I think I should live with her because she left me when I was still so young. I recently got to know she is my mother because all these years, I never thought I had a mother (Child T).

Child E2 was disappointed by his mother's absence which he felt intensely during key events such as school consultations. In his diary, he related how his aunt had missed his consultation despite alerting her of this key event well on time:

> In my heart, I also asked myself why is it that mothers have to go and work in another country; why is it like this because for us children, we need our mothers help. It is just difficult for children to live without their mothers because a mother equals love (Child E2- Diary 10 July).

The foregoing sentiment in which this child equals mothers with pure love is significant in understanding meanings children attach to motherhood. He insinuates that he does not does not get love from his caregiver, the kind of love only his mother can provide:

> What pains me is that I really long to live in a decent and beautiful house with my mother, living happily together as a family with a father also but then I don't have a father, I don't even know what his face looks like. What upsets me is that my mother lives in another country and I live in this country so I am always thinking of her (Child E2).

This child characterises his life as a double loss. Not only does his mother live in a distant country but he also does not know his father and has never had a chance to see him. It appears the absence of his father is brought up as a result of the loss he feels because of his mother's absence hence a father's absence could amplify his feelings of loss as a consequence of maternal absence. His wish to live in a normal family also illustrates his preference for nuclear-based family which are based on normative notions of family. Although the role of care-givers/other mothers, important as it may be is widely posited to be the solution to parental absence, the efficacy of such arrangements is often overstated as suggested by the findings of this study.

Consequently, while caregivers assume the role of other mothers on behalf of migrant mothers, evidence in this study suggests that some of the children are acutely aware that they do not receive the same attention from care-givers that would be anywhere near what they expect to get from their absent mothers. Simply put, the mothers and the caregivers are simply not equal in their roles of mothering. Even though there is no doubt that 'other mothers' (Collins 1994; Schmalzbauer, 2004) play a critical substitute role for biological mothers, the findings here reveal that left-behind children are not happy nor satisfied to be mothered by women who are not their biological mothers:

> I long for my mother to be here. Sometimes I face some personal problems but I am not able to open up about these because at times, I will not be comfortable to do so but if my mother was here, that is the one person I would be able to tell all the issues that trouble me and she would be able to sort out my life (Child E1).

The foregoing narrative reveals perceptions of motherhood that have a strong leaning towards the hegemonic model of ideal intensive mothering and the subsequent damage such models inflict on children who transgress such normativity (O'Dell, Brownlow & Bertilsdotter, 2018).

By mentioning that she would be able to share her issues if only her mother lived with her, Child J's perceptions of motherhood suggest that she perceives a mother as a confidant in whom she can confide. She casts a mother as a person she can trust with her most personal issues hence her disposition towards ideal mothering:

> Sometimes, I ask myself, what wrong have I done to deserve this kind of punishment to live without my mother while she is out there? In my life, I don't know what my mother likes or dislikes because I did have not lived with her for so many years. I only see her at Christmas only for a week (Child J, 2017)

In her diary narrations, her understanding of a mother illustrates that she perceived a mother as one whose love was special such that it could not be offered by anyone else. The geographical distance imposed by migration was an impediment to her getting all the love that only her mother could give. In other words, a mother's love was of a different kind so she felt that living separately from her mother was like some form of punishment some invisible or unknown force:

> I was blessed by God to have a mother and I am so happy but what makes me sad is that she stays far away from me. Whenever I am in need of a mother, she will not be there for me. There is a time when a child needs his or her mother's love, comfort and support. I don't get all the love from my mother because she is so far away from me (Child J, 2017)

Furthermore, children also felt the need for maternal presence for the sake of their discipline. Mothers were seen as crucial in regulating and sanctioning their behaviour in order to keep them out of trouble. Child J's justification for maternal presence is discussed in such light when she writes that she needs a mother who can guide her and keep an eye on her. In her narrative, a mother is perceived not only as a confidant but a moral compass who ideally should be present to ensure her child's good behaviour. She therefore infers that discipline is a role that only mothers can or should play:

> Some teenagers who do not live with their parents end up smoking and gambling which may affect their future. As a teenager, I need a mother who will always guide me to make good decisions, I need a mother who keeps an eye on me and corrects me when I have done wrong things (Child J- Diary May 2017).

In probing her further on discipline, I was interested to know why she would need only her mother to discipline her when her grandmother was the one living with her for close to a decade. She justified her position as follows:

> But sometimes I can still behave badly and my grandmother may not even know it because she is too old and besides, I can even do bad things that she may even never

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get to know completely but at least if my mother is present, she can see and pick these things easily (Child J interview, 2017).

Another observation in my discussions with the children pertains to the sense of loss experienced by the children. Although this loss has characterised their day-to-day experiences, it appears they felt it more intensely on those occasions they deemed special, such as birthdays or school consultations where they expected their mothers to be either present or at least remember, an expectation that appears to be in line with middle-class families. Child E2 exemplifies this:

> On the 25th of August, it was my birthday but not even a single person at home looked happy or celebrated that it was my birthday. Even my own mother in Botswana did not even call me to just say 'happy birthday'. As a child I was expecting something from my mother but she did not even do anything for me on this day. My wish is to have a birthday party like what is done for other people's children (Child E2- Diary 2017).

Implicitly painted in this narrative is the notion of a middle-class family thus revealing the influence of a universal model of mothering because when he assumes that a birthday party is what is done for other children, he is essentially drawing his discourse from a universal model of family. Although at home, no one wished him a happy birthday, he did not seem to be visibly concerned about his caregiver's failure to either wish him a happy birthday or do something for him. Instead, it was his biological mother who hurt him by overlooking his birthday.

Although this child was hurt, he became happy when his elder sibling came through for him and ran around till he got 50 cents to buy him some biscuits. I found this narrative quite thought-provoking from at least two angles. Earlier on in this chapter, I bought attention to the need to pay attention to how care circulates in transnational households. Older siblings in particular, also assume care for their younger siblings as demonstrated in this case. By the same token, I also argued that children should not be regarded as passive receivers of care but should also be seen as givers of care in their families.

What I wish to highlight is the void she filled on her brother's birthday, in spite of her own lack. She is the same child that was unable to get basic sanitary wear, but she decided to buy biscuits for her brother after realising how sad he was, given that nothing had been done for him on his birthday. This gesture indicates two things i.e. the agentic capacity of children and that children are also carers in their families and not mere recipients, giving credence to the assertion that care is reciprocal and multi-directional within family networks (Baldassar & Merla, 2014). In appreciation of sister's gesture, child E2 diarised the following:

> GOD BLESS MY SISTER; my sister is the one that ran around looking for 50 cents so that she could give me something. She then bought me biscuits for 50 cents and she sang happy birthday for me. That's why I love my sister so much and sometimes when we are going to school and have no food, if she has money, she sometimes gives me some to spend at school (Child E2- Diary 2017)

Another child describes the pain she felt when her mother did not turn up at her school for the prize-giving day despite her knowing her child would receive four academic prizes. She was pained by her absence, especially in light of the fact that she was expecting her mother to fulfil her promise that she would be there on the day. Her narrative also exemplifies that feelings of abandonment and separation amplified on key occasions in children's lives:

> I had 4 prizes, one for Geography, the other for Biology, another for computers and the overall prize for best student. I was really excited on that day because my mother had promised to come for the first time, I had my hopes very high. I saw other parents run for their children but when my turn came and my name was called to the stage, there was no one to run for me. I felt a huge lump in my throat and hated my mother for making false promises knowing she had made me other promises that she had broken before. Besides, she didn't have to make me promises that she knew she could not keep and you know what I always say, 'a promise is a credit (Child N Diary, 2017).

The idealised notion of family appears to have sustained influence in the children's perceptions as shown by their preferences for present mothers and nuclear family set-ups. Evidently, the nuclear family model and hegemonic mothering ideology invokes a sense of inferiority in the way these children are mothered, given the way they appear to shun this alternative mode of mothering (transnational mothering). Furthermore, a gendered observation related to intimacy between others and their daughters especially, also came up. Their stories exposed how prolonged absence of their mothers resulted them in missing emotional support and connection on some of their major development milestones e.g. at the onset of their menstrual periods. For example, child N explained how she could not even share with her mother that she had started her periods because of the unfamiliarity and consequently emotional distance between them:

> And I couldn't really tell her that I had now started my monthly periods because I felt embarrassed to share with her as a person that I never really had that much contact with. She is a person that I would possibly see once a year or even once after two years and then for the time that we would be together, it was like one or two weeks and then she would have to go back to work again (Child N).

Moreover, given that most mothers had left them behind for an average of 10 years, some of the children had changed caregivers as a result of death or family conflicts, for example. However, what I concluded was that even for those children who were closely attached to their caregivers, especially grandmothers, they still felt a care-deficit as a result of their mother's absence. Hence, as their narratives have exposed so far, they still felt they could not share their

problems and wished their mothers could be there to guide them, even in the presence of their care-givers. For example, from my observations, child J was very close to her grandmother but she still felt discontented about her mother's absence:

> Mothers are the most important people in the world, living without a mother is very difficult especially when you know she is alive (Child J – Diary 2017).

Seemingly, it appears caregivers were not in a position to replace their mothers, no matter the length of absence by their migrant mothers. I illustrate the children's diverse perspectives on caregivers with a few verbatim excerpts in order to give further insights into children's views on being mothered by 'other mothers' (Collins, 1994; Schalbaumazer, 2004). Their perceptions were continuously reifying nuclear family model as it was expressly desired as the best family form.

Most children felt their kind of families were not normal and therefore idealised the nuclear family model as the perfect family set-ups which unfortunately they lacked. Child J for example depicted in her diary by pasting a picture (below) of what she projected would be an ideal family for her, again grounded in an idealised nuclear family model. In the following picture, her perceptions of motherhood are evident as revealed by certain key characteristics of the picture. For instance, this picture depicts a nuclear heterosexual family that is co-resident and significantly with food on the table, signifying her leaning towards a nuclear middle-class family model.

The picture thus reveals her conformity to a traditional hegemonic family model, with a father as the bread-winner and head of the family. As the picture shows, symbolically, the position of the father in the family is illustrated by the position in which he sits at the head of the dinner table.

Figure 7: Picture extracted from a magazine depicting child J's wish to belong to a 'normal family'

For child N, her opinions of her caregiver displayed hurt and disappointment. She was left under the care of her maternal aunt who also had three children of her own. She narrated how she always felt like she would never be part of that family because as she grew older, she could see that she was treated very differently from her cousins, suggesting that a biological mother's presence instils a sense of belonging. She recounted an incident when her aunt's husband discovered some cuts on his leather seat and she was suspected to have made those cuts:

> Do you know that being blamed for something you did not do is the worst? I became more emotional day by day as the accusations piled up on me. I still remember the day when he found his favourite leather seat with cuts. I was the first suspect and it also came a surprise to me. I went through intimidation and interrogations which were really unnecessary but there were three of us children. This is the day when I saw the real meaning of the Shona proverb [*kusina amai hakuendwe*]. (Child N – Diary 2017). [1]

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[1] The idiom 'kusina amai hakuendwe in Shona means that can be loosely translated to mean "do not stray too far from your mother's umbilical code" It is based on the notion that when someone leaves their home, they do not know where they are going or the obstacles that await the other side so there will be no comfort for you. https://mg.co.za/article/2016-21-00-breaking-free-from-migrant-status

Loosely translated, this term is a Shona proverb that warns one never to go to a place where your mother is not and it connotes a situation of suffering should you ever find yourself in a situation where you are separated from your mother. Effectively, it means you do not have your mother's protection because you are in a space/place where she is absent. By living in a place where her mother was not, my thinking is that she felt displaced because in her views, a mother bestowed a sense of belonging on her children. By using this idiom, she essentially means that had her mother been there with her, she would not have been accused and treated in that manner. Her mother's absence therefore meant lack of protection.

Inferring this to her broader thoughts, her own personal discourse is actually in line with mainstream motherhood ideology which idealise in-situ mothering as the best form of mothering for children. Child E2's narrative also displayed a strong sense of helplessness in the absence of his mother. Under the care of his aunt, he relayed how he was really hurt when his caregiver totally forgot to attend his consultation day at school. I will quote this incident as he recounted this day in his diary:

> On Wednesday the 10th of July, I came from school and I told my aunt that parents were invited the following day to school to come and have a look at our books and that she could also come anytime on the day. On the day, I asked my aunt if we could go together to school and she told me she would follow me later and I even pleaded with her not to forget and that I would be at school that whole day until 4p.m. and she told me it was fine. I got to school and waited and waited while I kept seeing other children's mothers coming in to assess their children's books. It was at this time that I started to think of my mother, wishing that if she was here, I would also be proud to have my own mother present with me (Child E2- Diary 2017).

As this child continues to narrate how his whole day unfolded, he narrated how he kept on hoping that perhaps by 4.p.m, his aunt would have shown up. He expressed his disappointment in his diary:

> I looked at that time and realised it was already 12 noon. I went to the gate to check if my aunty was coming and did not see any sign of her so I eventually went to sit down, wishing for my mother because if my mother was here, she would have been there to assess my school books and we would have long gone back home like the other children. That is when I realised the importance of living with your own mother because everything will run smoothly and that shows me how important a mother is. It is just difficult for children to live without their mothers because a mother equals love

He diarised his pain and walked back home to express his disappointment to his aunt, the caregiver but the damage was already done:

> Up until 4p.m, I kept waiting for my aunt at school until the teachers dismissed us as it was time to go home. I walked back home thinking what my aunt had done and I was

in so much pain. I got home and told her how disappointed I was and she just told me she had forgotten about it. On this day, I was really hurt (Child E2- Diary 2017).

As a result of this experience, child E2 was of the opinion that it was better for his mother to come back and live with them than continue to be a transnational mother. When I asked him to explain why he felt that way, he responded that:

> Because it is important to live with your mother and sometimes like at my school, when its consultation day, I would just see other children coming with their mothers and I just kept wishing if only my mother was also here (Child E2).

I probed him further regarding what would happen if she returned in reference to their livelihood. He reminded me that often when he asks for something from his mum, his mother always tells him there is no money in Botswana. As such, he reasoned that it was better for her to return home because if there was no money, he wondered why she continued to live away from home because he had long associated his mother's migration with increased access to material resources yet his realities were otherwise, hence his lack of faith or hope in the migration project.

Child N further related again of her situation in her caregiver's family. Her aunt has three of her own children. She narrated that as she grew older, she started observing that she was treated unfairly in comparison to her cousins. As a result, this marked the onset of the resentment she felt towards her caregiver as well as her mother because she blamed her for leaving her:

> When I started living with my aunt, initially it was ok but as I was growing up, I could see things were not as they seemed. Among her children, there is one who is the same age as me and that's where I could see that I was not really part of the family, even from the things she would buy us., they would be totally different. The way they treat you, you can see it will be very different (Child N)

> And then when my mother would send my school fees, some inconveniences would occur because sometimes my aunt would not have money so she would share my school fees equally with her child. In fact, sometimes we would be suspended from school because she would take part of my fees and pay for her own child. This was during my primary school years (Child N).

> This just gave me a picture of how much she wished the best life for us, why wasn't my mum in the picture this whole time? Because for real, I really didn't know her. My aunt was the only mother I knew at that time (Child N- Diary 2017).

This child's ambivalence gravitates between negative and positive perceptions of both her mother and caregiver. In some cases, her resentment towards her aunt and her husband was triggered by the way they negatively spoke of her mother in her presence. Although she felt

resentment towards her mother for being an absent mother, when she heard her mother being discussed in a negative light, it increased her resentment:

> But then the other issue that really affected me were the issues they would discuss about my mother in my presence. My uncle was always complaining that my mother was not sending enough money, who did she think was feeding her child, my mother this, my mother that…. And it was really sort of insulting because they would discuss in my presence and I don't know what they expected me to say or do as a child when they spoke of my mother like that, aargh (Child N)

With the prior account in mind, child N's narrative reveals family tensions caused by her mother's migration. Migration left her exposed to maltreatment and at the same time, took away the kind of protection that only her mother could provide. As has been suggested by Wall and Spira (2006), narratives in family set-ups may offer chances present as opportunities to solve problems for some individuals and may expose complex and contradictory expectations among family members. In telling her family story, child N reproduced and at the same time was also repelling her family through her narrative. (Langellier & Peterson, 2004).

Notable exceptions were observed however, noted particularly among those children who were being raised by their maternal grandmothers as they were very close to their grandmothers, validating claims that grandmothers are usually the best caregivers for left-behind children (Mazzucato & Schans, 2011; Lutz & Palenga-Mollenbeck, 2012). The challenges expressed by children emanate from simultaneous expectations they harbour towards their absent mothers. Although absence was a livelihood strategy, children in this study still expected their mothers to be present to fill in those roles which they felt only their mothers could do. Against such expectations, it came as no surprise that these children displayed high tendencies of ambivalences towards maternal migration, as the following section will show.

5.4   Ambivalence

This section discusses the ambivalence felt by children towards their mother's migrations and subsequent prolonged physical separations that have characterised the greater part of their childhoods. Ambivalence was significantly evident in the manner through which children tried to make sense of maternal absence which left them with mixed and contradictory feelings towards their mothers. Considerably, children's ambivalence is also better understood through the social context in which their ambivalent feelings were emerging, suggesting the necessity of looking at the local and broader structural conditions in which such ambivalences were conceived. As such, most of the children realised they had lost out on time with their mothers

but at the same time, they had to eventually accept their mothers as migrants in order to maintain their livelihoods, humble as they may have been.

I opted to use Child N as a clear example of ambivalence for she often expressed feelings of love and hate for her mother simultaneously. She recognised the sacrifice her mother had made and yet deliberately decided not to be close to her, openly admitting to me that whenever she saw her mother, she would make sure that she only responded to what she was asked and nothing more. She chose to act up in the presence of her mother. Dreby (2010) came up with similar findings in her study of Mexican children who deliberately chose to act up when their parents visited. Child N had a series of diary entries that openly demonstrated high levels of her ambivalence shown towards her mother. I extracted the following excerpt which sounds like lyrics from a song to illustrate this:

I hate you; I love you and I hate that I want you

The fact that her narratives displays two highly opposing positions towards her mother interestingly presents as if it is two people conversing although in reality, it is one person, points to how highly ambivalent she is towards living separately from her mother but most importantly, the unresolvability of ambivalence. Therefore, ambivalence in this study provide an important lens through which children's perceptions of motherhood could be understood from their subjective experiences. In the case of Child N, although she is aware that she loves her mother, the separation from her summoned feelings of resentment towards her mother, leading her to gravitate between love and hate, two extreme emotions that she was clearly failing to reconcile.

She further reminisces on one of her hurtful past experiences by recounting how some years ago, she had suffered severe stomach pains after eating a pudding her caregiver had prepared. Her caregiver had called her mother, but her mother had not been able to return to visit her, leaving her feeling deeply hurt.

> To tell the truth, I HATED my mother to the extent that I never wanted to see her or to even think about her …. Well at that time I had mixed feelings about her. I didn't really know her because I never really had time to talk to her or anything of that sort, you know me and mommy time…. The truth is that I didn't care about her, but for the things she provided, I mean why would I waste my time caring for someone who had nothing to do with me? (Child N- Diary 2017).

What stood out for me in this diary entry is her use of the word hate which she actually capitalised, supposedly to emphasise how she felt towards her mother. Yet as I continued to read this child's diary, her ambivalence became even clearer because in the same diary, she

goes on to write a completely opposite account of how she loves her mother. One would mistakenly assume that her diary had been authored by two different persons, given how her ambivalent feelings are constantly shifting between love and admiration on one hand, and hate and disappointment on the other.

> Because I have the best mentor, my mom who has set an example for me that life is always about grabbing opportunities that come your way and not about competition with others but being the best that you can be, I LOVE YOU MOM

Then she continues to praise her mother for the sacrifices she has made as portrayed below:

> Mom, you going out for my sake has been the best example
>
> When God gave mothers, he gave me the best
>
> I think I now have the answer why my mother wasn't there for me when I need her most. She was busy building a future for me [and at the end of this statement, she draws a smiley picture]

Typical of her ongoing ambivalence, she reasons that she is getting the best education and in comparison, to her other peers at school who have both parents present in their lives, she has all she needs at school provided for; she has a good quality cell-phone, all thanks to her loving mother. She further reasons that no one would ever think that she is just a child of a 'general worker', to quote exact words. She further writes that she has every reason to love God because he gave her the best teacher she could ever ask for, in reference to her mother.

Significantly, when this child makes reference to her material blessings, all provided for by her mother, she illustrates a typical example of a child who had managed to make the connection between migration and economic gains. In this unique case, her mother's migration project has paid off financially, but has proved very costly emotionally. However, her feelings towards her mother's absence are clear evidence of how children may gain materially but with huge social and emotional costs when parents migrate. Most importantly, the notion of ambivalence illustrated that children did not interpret migration and maternal absence through a singular perspective but instead through multiple interpretations that were not static across time and space.

As Child N pens her thoughts in her diary, she chronicles also present evidence of how she links her mother's migration to significant sacrifices made for her sake. To emphasise her appreciation, she further vows that this sacrifice shall not be in vain. I would, in this instance, argue that the migration project has invested in some form of symbolic capital where this child

also feels obliged to repay her mother in future. By recognising this sacrifice, her obligation to offer intergenerational reciprocal support to her mother in future is strengthened:

> Who am I that I was able to learn at Group A schools with a mother who is just a general worker? I have that kind of mother who has sacrificed all that she has ever worked for, for my sake. I mean who does that, everyone is concerned about their own lives. THANK YOU, MOM for everything, know that all you have done for me will not be in vain, I LOVE YOU SO MUCH (Child N – Diary 2017).

I have used child N's narratives to exemplify the level of ambivalence persistent in the day-to-day experiences of children in this study. Through the notion of ambivalence and ambiguous loss – a physical or psychological loss that continues without closure or solution (Boss, 1999; Boss & Yeats, 2014), children's concrete struggles with maternal absence in transnational families were exposed and revealed situations of on-going losses which left-behind children felt that continued to persist without closure.

In a different household, child B1, a 15-year-old rural based child who had dropped out of school at primary level also displayed his ambivalence towards his mother's absence. He longed for his mother's presence but at the same time, had to accept that her absence is what would guarantee their livelihoods at home. He also exemplifies a child who was able to make the linkage between migration and the family's livelihood.

> My mother since left in 2007 up to now and I am 16 years old now. I just wish my mother was here but if she comes back, then we will not get any food and my grandmother will suffer even more (Child B).

> On a few occasions, I once visited her but aaargh, we did not have much to discuss. When we talked, I would start seeing person that I did not really know, a person I did not have any stories in common with. She really tried to make me feel free to her talk to her but I was also scared to say much because we never spent any time together so I did not know what to discuss with her and would just go silent. She really cared and would ask if anything was wrong with me and why I was too quiet whenever she was around (Child N).

Child K who lived alone, had been left-behind living since he was in grade six (6) at primary school also showed signs of ambivalence towards mother's physical absence from home. However, he reasoned that if he demanded his mother's return, then he would have no provision of food, school fees and clothes, a theme he articulated in his diary as well as during his first narrative interview:

> Of course, I wish to be with my mother but then I realise it's better that she stays away to work in Botswana otherwise if she comes back here, I won't be able to get food or schools so it's better for her to be in Botswana. I would say that living alone has some advantage to me because if my mother were to opt to stay here at home with me, that

would not help us in any way. I say so because if I consider food, clothing, school fees and other needs, there is nowhere else we can access these if my mother stays home with me. We would actually suffer from serious poverty if she were to come back so that is why I say it is better to live by myself because when I am alone, my mother will be working for my survival (Child K – Diary 2017).

Despite this child doing a cost benefit analysis between survival and maternal presence, with the latter taking precedence, he still fears his position living alone at the family homestead but at the same time, admits that he cannot have both material provision and maternal presence:

> When I am alone, I am usually scared to live by myself but there is no other option as my mother is absent. There are some problems I encounter as a result of living alone such as problems with my schoolwork. Sometimes I get homework from school and I will be in need of assistance on those aspects I will be finding difficult to grasp but there is nothing I can do about that, so I end up just working on the work that I can manage on my own and because of that, I am always lagging behind at school (Child K- Diary 2017).

There is a perceived connection between migration and expected financial gains. However, the dominance and influence of idealised motherhood remains the most significant reason why children held their mothers accountable for their care, regardless of the fact that their mothers were also fulfilling the breadwinning role, essentially so that they could take care of their needs. Under these circumstances, ambivalence emerged as a response to children's frustrations of being left-behind yet they also understood why their mothers had to leave them behind.

5.4.1 Transnational communication

In my analysis of ambivalence, I also found that ambivalence was further amplified by the very limited or completely absent communication between transnational mothers and their children. As such, prolonged maternal absences were felt more intensely by children due to limited or non-existent communication. I used new communication technologies as a lens through which children's lived experiences of distant motherhood could be analysed and found that this also intensified their ambivalence towards migration. Frequent contact is one of the major ways through which mothers maintain intimacy with their children and give emotional support from a distance (Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avila, 1997; Schmalzbauer, 2004; Parrenas, 2005; Waldinger, 2006; Fresnoza-Flot, 2009; Madianou & Miller, 2011).

However, when it came to mother-child communication in this study, I found that it was either very limited or completely absent in some cases due to resource limitations on both sides, suggesting that practices of traditionalism are class-based and dependent of resources to travel

and communicate frequently across space. All children, except one, lamented their lack of a basic cell-phone and when I was parting from them after my field work, most had given me messages to their mothers – the key message being requests for a cell-phone handset.

Furthermore, in rare instances when mothers communicated directly with the caregivers, it was mainly to have quick conversations regarding remittances and checking on children because resources did not permit for long conversations with the caregiver, let alone with their children. As a consequence, emotional ties between children and their mothers had waned over the years because they rarely communicated due to lack of cell phones, data and Wi-Fi, compounded by the infrequent visits, usually limited to one annual visit in December. Child K who lives all alone represents a typical case of this theme:

> Sometimes I am confronted with difficult situations but I am not able to tell my mother because I have no access to a phone to communicate with her and this issue really troubles me. I wish I could get a phone so that at least I will be able to communicate with her and tell her the issues I am facing here (Child K).

These findings divert from mainstream transnational literature whose findings apply to those countries with a wide array of advanced communication technologies thereby allowing the transnational practice of an 'absent-present' (Pertierra, 2005) to be realised. In other regions, such as the Philippines and Mexico, digital communication technologies have afforded transnational families 'ways of togetherness' (Baldassar, 2007) but in this study, such relevance was lost and was, in my view, a key factor in elevating feelings of ambivalence amongst left-behind children. Unlike Filipino left-behind children, although Parrenas (2005) identifies emotional costs of separation as being present, they were in some sense cushioned by ease of access to virtual intimacy technologies which mothers frequently utilised to be in regular communication with their children, thus ensuring sustained emotional circulation of care.

In the present study, lack of access to communication tools implied that children were not equipped with any form of agency to initiate any form of transnational communication with their absent mothers. Instead, they had to wait to see their mothers once a year for a few days if they were lucky to have their mothers afford the costs of visiting during the Christmas holiday meaning they had no access to their mothers at all except for a one week in December. When considering the fact that mothers were unable to sustain a sense of co-presence through frequent communication, it becomes easier to understand why this scenario would intensify their feelings of ambivalence towards migration. All factors considered, migration was perceived as

the process that had separated them from their mothers and equally blamed for lack of communication, resulting in lack of intimacy and unfamiliarity among left-behind children.

In contrast, in the present study, only one child had a personal cell-phone which she did not have constant access to while the rest did not. The majority of mothers lacked resources to be in touch on a frequent basis thus illustrating that transnational communication is shaped by one's social class positioning (Wilding, 2006; Elliot & Urry, 2010; Madianou & Miller, 2011). Consequently, the mother's class positioning actually failed to produce meaningful exchanges between mothers and their children (Suarez-Orozco, Todorova & Louie, 2002) due to lack of financial resources to purchase cell-phones and airtime for their children. New communicative technologies have been hailed as ushering in a new era that affords parents separated from their children opportunities to relate (Bryceson & Vuorela, 2002) across spaces as if they were in one space by allowing for 'connected presences' (Licoppe, 2004) or 'absent presence' (Pertierra, 2005).

Yet to my participants, it was clear that this wave of globalisation successes had simply bypassed them and was unlikely to benefit them in the near future. Yet again, I argue that absence of communication in this study directs the necessity to pay attention to the local, national and global factors (political, social, economic) that give rise to the specific kind of childhood these children were experiencing as well as the factors that inhibited communication. Through the lens of transnational communication, the study revealed how larger systems of inequality shape transnational family life and the day-to-day childhood experiences of left-behind children (Parrenas, 2005).

Therefore, there is a significant link between the mother's socio-economic class and their transnational engagement and contact with their children as it is their class in Botswana that determined the frequency of maintain contact. Given that transnational family life encompasses not only remittances, but also the flow of emotions (Parrenas, 2005), in the absence of communication between children and their absent mothers, ambivalence was not surprising, given how the topic of maternal absence invokes high emotions in children. However, it should also be appreciated that the presence of frequent communication in transnational families does not necessarily remove the notion of ambivalence, especially if it is not followed by physical contact (Leifsen & Tymczuk, 2012), hence whilst communication technologies have, to a certain extent, made separation easier, they do not completely remove the desire by children to

have physically present mothers as they do not provide left-behind children with the full intimacy nor emotional security afforded by physical presence (Parrenas, 2005).

5.5   Paternal absence and expectations of fatherhood

An unexpected theme that developed during my interactions with the children focused on another fundamental, yet under-researched dimension of parenting i.e. fatherhood. Without any prompt from me, all children who participated raised the absence of fathers as a major source of concern, despite the fact that none of these children actually ever knew their real fathers. Their fathers had either died when they were still young or were totally absent. Findings revealed an intrinsic linkage between maternal separation and paternal absence for these children in the sense that their narratives of paternal absence were simply triggered or amplified by their mother's prolonged absences.

 Absence of their mothers is primarily what provoked their sentiments in relation to absent fathers as the children felt a double loss of parental absence through their experiences of living with neither their mothers nor fathers. All the children did not know their fathers, nor had they ever engaged with them since they all raised the issue of absent fathers. However, the way they perceived fatherhood differed significantly from their perceptions of motherhood. Whereas they subjected their mothers to criticism for absence, leading to lack of emotional support and guidance, for fathers, their thinking resonated with the normative prescriptions of fatherhood along gendered lines. The findings thus illuminated the children's meanings of what a father was or should be.

A father was imagined to be a financial provider whilst a mother's key role was emotional provisioning. They associated paternal presence with financial support as some expressed that their lives were difficult because their mothers had no husband to support the family. The key finding here points to how the significance of paternal absence is not accorded similar significance as that attached to maternal absence. Some studies have paid attention to the likelihood of material deprivation being higher in children of single parents (Davis, 2011; Berk, 2006) although it is not all children with single parents who experience negative outcomes. Maternal absence, coupled with father's absences, appeared to compound their negative feeling of living separately from their mothers, in particular especially given that neither parent was present in their lives, be it economically, physically and especially emotionally, signifying a double gap/void in the children's lives. However, children emphasised on significance of their

fathers, in relation to the material/ financial provisioning and not in relation to emotional care-giving.

As I have already alluded previously, we cannot know for certain what, if any, roles the fathers of the children in question could have played given that the study did not focus on fathers, hence pointing to a limitation of the present study. Consequently, when it came to care-giving, what was clear was that children still held their mothers accountable for their care-giving and not their fathers, with most of them reasoning that if perhaps their fathers had been present in their lives, then their mothers would not have migrated and left them behind. Some of the children felt that their lives would be relatively easier if only their fathers were present. Child J's extract demonstrates the far-reaching effects of hegemony.

Hegemonic masculinity (Connell & Messerschimdt, 2005) typifies a particular gender order in society and models a man/father as one who assumes the breadwinning role in the family whilst the femininity equates females to mothers and carers. For child J, paternal presence could have spared her mother from undertaking migration to work for her and her siblings. Interestingly, she does not refer to a father in the emotional sense of being there for her as she did with her mother but more in the role of providing economically for the family, illustrating how maternal migration impacts children more than father's migration. Consequently, this may account for why women's migration is often pathologised whilst father's migration is frequently normalised.

> I don't know my father, I was just told that he died a long time ago, I don't even know his face. My mother is doing what she can to make us go to school but things are tight. There is no daddy who can help her at all, I don't even know him. Sometimes I wish if my father was there and helping my mother because she is struggling to ensure that we have something to eat (Child J).

Her perceptions of fatherhood tie in with her earlier lamentations on her mother's absence which she felt left her with no one to confide in or discipline her. Motherhood and fatherhood are thus perceived differently along gendered lines, with family disruptions more evident when mothers migrate (Parrenas, 2005; Asis, 2006; Jordan & Graham, 2012). The pain of paternal absence was also evident in child E2's narrative whose wish was to live in a decent house with a mother and a father as one happy family. Child E2's expressions romanticise a nuclear family and by implication, shuns his kind of family. He therefore assumes that happiness is typically found in this kind of family:

> What pains me is I wish I could live in a decent house with my mother and also a father as one happy family but I don't have a father, I don't even know what his face looks like. I am told I last saw him when I was only a few months old (Child E2).

Some of the children like child T felt that their lives were a double loss. In his case, his mother left when he was just seven (7) months old and he narrated how he sometimes cries when he tries to understand why he cannot live with his mother who left him so many years ago. By his own admission, a fact that was also substantiated by his mother, he had not known that mother T was actually his mother and had recently just found out. He therefore holds his mother to account for leaving him at such a tender age and so uses this reason as justification of why he should now live with his mother:

> Since I was young, I never even knew that I had a mother and again my father died when I was still young so that why I am thinking I should stay with my mother (Child T).

Bruner (1990) suggests that narratives people tell reveal contextual cultural rules into the manner people claim their cultural identities. Child K (lone child), for example, mentioned that his father was deceased and even though he lived alone, his father's extended family lived not very far from him, but they never related to him nor invited him to their home. In spite of this isolation from his paternal family, he felt a strong need to be united with his family because he belonged there and not on the side of his mother's lineage. Experience is always mediated temporally, culturally, historically and socially (Meretoja, 2016) and the story of his identity can be understood if analysed within the broader ideological context.

In Zimbabwe, lineage is patrilineal and therefore determined through the father. That explains why this child feels he does not belong where he is currently positioned geographically. Children are thought to belong to the father and thus assume their father's name as their primary identity (Bourdillion, 1976) although realistically, having a father's name does not automatically mean that the father's family will take responsibility for the child. This cultural socialisation perhaps explains why, even though he was being raised on his maternal side, he does not feel like he belongs as he has not had any affiliation with his paternal kin.

Narratives, by nature, often assume a moral stance and are also cultural sense-making practices (Ochs & Kapps, 2001). By making this claim, this child is effectively interpreting this cultural norm in contrast to how he is currently positioned, not only culturally but also geographically and socially; and hence concludes that he is not in the right place and in essence, feels displaced:

> I would want to unite with this family because there is no way I will grow into a man and still live on my mother's side. At some point, I will have to leave this place and go to my father's family

He also reasoned if he did not join his father's family, then how he could learn to be a man, suggesting a gendered line of thinking where his mother, as a female was not in a position to teach him manly lessons. Nonetheless, because family is both a cultural and social construct (Finch & Mason, 1991); Child K's rationale cannot be divorced from the socio-cultural context in which he is being raised shapes his everyday experiences, hence his stance on paternal relationships. Josselson (1995, p.33) defines narratives as "representation of the self in conversation with itself and with its world over time".

Likewise, excerpts from Child N's diary also echo the above and resonates with Shaw (1996) that qualitative research with children is essentially a process of narrative inquiry where children live their stories in an experiential text but also tell their stories as they speak to their own selves as well as explain themselves to others. This is evident in Child N's diary entries as it shows how she was also telling her story and in constant conversation with herself whilst trying to make sense of her father's absence. She therefore resented her mother for avoiding a discussion of her paternal identity and had even previously questioned her grandmother about her paternity. She narrated how her grandmother was also evasive in her responses and she therefore failed to get the truth of her paternity from her mother and grandmother:

> So today I have been thinking, why is it that I grew up without a dad? Well the answer is not so clear; I have racked my brains for answers but I could not find one. Why is it that my not-so-open mother does not give me the answer that I am looking for? I have come to think that maybe it brings sad memories to her, so does this make me a 'mistake child', you know [*mwana wemusango*]?

In the same diary entry, as she ponders if she was conceived by mistake as a possible explanation for her mother's stance of non-engagement on this issue, she continues to write that:

> Well, its ok, that makes me very unique, I have told myself that I am special, maybe I came the same way Jesus did, ha ha, just kidding

She then transfers the blame from her mother to her unknown father and writes her thoughts about him:

> Maybe he is just a jerk who doesn't even deserve a child like me, is it ok to hate him for not always being there for me?

Yet again, she gravitates between blaming her mother and her unknown father, all the while posing different scenarios regarding her conception and subsequent upbringing, revealing her frustrations on the matter as she converses with herself. Similar to E1; K; T; and J, she is also constantly troubled as a result of not knowing who her father is. She is also not sure who to apportion the blame to between "my own-not-so-open-mother' or a father who is, 'a jerk who does not deserve a child like me' ultimately, she ends this diary entry by bringing the blame back to her mother for keeping her paternal identity a secret:

> Isn't it my right to know my father, is it fair that I never really said 'dad' to my real father? Only one day, I will gather up my guts and ask my mom the real truth (Child N- Diary 2017).

Significantly and from a methodological point of view, it also illustrated that children used their dairies to debate with themselves about their life dilemmas as shown by Child N. As a data collection method, diaries emerged as a medium through which children could express their inner feelings and mean making processes. In the next section, I discuss circulation of care in transnational families through the lens of care-circulation (Baldassar & Merla, 2014).

5.6 Transnational family care circulation

In transnational families, the common assumption is to cast those family members that migrated as the provider of financial protection in families through the flow of remittances, yet transnational care in families is bound by reciprocity and expectations. Accordingly, even though transnational migration relies on remittances, equally, this process also relies heavily on the people back home i.e. the stayers. Moreover, in transnational families, left-behind children are often depicted as needing care and rarely have studies acknowledged that children are also caregivers and sometimes assume 'adult-like' responsibilities.

Based on a hegemonic discourse of childhood, a child is seen as someone who needs adult care in order to develop, as one who needs adult protection and as one who needs an adult to speak on its behalf. The kind of child I encountered differed sharply from the child that is constructed on an idealised nuclear family model. My findings revealed that children were both care-recipients and also caregivers, a position that kept on changing and shifting, based on time and family circumstances. Similar to the study on transitional caregiving in Ghanaian and Guatemalan families (Mazzucato, 2009), this study also found that children could provide care for their elderly caregivers when the need arose.

Consequently, children could help either by performing household chores, offering companionship, or maintaining that link which keeps migrants actively remitting back home (Mazzucato, 2009). Secondly, the present study also found that children could also be financial providers by engaging in piece-work to supplement the family income. Instead, findings support the work of Callaghan, Andenaes & McLeod (2015) in their work with children of domestic violence. They suggest that "research and practise need to shift focus from studying and considering survivors through a problem-focused to a resilience-focused lens" (Callaghan et.al, 2015). As such, my findings rejected the claim of the universal child – who lives in a nuclear family and is represented as vulnerable or in need of care (Burman, 2008).

Empirically, my results support ecological theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) which calls for the understanding of childhood by taking a wholesome environment into consideration i.e. from the individual to community and to macro-dimensions of the environment in which one is experiencing their childhood, mediated by gender, class, and context. The social locations of the children I researched showed deprived children, some of whom were involved in the household economy by working in various piece jobs thus presenting a sharp contrast to the normative understanding of childhood. As such, children were also a source of labour in the household as well as income generators to cover their material needs as remittances from their mothers were either not forthcoming or insufficient.

Secondly, due to prolonged absence of their mothers, some children had stayed behind with elderly caregivers (grandmothers). However, due to old age, some of the children realised their grandmothers were no longer capable of performing some care duties and instead, reversed roles to relieve the burdens from their caregivers e.g. during illness or diminished physical incapacitation. Although children at hand took on some care responsibilities out of necessity, what this also showed was their agency which children used in the absence of their mothers to either take over responsibilities that were originally not theirs or to make decisions that would help them to get some resources for the family to use, especially given the sporadic remittance patterns by their mothers in Botswana.

For example, Child B1 who had since dropped out of school was heavily involved in doing field 'piece jobs' with his grandmother for people in their village in order to contribute towards his family's livelihoods. In the excerpt below, 15-year-old urban-based Child J resorted to doing household 'piece jobs' in order to get money for her books and clothes. By choosing to

look for piece jobs, she was able to use her agency to lessen the burden on her grandmother and also to provision for her family and herself.

> Sometimes, I have to find some work to do, like going to clean someone's house so that we may get money to buy some food to eat before we go to school and also to buy books (Child J)

The foregoing quote does not represent the often normalised and idealised version of a middle-class child from a nuclear family but instead illustrates childhood as a contested notion, given the complex relationship between a child and its environment. Rather, it presents an alternative childhood, one that is not in synchronisation with the universal norms but nonetheless, one that is realistically determined by the circumstances and context in which they are doing family. In this case, the duty of giving care by children is borne out of conditions beyond the local that arise at a broader macro-structural level due to social inequalities in an increasingly globalised world. As such, care-giving should be analysed with their migrant mother's social and economic positioning in mind. It is the location of the mothers that directs, influences and mediates their transnational family experiences.

Children's roles in their families do not remain static but also shift in response to the family needs as they grow older, suggesting the credence of adopting a life course perspective of care (Merla & Baldassar, 2014) in this study as transnational family members will either be care-givers or care-takers or both at various points in their family life cycles. Hence, care will not necessarily take the route of one direction, but it circulates both ways among family members in transnational social spaces (Mazzucato & Schans, 2011). Child E1 repudiates the often-assumed adult-centric view that perceived children as needing care thereby making them merely recipients of care.

> When my aunt who we lived with also migrated to Botswana, I had to assume cooking and cleaning responsibilities in the house for my siblings and my grandmother because she was now very ill. I was always troubled because my grandmother was now always vomiting blood (Child E2 Diary, 2017).

In this prior account, there is an element of agentic capacity that begs to be recognised as she narrates how she had to take care of her family when her granny was ill. In her particular case, this child had been separated from her mother since 2006 when she was still a very small child. At that time, she needed to be cared for by her caregiver but years later, when she had grown slightly older, she also took it upon herself to take care of her ill caregiver. Overall, my findings support the notion of care as circulating in families across varying life cycles. Moreover, I also found that the circulation of care in the families researched was linked broadly to notions of

reciprocity and expectations, a theme that will be discussed in detail in the next section. Essentially, children exposed feelings of guilt and obligations as children felt they owed their mothers and some of their caregivers, particularly for the children who were under the care of their grandmothers. As such, I found the obligation felt by children to reciprocate was linked to how care circulated in families across their life-courses. I expand on this concept in the section below.

5.6.1 Notions of reciprocity

This section briefly focuses on notions of reciprocal exchange in transnational families. Reciprocity has been defined as a personalised form of exchange in which there is an expectation of return between people who have social bonds (Pelaprat & Brown, 2012). Notions of reciprocity normatively assume that people will respond to each other in similar ways. Reciprocity rests on the assumption that in many social situations, human beings normally pay back what they have received from others (Putman, 2001). Therefore, it is normatively assumed that if you receive something positive from another, you will also pay back with something similar i.e. also positive. Findings suggest that children felt they owed their mothers for the sacrifices of migration.

They expressed narratives that were driven by a strong sense of obligation and the desire to reciprocate their mothers and caregivers (for those who were under the care of their grandmothers). Reciprocity is said to reinforce social bonds but at the same time, it also carries moral weight. As such, it has strong psychological power over the recipient, who has to contend with such weight until the obligation to reciprocate has been met (Kleinman, 1995). It is thus a social debt that one carries for life in on-going exchanges in social relationships. In the present study, it was also a driving motivation for the children to work hard so that they would get good jobs in future and take care of their mothers who had sacrificed so much for them.

Most importantly, this finding illustrates that caregiving in transnational families' binds people in intergenerational networks of reciprocity and obligations (Baldassar & Merla, 2014; Dankyi, Mazzucato & Manuh, 2017).Accordingly, children, similar to their mothers, often expressed their mother's migrations as 'sacrifices' made for them hence they felt indebted and hence in their narratives, they all spoke of also looking after their mothers when they were adults. Generally, in collectivist societies, caring is a normatively natural commitment by parents towards their children who in turn, are also expected to care for their parents in their old age.

Therefore, it can be argued that it is basically an exchange where what you do for your child today, he/she is also expected to do the same for you in future, thus qualifying this notion as a future investment of some sort. Deriving my argument from this line of thinking, I argue that children's desires to look after their mothers and caregivers in future was driven by the narrative of sacrifice to which all their mothers constantly referred. Furthermore, it appeared that in their day-to-day interactions, particularly for those children who lived with their grandmothers, these caregivers often spoke about their hopes and dreams for the children to earn in future so that they would also look after them.

They actually expected that their grandchildren would perhaps become nurses, teachers or doctors of tomorrow who would in turn, look after them. On the other hand, the self-sacrifice narrative by their mothers also echoes similar undertones from which children drew cues to also reciprocate their mothers and caregivers in future. This was especially evident amongst the three urban-based teenage girls. For instance, even though Child J missed the presence of her mother, she also realised the sacrifices her mother, as well as her grandmother, were making for her. She planned to work hard at school and become a doctor and be in a position to look after both of them:

> I hope God will bless me, my dream is to become a doctor and if that materialises, I will take care of them and I will stay with them (Child J).

Furthermore, by resolving to pursue her dream of becoming a doctor, Child J is making a choice that may change her future trajectory to enable her to take care of her mother and grandmother. First of all, she feels a sense of obligation to reciprocate her mother for the sacrifices she has made for her. This is indicative of the symbolic capital I have earlier on referred to which transnational mothers consciously create to cushion themselves materially in future. In fact, [*karere mangwana kagokurerawo*] is a commonly referred idiom in Zimbabwe which loosely translates to "look after a child today and tomorrow they will also look after you".

Thus, child-raising in this context and by extension, a mother's sacrifices are embedded in notions of reciprocity expectations and rewards. Likewise, Child N, though a highly ambivalent child towards her mother's migration as displayed by her resentment towards her, still felt obligated to reciprocate in future for her mother's sacrifices:

> If I work hard and get a better life, I will have my children and live with them and also be able to sponsor my mother and look after her so that I can also pay back for the years she has been working tirelessly for me and always away from home. Because I know she wanted to be also home living with her family but just because of me, she had to go out of the country, she had to be working very hard for me. So, I would also want to

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work very hard at school and pass so that tomorrow, I can also help my mother (Child N interview, 2017).

This also supports the multi-directional nature of care in families as it circulates and does not flow in one direction i.e. from mothers to children. Rather it is not static but is continuously exchanged between family members at different life-stages as care is mediated by spatial and temporal dimensions (Baldassar, 2007; Baldassar & Merla, 2013). Child E1 for example, had a dream of becoming a doctor so that she could look after her mother but also in order to be in a position to help people, especially those who would be struggling with school fees. She diarised that:

> When I grow up, I want to be a doctor. I want my mother to enjoy the money I worked for. I want to be a doctor because I want to help people with many diseases. I also want to help people in need of paying school fees for them. My motto is to work hard and make my mother always happy for her life (Child E1- Diary 2017)

Self-motivation emerged as a key coping strategy that was particularly evident in the children's diaries. Yet another child was in a self-motivation drive when she diarised her future dreams and aspirations on 14 June 2017. She indicated as such:

> Today I am experiencing a new year, not because it's January or my birthday but because I am experiencing a huge change in my life, I'm changing from living a life of mediocrity to living my dream. It's my year of hope, I am going to be a woman of strong faith that enables me to overcome the fear of failure, and IT'S A YEAR TO MAKE HISTORY. For many are called but few are chosen, everyone was created to succeed but only a few are willing to pay the price. If you don't know where you are going, any road will take you there, life without a purpose, passion and plan is like a ship without a sail and destination. Ready to work like a slave so that I can live like a queen, being the star of my own movie (Child N- Diary 2017).

Even for 'adultified' Child K, a similar strategy projecting future agency through self-motivation was exhibited. He articulated how he wished to pass his school-leaving examinations and secure a job in order to look after his mother. He wrote this:

> I really wish I could pass my form 4 examinations, then I can also secure a good decent job in future. If that were to happen, I will work really hard and make sure that I also look after my mother. I really wish this could come true because my mother is also out there working for us to get what we need (Child K – Diary 2017).

Similar to Child K, Child N also felt she had to work hard so that she could help her mother in future. She was motivated to work hard in order to reciprocate for her mother's supposed sacrifice. Indirectly, Child N is admitting to her indebtedness to her mother and she reasons that working hard and passing is her ticket to writing off this debt. In this sense, I suggest that transnational mothers have managed to create some future capital for themselves, assuming of

course, that their children gain positive future job prospects to look after them in return for their current sacrifices for their children. In reference to her mother, she said:

> I know she also wanted to be home living with family but just because of me, she had to migrate, she has to be working very hard for me, which is a very big sacrifice that she has been always doing for me. So that is why I have to work hard so that I can pass and also help her in future (Child N, 2017).

What is unknown at this stage is whether this capital will pay off in future as that is dependent on the trajectories their children's lives will take. Nonetheless, such narratives serve to confirm how reproductive labour is often associated with moralities of reciprocity and obligation and further confirms how kinship is lived in storied lives this shows that care in transnational families is inherently reciprocal and governed by generalised norms of reciprocity (Baldassar & Merla, 2014).

5.7   Strategies of coping with prolonged maternal separation

In this section, I talk about how left-behind children devised strategies to cope with maternal separation. Some children had developed strategies of coping that would ease the burdens of the experiences of separation such as remembering the best moments experienced before their mother's migration. Emibayer and Mische (1998, p.962) suggest that "agency is a temporally embedded process of social engagement with the past, responsive to the present or oriented towards the future". Another way of coping was for children to project their future plans by desiring to work hard and hence be able to climb up the social mobility ladder. By projecting their future agency, they were able to imagine what quality of lives they could afford in future for themselves, their mothers and in some instances, caregivers.

Through planning for their present in order to affect their future trajectories, the children were also planning for their 'imagined yet to be' as they were telling their narratives through the present of future things (Ricouer, 1990) by projecting into their futures. Accordingly, even though these children realised they had no power to change their present, they had instead redirected their agency towards the future, with a view to improving their lives. The coping strategies were mostly evident in their diaries where some pages were utilised as memory spaces of their mothers. Over the years of prolonged separation, child J had invented further strategies in order to cope with her mother's absence. She chose to resort to good memories she shared with her mother before she migrated in order to lessen her pain and deal with maternal absence. For example, on days when she really misses her mother, she diarised that:

Sometimes when I miss my mum very much, I wear her clothes so that I can smell her scent whenever I miss her (Child J- Diary 2017).

I took this as her way of maintaining her own unique 'absence-presence' (Pertierra; 2005). For this child, smelling her mother's clothes was her own special way of maintaining that 'absence-presence'. Furthermore, for this child, some items that belonged to her mother had sentimental value in so far as connecting with her absent mother. To illustrate this, she drew a tree in her diary which reminded her of her mother and it was also under the tree that she would always sit with her mother when she visited:

The picture in that camera shows a tree which my mom planted a long time ago and whenever I feel down or sad, I go to sit under the tree thinking of my mother. She loves that tree a lot and her love for that tree makes that tree very special to me (in reference to the photograph of 29 May 2017)

Figure 8: Memory tree for Child J – a photograph she shot of a tree at the front of their house

Even though her mother migrated to Botswana in 2007, when I met her 2017, exactly ten years after separation, Child J was still striving to keep that connection to her mother alive through various strategies. In her own unique manner, this was her way of maintaining emotional ties by holding on to her mother's memories so dearly. As such, in addition to wearing her mother's clothes and sitting under the tree, she also diarised that:

My mother has her own sewing machine which I like to keep safe for her. Whenever I think of her, I take her sewing machine and start to demonstrate to myself what she did a couple of years ago

In one of the pictures she took from a book and pasted in her diary in May, 2017, she narrated how she still has fond memories of a dress that her mother had sewed for her when she was just five years old:
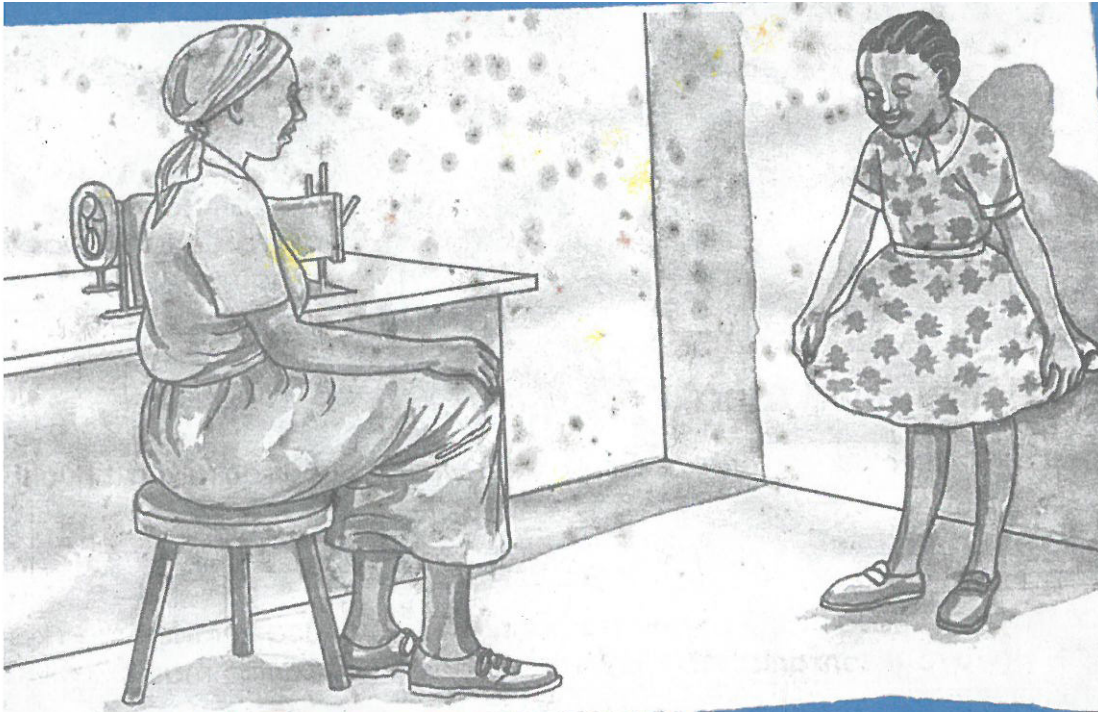
Figure 9: Picture taken from a magazine to depict her memories of a dress her mother sewed for her at the age of five

She gave a narrative of this picture in her diary:

> Whenever I see this picture, it takes me back to when I was five years old when my mother sewed a very beautiful dress for me. I cannot forget that day because I was very happy like the birds singing to welcome a new day. That day was like a sweet dream to me (Child J- Diary May 2017).

It appears most children had rationalised and eventually accepted that they could never change their present circumstances or make up for the years they had lost with their mothers given that that these children were left at very young ages, ranging from infancy to toddlers or just before they began primary schooling. This appears to corroborate with most mothers' narratives who migrated because their children were about to begin school and they needed to work for their school fees.

As such, given this context, when I met with the children, I was not meeting infants or toddlers but children who had passed that stage, most of who were now teenagers hence their attitudes towards maternal absence were not static but shifting as they grew older and were especially able to link their mothers' migrations to their livelihoods. Perhaps this would explain why these

children were now focused on their future plans given the time lapsed, firstly as a way of coping, secondly as a means of changing their future trajectories and lastly, as a way of reciprocating their mothers for the sacrifices they had made for them.

5.8 Concluding remarks

This chapter has presented children's perceptions on motherhood vis-à-vis maternal separation. In line with the main themes, the study has shown that children harbour material and non-material expectations towards their mothers which make it very difficult, if not impossible, for both to be simultaneously fulfilled. Their expectations revolve around productive and reproductive roles which are essentially irreconcilable, leading to children feeling ambivalent over their mothers' absence. Their mixed feelings and attitudes towards maternal absence fluctuate between processes of rationalising absence and accepting absence as a necessary livelihood strategy, on one hand. On the other hand, their perceptions and attitudes are driven by anger and frustration over their situations.

Ultimately, even though children tend to conform to biological-based views of mothering (Parrenas, 2005), they were still able to appreciate the connection between migration and livelihoods / material gains. On this basis, I concluded that the level and degree of acceptability of maternal absence was tied to the fulfilment of their economic needs, suggesting that ideology is actually malleable. This ambivalence children experienced was influenced by children's unquestioned conformity to mainstream motherhood ideologies that privilege nuclear based family models but also intensified by the absence of transnational communication with their mothers and very minimal physical contact.

The sporadic remittances also served to amplify their ambivalence as it cast doubts on their mothers' migration projects. Through the lens of transnational communication, the study was able to connect children's experiences of separation to the larger social inequalities that are governed by broader macro-structural factors. As such, the study argued for the necessity of using an intersectional lens to situate the mother's class positioning which actually dictate the kind of the mothering left-behind children receive and the kinds of childhoods they experience. My findings also illustrated the significance that children attach to fatherhood by unpacking what they perceive to be a father.

Through analysing their sentiments on paternal absence, it was evident that the children were still regulated by hegemonic gender discourses, given how they tended to associate fathers with the responsibilities of material provision for the family. This finding suggested the necessity

of including fatherhood in transnational family research because the sentiments they expressed were merely based on an imagined fatherhood which would be better addressed by researching on fatherhood in transnational families. In addition, the study buttressed the commonly held assumption based on the notion of a middle-class childhood that children need adult care and supervision. Instead, the children in the present study were able to exercise their agency through individual actions without the interventions of adults. For instance, the child who went out her way to buy a small birthday present for her brother; the girl who took up piece jobs in order to augment financial resources for buying books and some food or the boy who would join his grandmother for piece jobs in people's gardens in order to generate some income for consumption in the household.

Such actions by children also showed the changing dynamics in transnational families as roles shift with some household work now being done by children. However, I do not over-privilege this agency in my study as it was invoked by poverty in the first place. As argued by Abebe (2010), poverty is one the main reasons why children may become caregivers in families. Furthermore, although the key concept underpinning the present study is distant motherhood, which connotes a geographical separation between children and their mothers, findings show that it was not only distance that prohibited the actual exchange of care-giving for which the children yearned.

Instead, due to the mother's class positioning, a number of obstacles stood in the way for effective transnational engagement between family members, such as lack of access to communication tools and financial resources to communicate. As such, migration and the subsequent prolonged absence of mothers introduced shifts of mother's duties that left both children and mothers feeling ambivalent against the realities of failing to conform to universalised notions of mothering yet experiences shared by children exposed the impact of structures on families and left-behind children. Childhood, just like motherhood, is classed based on gender, race, ethnicity and class positioning, thus supporting intersectional analysis (Crenshaw, 1989) as an analytical tool in framing the kind of transnationalism in which the participants were engaged and the accompanying outcomes of their children.

Situated at the crossroads of multiple disadvantages because of their class and legal positioning, separation was the only strategy of survival for these families. I therefore maintain that maternal separation was a livelihood strategy and therefore a form of care, even though this care was not proximate. The geography of doing family also serves as a useful analytical tool

here. This is premised on the assumption that doing family incorporates any spaces that enable the support of familial relations (Valentine, 2008). Valentine's (2008) spatial geography of doing family was therefore useful for understanding those families that are normatively labelled as transgressors because it opens up the possibility of appreciating doing family as being anywhere or everywhere, thus calling for an understanding of how and why migrant mothers spatially reproduce their mother-work in separate geographical locations from their children. Distance alone is not a prohibitive factor in distant caring but other factors also come into play, specifically the social and economic location of the mothers in question.

Furthermore, even though decisions to migrate for care-work are made at individual level, it is actually the processes of globalisation that have engendered migration and also account for the radical alteration of family forms and functions (Schmalzbauer, 2004). At national level, the state is also central in the regulation of families. There is a significant entwinement between how families function in the private sphere and the economic, political and global context within which doing family takes place. Consequently, this calls for childhood experiences in transnational families to be located and analysed within the broader macro-structural processes at national and global level in sending and receiving contexts.

I have therefore paid attention to linkages imposed by structural factors that mediate the environments in which these children are being raised as well as the environments in which their mothers are embedded. To push the point further, I revisit the three main ways in which transnational mothers supposedly assert their role as mothers and breadwinners i.e. through frequent visits, communication and regular remittances. By using these three as the necessary conditions for impactful transnationalism, this takes me back to chapter 4 where I discussed at length about how structural economic and legal factors have impacted on the migrant mothers' ability to fulfil their motherhood and breadwinner roles for their left-behind children.

In that specific discussion, I also made reference to these outcomes extending beyond the host nation and directly affecting the children (the manner in which they interplay across borders). I have connected children's stories to the broader context as a way of developing story linkages to the broader social context in which they were produced (Kim, 2016) in order to interrogate historical, social and the political world in which the stories are embedded (Eisner, 1991; Schifrin, 1996). Gubrium and Holstein (2009, p.55) argue along similar lines that "in practice, no item of experience is meaningful in its own right, it is made meaningful through particular

ways it is linked to other items. Linkage creates a context for understanding." I therefore attempt to link the children's experiences to factors beyond their immediate households.

Just like motherhood, childhood also emerges at the intersections of children's situated experiences, as well as external conditions. Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (1979) identified a set of systems that impact on a child's development. Key to this theory is the acknowledgement of both micro (which is the most immediate/ proximate environment of the child and macro systems (which though furthest from the child's proximate environment, are responsible for determining a child's economic, political and cultural positioning. The multi-sited research approach used in this study provided a more nuanced analysis of the environments in which children and their mothers were embedded.

That brings me to the new sociology of childhood studies whose theoretical underpinnings I used to anchor my research with left-behind children. Broadly speaking, this theory is underpinned by the necessity of recognising children as independent thinkers and agentic beings (Qvortrup, 1994; James et al., 1997; Punch, 2002; Dobson, 2009). However, I am inclined to resist thinking of children's agency in its generalised form as propounded by the new sociology of childhood. Instead, I want to engage the notion of agency in so far as I thought it applied or not, in relation to the children who participated in the present study. Although I came across some cases of agency though my interactions with them, I found that their agency was not so clear-cut or straightforward.

For starters, the children's social locations did not leave much room for agency but rather agency that originated from poverty (Abebe, 2010). For example, Child J and K, doing piece jobs, were actually actions that were born out of necessity in environments where they had several constraints. Similarly, other instances where some glimmer of agency may have been present, such as the agency to assume care duties in the family, their agency to work or helping their siblings or elderly caregivers were merely born out of necessity and lack of alternative choices for these children. Agency thus had to be analysed within their situated contexts, which in my view, invoked some form of forced agency for the sake of survival and not voluntary exercise of their agencies. The concept of family care circulation and notions of reciprocity (Baldassar & Merla, 2014) were also discussed in this study.

Children's feelings of owing some form of social debts to their mothers for the sacrifices they undertook for their children were at the centre of this theme. Children's narratives exposed some implicit informal social contracts which were driven by the self-sacrifice narrative of

mothers, thus propelling children to value and pledge future reciprocity for their mothers. In unpacking these notions, I argued for the adoption of a life-course perspective on care-circulation (Baldassar & Merla, 2014) in order to illuminate care-giving in transnational families as constantly changing across space and time at different life-courses of the individuals involved. To illustrate this, I found that although children were left by their mothers at very young ages (average of five years), these children had grown and were now teenagers. As such, they also took on care-giving duties in the household which included caring for their elderly caregivers and siblings. In that respect, I argue that care-giving is a form of social capital which family members continue to exchange and draw from in long-term intergenerational exchanges of care and reciprocity.

This resonates with Baldassar and Merla (2014) care circulation framework to illustrate that care is not static; different family members will receive or give care at different life course stages and care-giving is not neutral but is governed by expectations of reciprocity which are underwritten by asymmetrical relationships in the circle of care-giving. Last but not least, the study also demonstrated how children use their agency to cope with absent mothers, findings showed that children suffer considerable emotional costs to migration of their mothers. However, in order to adapt to their situations, they had devised way and means of coping which included revisiting happier moments with their mothers and keeping old items their mothers had given them in order to maintain a sense of co-presence by drawing from their happy memories.

In my final analysis, my findings reverberated with previous studies that have established that children may benefit economically whilst suffering emotionally from parental separation (Asis, 2006; Parrenas, 2001; 2005; Suarez-Orozco et al., 2002; Boccagni, 2012; Graham et al., 2012). In this case, even the economic benefit has not been fully realised such that children were suffering both emotionally and economically, with the exception on one child who had most of her needs fulfilled. Zentgraf and Chinchilla (2012) have devised a framework for assessing costs and benefits of separation and suggest context as the most significant factor in understanding transnational family separation.

Their framework considers six factors to be taken into account, namely, the pre-migration family and child-care traditions; nature and regularity of contact; reliability of remittances; perceptions around remittances and how they are used by recipients; opportunities and context for reunification as well as policies shaping transnational family separation and reunification

(Zentgraf & Chinchilla, 2012). This framework further provides a lens through which left-behind children's experiences can be understood. Drawing from this framework, I found that children in this study suffered tremendously emotionally and economically given that the key factors raised in this framework were all negative i.e. absence of contact, quality of contact; lack of opportunities for reunification, migration policies that sustained their mothers as illegal and undocumented leaving no official room for reunification and lack of frequent and sufficient remittances.

Consequently, the stories children told in this study are best analysed through these six key factors in order to understand their perceptions of motherhood and fatherhood, their ambivalence and their duties as caregivers. However, what remains is that the emotional and economic impact of separation on children and their mothers, though felt and experienced at household level is governed by higher level factors that occur outside the family but is driven by processes within the broader national and global institutions encompassing formal and informal institutions.

CHAPTER 6:   CAREGIVERS – RESULTS & DISCUSSION

> Transnational studies tend to conjure a picture of migrants located in host settings as the primary architects of transnational social fields. The activities of their kin and contacts in the home settings, while clearly an important part of these processes, are not accorded equal status (Harney & Baldassar, 2007, p.195).

6.1 Introduction:

The previous two chapters have reported on findings from transnational mothers and left-behind children respectively. Although there are unique insights given by each group, there were notable consistencies in some of the findings when it came to mother's and children's perspectives on motherhood. Similarly, results from caregivers also showed some similarities in perceptions with mothers and children. As such, I begin this chapter by briefly discussing these similarities and then I move on to discuss the findings related to caregivers in this study. Overall, results from mothers, left-behind children and mothers indicated that they all believed in ideal motherhood as the best form of mothering.

As such, for all the three participant groups, there was a disjuncture between expectations of motherhood and the actual lived experiences and realities they faced in relation to motherhood. Taken together, their sentiments suggested that they associated co-resident motherhood with better outcomes for children in terms of care duties such as discipline. All participants felt that they were responsibilities of motherhood that only biological mothers could do, showing the importance of a physically present mother. For example, mothers felt their absence had led to deviant behaviours from their children back home, children felt they needed their mothers to ensure proper guidance and discipline whilst most caregivers felt the responsibility discipline should lie within the actual mothers of left-behind children.

Furthermore, sentiments from children and caregivers also converged on their expectations and notions of reciprocity. It appears mothers and caregivers' sacrifices made for children in terms of care-giving were not given neutrally as children felt compelled to reciprocate for these sacrifices sometime in the future when they became financially independent. As such, the findings illustrated that the relationships between mothers, children and caregivers were governed by informal social contacts which served to remind the care-recipients (children) of their social debts owed to their mother and caregivers. This was despite the fact that sometimes, children particularly older ones also took up care duties in the household for their siblings and elderly grandmothers. Against a background of the aforementioned similarities, this chapter moves on to discuss the narratives from seven caregivers of left-behind children in this study.

I begin by discussing what care encompasses in transnational families and then explain why caregivers were brought into the present study.

Care covers a wide range of activities ranging from highly intimate social, health and sexual care, services of bathing, feeding, nursing and sexual acts to lesser intimate ones such as cooking, cleaning, shopping and general maintenance work. In some accounts, it may also include wage-earning or income-generating activities necessary for provisioning (Yeates, 2009, p.9). From this definition, it may be concluded that the migration of mothers is also a form of care-work but does not constitute all care work. However, in the context of migration of a mother, these responsibilities usually witness reconfigurations in response to transnational circumstances, paving the way for substitute caregivers to take over parenting roles to children of migrant parents.

Several authors (Parrenas, 2001; 2005; Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avila, 1997; Schmalzbauer, 2004; Menjivar, 2006; Falicov, 2007; Raijman et al., 2003) advanced three main facets of care that children need, namely, moral, emotional and material. Moral care is that care that provides discipline (and also values education) to children in order to raise decent moral citizens and is determined by societal and cultural expectations, whilst emotional care provides emotional security to children and is expressed through expressions of warmth, concern, affection and sympathy (Parrenas, 2001). Lastly, material care is that which satisfies physical needs such as food, clothing and education. These three facets suggest that transnational mothers may not be in a position to fulfil all three forms of care at a distance and therefore resort to sharing such responsibilities with caregivers who remain co-present in the children's lives.

Seemingly, collectivist care-giving practices are not new (Falicov, 2007) in Zimbabwe, and many other places in Africa, making child raising a duty that encompassed both biological and extended family. On the other hand, although African family systems are characterised as being flexible with responsibilities distributed among extended family members (Bledsoe, 1990, cited in Baldassar et al., 2007, p. 144), there is a need to appreciate that African family systems are not homogenous but a diversity determined by their cultural and social context. Crucially, this factor is key in understanding why the notion of the universal child, based on a middle-class nuclear family system, may not be relevant in the present study.

Central to mobility of transnational mothers is the key role fulfilled by caregivers who look after the children during the absence of the mother. It is argued that caregivers play an enabling role as they contribute to the migration decision of transnational mothers. Caregivers are also

important for the well-being of left behind children (Mazzucato & Schans, 2011). It was equally important to explore the various kinds of transnational care arrangements employed by migrant mothers in Botswana, the factors influencing their choices of caregivers and the type of relationships with the 'other mothers' who they entrusted with the day-to-day care of their children.

Furthermore, the role of caregivers in the transnational families has been understudied, with most studies focusing on either the transnational mother in the host country or children left behind in the origin country. Dankyi, Mazzucato and Manuh (2017) have argued that care work that is done back home in order to allow migrants to migrate is often under-researched, with most studies emphasising how migrants provide social protection back home through remittances. However, they further argue that migrants also receive social protection from the people they left behind, such as caregivers.

As such, the role of the caregivers is often overlooked. Moreover, there is surplus attention paid to care export to the Global North by women from the Global South, leaving less room to focus on the actual care-giving that takes place in the Global South (Dankyi et al., 2015). Again, even though remittances play a crucial role in migrants' lives, nevertheless, a focus on remittances that needs to also pay attention to the reciprocal processes that take place between the migrants and caregivers (Dankyi et al, 2017), a process that Mazzucato (2011) refers to as reverse remittances or cross-border division of labour (Schmalzbauer, 2004).

For these reasons, it was important to bring in the perspectives of care-givers Equally important was the need to research and understand why or how caregivers take care of left-behind children, in view of the parenting norms in Africa, where other kin beyond the biological family may take care of children (Dankyi et al., 2015), suggesting some caregivers may take up their roles out of a sense of obligation towards family and not out of choice. Based on the foregoing, this chapter discusses findings of the data that emerged from care-givers of left-behind children in Zimbabwe.

This discussion focuses on the perceptions of motherhood and experiences of care-giving by 'other' mothers. I accessed a total of seven (7) caregivers, of which two of these were once children that had been left behind by their mothers and as they grew up, their transnational status shifted from left-behind children to caregivers to their younger siblings. Furthermore, during the course of their mothers' prolonged absences, they had also fallen pregnant and were now also single mothers, both carrying dual responsibilities of caring for their own children as

well as their siblings. Consequently, in giving their narratives, they spoke of the duality of their experiences as left-behind children and as caregivers as well.

My findings established some key issues which questions some assumptions of migrants and caregivers in transnational families. Firstly, it is commonly assumed that migrants remit to caregivers so that their children may be well taken care of by caregivers. However, the findings of the present study were inconsistent with this view because caregivers were also remitting back to the migrants through various income strategies which they used to look after left-behind children. The commonly held notion of the caregiver as a receiver of resources from abroad was repudiated in this study. Instead, this study illustrated a reworking of family not only in terms of emotional labour, but also productive labour, with caregivers also encompassing the role of breadwinner in transnational families.

Secondly, there was significant evidence to show the gendered nature of care and the normative obligations that underpin caregiving. The fact that all care-givers were female kin-relatives corroborated the central tenets of the global care chain theory in which care-work, though hierarchical, is concentrated in the hands of women and arranged in a manner that ensures women, and not men, are held responsible for child raising and care-work (Hoschild, 2002). The study indicated that caregivers were involved in care-work because they were obligated to do so on the basis of their gender. Even when they knew that the burdens were overwhelming, as in the case of elderly caregivers, they still endured under the most difficult circumstances due to their kinship gendered obligations.

It also emerged that although care-giving was gendered and underpinned by cultural obligations, it was not given neutrally as caregivers harboured some expectations which acted as a form of future social capital which they could draw from when the children grew older and were independent. As such, caregivers placed high value on the education of children because they saw education as the surest way through which the children could become financially independent and thus look after them. From a theoretical stand-point, this finding gave merit to the care circulation framework (Merla & Baldassar, 2014) by situating the role of caregivers, not as static, but revolving over time and space across different points in the life-cycles of both the care-givers and care-receivers.

Another major issue raised by caregivers exposed their perceptions on the meaning and roles of a mother. I have already mentioned gendered obligations that underpin care-work in transnational families. However, it appears that normative expectations placed on caregivers

did not leave any room for them to turn down the responsibilities of looking after left-behind children. However, their views on motherhood showed a disjuncture between their everyday roles as caregivers and the meanings they assigned to motherhood, suggesting that they may have gone into these roles unwillingly, or with some reservations.

Therefore, when they expressed their reluctance to discipline children, for example, they were in fact reifying hegemonic ideologies of gender and motherhood. In their views, they were specific roles that only mothers could do, hence essentialising biology in care-giving and child raising. Given this background, I devote the following section to give brief introductions of the caregivers and I subsequently move onto the discussion of the mentioned themes.

6.2   Introducing the participants

Caregiver B: She was an elderly grandmother who had been looking after her daughters' children since 2007. When I met with her for the first time in 2017, she had been care-giving for ten years. She assisted her daughter to migrate by selling her goat to meet migration costs. She also had many other orphans she was taking care of as she had lost three of her children to chronic illnesses. She had consistently faced problems of insufficient remittances and disciplinary issues from some of the children.

Caregiver F: She was left as a child by her mother in 2007 under the care of her uncle back then. However, when she was a little older, she became the caregiver to her younger siblings. She had also fallen pregnant during her teenage years and when I met her, she had just had her second child. Remittances were hardly sufficient, and she struggled to discipline her brother. She believed it was the mother's responsibility to discipline him.

Caregiver C: She was the only caregiver that was from the paternal side of the child she looked after. She was caring for her brother's son whose father had since died. The mother had migrated in 2007 leaving her son with her sister, an arrangement that did not last long as the child preferred to stay with her. One weekend, the child visited and decided not to return to his maternal aunt again and that is how she assumed responsibility for her nephew since 2007. She was employed and was paying school fees for her nephew. When she faced disciplinary challenges, she would call and refer the issue to the mother of the child.

Caregiver E: She was taking care of her sister's three children. She suddenly found herself as the caregiver after her sister separated from her husband and her children were chased away. She felt obliged to help take care of these children despite her incapacities financially. Although

obligated to assume responsibility for her sisters' children, she strongly believed that children needed to live with their mother.

Caregiver J: She was an urban-based grandmother who was looking after her grandchildren after her daughter migrated to Botswana in 2007. In addition to her daughters' two children, she also had other children she was caring for that were left to her by her deceased son and daughter, making them a total of five grandchildren. Often, she would be contracted by the school where her grandchildren attended to do piece jobs at the school fields as payment in lieu of school fees.

Caregiver T: She was an elderly grandmother in rural Zimbabwe whose daughter had migrated to Botswana in 2007. She had remained looking after her two grandchildren aged five years and a seven-month old infant. She occasionally did piece jobs and also sold her cow to raise school fees for her grandchildren. She strongly believed that in future, they would get good jobs and also look after her.

 Caregiver M: Like caregiver F, she was also unique in the sense that she was once a left-behind child by her mother who had migrated to Botswana in 2005. As she grew up, she assumed responsibility for her younger siblings and her own daughter as she had fallen pregnant in her late teenage years.

With the foregoing backgrounds in mind, I now discuss the main themes in the following section, supported by verbatim quotes from participants.

6.3   Gendered obligations and entrapment

Remittances emerged as a constant source of tension for the caregivers and this was directly linked to undesirable consequences for the children and their caregivers. From the class and social locations of binational mothers in this study, we were already aware that remittance behaviour would be negative and hence impact on caregivers' capacities to care for left-behind children. However, I want to discuss remittances beyond the effects on caregivers but in so far as they link to gender and kinship obligations of care. I therefore illustrate some of the difficulties expressed by caregivers that are tied to their kinship obligations in the sense that no matter the difficulties faced, caregivers in this study, still endured out of cultural and kinship obligations to take care of left-behind children. Almost all caregivers stated that the limited resources they received were insufficient to care for the children and all their needs and failure to remit regularly meant caregivers experienced some form of 'stuckness' in the care duties

they were supposed to fulfil as there were various difficult situations that required financial /material resources.

As a result, this unleashed a number of undesirable consequences with which the caregivers had to find solutions to, while at the same time dealing with the emotional impacts these had on children who found themselves trapped in a cycle of poverty. Caregivers often found themselves trapped in poverty when remittances did not flow in smoothly or sufficiently. Remittances represent the currency of love and care in transnational families (Singh, Cabraal & Robertson, 2010; Castaneda & Buck, 2011) and the irregular flows experienced by care-givers meant some form of dissatisfaction leading to tensions with the transnational mothers.

Insufficient or total lack of remittances meant caregivers had to contend with lack of food, clothing, basic needs, school fees, school uniforms, books, etc.; debts, lack of or no communication between mothers and caregivers; selling of valued assets such as domestic animals, resorting to menial piece jobs to fend for the children, deteriorating health and stress. I observed that narratives of poverty were consistent from all three groups of participants. Mothers could not remit enough due to their difficult conditions in Botswana, children never received enough for their food and education and caregivers never got enough to take care of the children's needs.

Therefore, in discussing remittances in this section, I do not focus on the type of poverty they experience but rather I use it to connect to my overall argument which I have discussed in the previous chapters and to also illustrate the concept of gendered entrapment in transnational caregiving arrangements. Earlier on, I have argued that the experiences of motherhood and childhood should be analysed within the context in which they take place. By the same token, I argue that the experiences of care-giving given here in relation to lack of remittances should be situated within the broader context in which care-giving is taking place.

I also place remittances at the centre of care-giving as they determine outcomes of the relationships between the transnational mothers and caregivers with consequences on the children left-behind. Remittances or lack thereof determine the kinds of relationships and care the children will eventually receive from care-givers. For example, in the following extract, grandmother T, based in rural Zimbabwe and a primary caregiver to two of her daughter's children since 2007 was one of the caregivers who revealed the migration challenges of her daughter. She had to make do with selling her personal domestic animals in order to send her grandchildren to school. Although she acknowledged her daughter's challenges, she also

complained about the flow of remittances from Botswana but at the same time, she has no choice as she is also described gendered kinship obligations of care towards her grandchildren. She shows that she is expected to do that, and it is not a duty about which she has a choice or that she can easily refuse to do.

By expressing that she is 'she is wondering what she can do' so that her grandchildren can complete their schooling, she is basically projecting signs of 'stuckness' but with no solution. I noted that giving up or rather surrendering these children or at the very least telling her daughter that she could not cope were not options that came to her mind at all. She insisted that because these children were her daughter's children, she had to do whatever she could to help them.

> I struggle as the mother delays in sending money so I have three cows and I have had to sell one of them so that my grandchildren can go to school. I want this problem to end for the sake of my grandchildren so that they can go to school but I can see that the money the mother earns in that country is difficult to come by and I can see the mother is also struggling and suffering so I am really wondering what I can do so that the children can complete their schooling (Granny T, 2017).

Additionally, although like the children, caregivers are also aware that they would be worse off without remittances, never mind how little or delayed they may be in coming, the actual reality is that the remittances provided very little for them and they also come at huge costs, emotionally and psychologically. In some cases, there a were economic costs too, as in this case where the caregiver resorted to selling her own cow to cover the gaps in school-fees, an indication of how migration comes with significant costs for families. For Caregiver C, she conveyed her sense of 'stuckness' when she revealed how it was difficult for her sister's children to fully understand their lack of resources:

> Because of the lack of money, even when you talk to the children to explain the situation, the children will start to wish if only their mother was there, they would not be lacking. They think back to the time when they once lived with their mother and they always wish if only they could be like other children, with proper school uniforms, books, with their fees paid but we are not able to do that because of the life we are living now, we have nothing and we live from day to day (Caregiver E – Interview)

In the foregoing, the caregiver's story reveals her perceptions of motherhood as she reasoned that her sister's children would be more accepting of their situation, i.e. poverty, if the mother was present. On the other hand, Caregiver M, left by her mother in 2005 when she was still a little girl in primary school is now a grown woman who fell pregnant during her late teen years and now has a daughter. In addition, as the first-born child, she is responsible for her three other siblings including a younger one who the mother conceived in Botswana in 2012 and

subsequently passed on to her to care for. Her account also speaks of her mother's as well as her own difficulties in fulfilling motherhood obligations due to her inability to provide for her siblings and her own child.

Despite her being unemployed, she is still expected to care for her younger sibling, a child the mother conceived whilst in Botswana. Her narrative reveals she is trapped by her obligations to care but because she is expected to take of her mother's other child, she continues to endure despite the challenges.

> I am unable to get money and if only I could get some capital so that I can start hoarding goods for re-sale in order to look after my child as well as my mother's child because sometimes we do not have money for food. Like right now, at my sister's schools, she needs books and a tracksuit but I have no money to buy this so that she can go to school with adequate provisions. Also, my mother usually sends groceries and then tells me to also source other basics like vegetables and meat but I am unemployed (Caregiver M, 2017).

It appears gendered expectations of care exert pressure on women to take up and endure childcare obligations. Another example related to caregiver E, a maternal aunt to three children left in her care by her younger sister, does not only have to contend with care-giving to these three children. She also has three children of her own and another three from her younger sister who migrated to South Africa who had been out of touch for several years, without any communication or remittances. Yet despite this, she still endured in her obligations as a caregiver bringing the total number of children under her household to 13 and in addition, three adults. This family of 16 resided in a two-roomed shack in urban Harare and epitomised what it means to be stuck in gendered obligations of care.

> When my sister's children were chased away by their stepfather, I just had to take them in and I had no problems in that. However, my sister's situation in Botswana is not good and sometimes she cannot send money because she says they are not paying in Botswana. So, the challenge is that I can't get food to feed them even when they are going to school, most of the time they go on empty stomachs (Caregiver E, 2017).

The preceding case demonstrates the willingness of another woman's readiness to suddenly assume care responsibilities because of the obligation to do so, regardless of her own impoverished circumstances. What is striking is the absence of either of the fathers of these children or male kin in the care-giving arrangements. Moreover, since 2006, the children have not been under one caregiver but have had to change caregivers and in none of these changes, did a male figure feature as part of the care arrangements.

Unlike men, women are regulated by a strong discourse of gendered obligations that they are expected to fulfil, regardless of circumstances, hence the reason why she is willing to sacrifice for her sister's children. Grandmother J's daughter also migrated for domestic work in 2007 and left her two children behind. In addition, she lost her husband, then her son and older daughter who in turn, left three children orphaned. By default, these orphans are also dependent on the migrant daughter. In narrating her story, she expressed the agony of how she and her grandchildren live destitute lives, again revealing the 'stuckness' she is in:

> I have no food to eat and I have no one else to depend on except J. Once in a while, some church members give me food. Food is very little and not enough for me and the children. When things are difficult in Botswana, sometimes she will send a few dollars and I buy maize meal and sometimes when things are really tough, she will not send and we will just have to endure because since she left for Botswana, she is still struggling and as a result we are suffering here such that at times, I get help with second hand clothes from my church and sometimes they also give me mealie-meal. The burden of this family is too much for one person to handle and it's also difficult for my daughter.

Turning back to my earlier position of class positioning, I argue that the caregiver's feelings of entrapment were not independent from the effects of the structural environment from which the migrant mothers were operating. Therefore, transnational mothers' class and social locations had a direct impact on the way caregivers exercised and experienced their responsibilities on a day-to-day basis. The effects of transnational motherhood did not remain in Botswana with the mothers but were transported back to the families left behind.

6.3.1   Grandmothers as care-givers

The way caregivers feel obligated to care for their kin relatives is driven by dominant ideologies which function to regulate what women should do or not do. Such obligations, particularly the burdens associated with care-giving, become more apparent when elderly women are involved in the provision of care for children. Previous studies have shown that the demands of care-giving exert stress and affect the health of grandparents (Grinstead, Leder, Jensen & Bond, 2003), especially given the physical demands of caregiving (Jendrik, 1993). It has also been noted that childcare affects health as it also invokes lifestyle changes, relationships and social roles of grandparents (Szinovacz, DeViney & Atkinson, 1999) as this reduces their time for self-care (Roe, Minkler, Saunders & Thomson, 1996).

In this section, I discuss maternal grandmothers as care-givers to children in this study in order to bring into focus their experiences of care-giving in their old age. To a large extent, grandmothers in caregiving also link and extend the notion of gendered entrapment and

obligations to care that are carried by elderly women, regardless of their age. In the present study, three grandmothers continued to endure in their roles as caregivers in spite of the limited capacities due to their old ages and failing health. For example, caregiver B knew she was not as healthy as she used to be and was constantly unwell, leading to a reduction in her capacity to care, which was dwindling as each year passed but she still had to endure in caring for her grandchildren:

> My body is now sore and sometimes I fail to sleep because of pain, I don't even know whether it is cause by high blood pressure but I went to the clinic and when they checked, they told me I don't have BP or diabetes. I ended up stressing and even asked them to test my blood for HIV and the nurses even laughed when I suggested this but they tested me and told me I was negative. I think the pain is also from working in the fields like now we are starting to prepare to plough the fields and we have no cows so it's all manual and then the harvest is not even that much (Granny B, 2017).

The burdens of care-giving associated with ageing further compounded the feelings of entrapment in which aged caregivers found themselves. It can thus be argued that caregiving by grandmothers had the effect of overextending them physically and emotionally, yet they still felt obligated to care for left-behind children. In some care-giving triangles, studies have shown that the role of care-giving may prove to be more burdensome and less provisional than expected (Parrenas, 2010). In addition, given this care-giver's age, the burdens she is carrying as a caregiver brings into question what appropriate aging is or should be.

Just like the dominant discourse of motherhood, there is also a dominant discourse of aging that works alongside that of motherhood. However, both discourses are implicitly classed and gendered. Ideally, the dominant discourse on aging regards old age as a time when they should be resting and also be taken care of. However, in this instance, we witness a reversal of roles invoked by migration, pointing to the disruption caused by migration which has called for a reconstitution of familial duties and responsibilities as the care voids left by the mothers now have to be filled by the elderly.

Furthermore, the scenario also supports intersectional theory (Crenshaw, 1989; Yuval-Davies, 2006) in understanding caregiver experiences at the intersections of gender, class and nationality and age, in this instance. Age also appears to have a direct link to the quality of care that left-behind children receive as it is directly related to the (in) capacities to care:

> The five grandchildren are too much for me to look after and feed, the burden is heavy for me and there is nothing for them to eat. Like now we have no food and the younger one in grade two has already gone to school, hungry so I tell her to carry water and then

> I tell her to sip water throughout the day until she is back from school and by then, maybe if I am lucky, I will have found something to cook. (Granny J, 2017)

Grandmother B further admits that she is no longer able to do things that she could, due to her age and continuous body pains. The role she has assumed for so many years since 2007 basically demonstrate the changing family roles brought about due to migration but essentially underlining the limited choices that under-privileged transnational families have in choosing the right care-giving options for their left-behind children. Compounding to the losses of her children, Grandmother B further admits that she thought her daughter's migration would signal new beginnings of success for the family.

Her initial faith in this migration project was also evident in her decision to sell her goat in order to finance her daughter's journey to Botswana because she believed they would get "clothes to wear, blankets to cover them and food to eat" based on her initial beliefs. By doing so, her reasoning was to capacitate her daughter to fulfil her motherhood roles through migration on the assumption that this would benefit the entire family. This particular family's decision lends support to Stark & Bloom' s theory of labour migration which suggests that migration is a family strategy whose decision is made at household level (Stark & Bloom, 1985), hence the caregiver's decision to sell her goat to help with her daughter's initial migrations costs.

Since there was a clear-cut division of roles prior to migration and responsibilities assigned to each member, the caregiver had to remain and care for the children (mainly reproductive role) with the children whilst the mother migrated so as to be able to remit money to the household (mainly productive role). Consequently, her failure to remit did not only reflect as individual failure to meet migration expectations, but the entire household's inability to improve the household economy. Her account below captures the faith she had placed in the migration project and the subsequent realisation that it was not successful, hence placing burdens on her.

> I also have a grand-son who was born HIV positive and I worry about what I can do to feed him in order for him to get proper nutrition. When my daughter left for Botswana, I sold my goat in the hope that her migration would improve our lives, she is trying but because we are so many, it's heavy for her to manage the family on her own (Granny B, 2017).

It seemed that if resources were adequate, this would in turn reduce their stresses of care-giving on grandmothers as they would get adequate food and access to health-care for themselves and their grandchildren. Crucially, remittances, though not encompassing the entirety of care, are crucial in transnational caregiving. In my view, lack of resources thus intensified their negative

experiences of care-giving. Previous studies that resonate with my findings have established that grandparents who care for grandchildren experience higher levels of stress when compared to those grandparents who are not involved in informal kinship care (Dunne & Kettler, 2008).

Furthermore, it has been generally found that there is a connection between social disadvantage and psychological health of caregivers (Dunne & Kettler, 2008) with informal kin-caregivers experiencing more depression with lower levels of life satisfaction (Bunch et al., 2007). Although I did not have a comparison with grandmothers who were not caregivers, these findings resonate with the present study and also place remittances as an essential component in successful caregiving.

6.4   Future expectations and reciprocity

I have discussed the notion of reciprocity in the previous chapter as an on-going obligation that all children expressed as a necessary duty in future towards their mothers and caregivers. Reciprocity is a social contract through which two or more people form social bonds through the processes of receiving and giving back in turn. In this section, I adopt a parallel standpoint to Merla and Baldassar (2014) which positions transnational care relationships as processes that produce and reproduce unequal power relationships that are influenced by gender, socio-economic status and age. In this section, I discuss how education of left-behind children is closely tied to reciprocity and thus features centrally as a key motivator for caregivers.

I mainly focus on how education was perceived by caregivers as a viable avenue through which children will in future reciprocate for the care given to them by their current caregivers. There were strong nuances of expectations which revealed that caregivers expected that their care would in future be returned, regardless of when and in what form (Merla & Baldassar, 2014). Caregiving is a system that heavily relies on those who stayed at home (Dankyi, Mazzucato & Manuh, 2017). As such, caregivers perform various duties and maintain that link that keeps migrants actively sending remittances home (Mazzucato, 2009). Given the significance of their role, it is not surprising that they would harbour expectations of reciprocity from the migrants as well as the children they remain looking after in the country of origin.

Education of left-behind children featured prominently for a good reason, as it was seen as a means of ending the cycle of poverty in their families.

Subsequently, I argue that by taking care of left-behind children, caregivers were building social capital which they could use in later years. Consequently, when schooling was disrupted

as a result of lack of remittances, caregivers were affected by this as this would affect the possible earning capacities of the children in future. Education was associated with better income prospects which would mean care-givers would also be taken care of in future.

Accordingly, caregiving is not just based on kinship obligations but also expectations of reciprocity. This also suggests that care is not static, nor is it one-sided as it keeps circulating among family members at different times and in different spaces (Baldassar & Merla, 2014) thus meriting the adoption of a life-course perspective in transnational families. Findings show that caregivers realised that they had to support the children's education in order to secure their own future livelihoods suggesting that education of children was a kind of family investment for their future. This finding supports the notion that reciprocity is a long-term investment in which reciprocal relations signal initiation and persistence of social ties (Strauss, 1964) across the caregivers, as well as the children's life-cycles.

In the long-term circulation of care, families try to balance out reciprocal relations across generations, based on financial and physical strength of members (Shipston, 2007). The manner in which care circulated in the families in question showed that the care resources, be it material or affectional, circulated as reciprocal exchanges that were spread across the family members' life-cycles in which they would be expected to balance out through their life course (Pratt & Oppy, 1992). Furthermore, the expectations of reciprocity revealed the impossibility of attempting to separate material (remittances) from emotional ties as the two were inherently intertwined in care-giving relationships (Coe, 2011). In caring for children, there were expectations of material or financial gains supporting the notion that expectations possibly shape the way care work is done (Zontini, 2006), hence the willingness and sacrifices made by caregivers through engaging in productive roles in order to fund children's education as an example.

Overall, these findings suggested that their willingness to submit to gendered obligations of care was not value-free as care-givers also anticipated a time in the future when the children would have to pay back. Most caregivers were not in a position to pay school fees for these children but still valued and worried about the children's education when school fees were not remitted, causing school disruptions to the children. The worries emanated from what the caregivers perceived to be future consequences on the children if they did not get a proper educational foundation.

In one instance, a child ended up opting to quit schooling as he was always in school fees arrears. The grandmother had been his primary caregiver for 10 years and attributed her grandson's decision to drop out of school to poverty and lack of resources, hence she could not blame him for taking such a decision. School disruption, in this instance, effectively represented disruption to a possible future investment because their hopes of care in future were dependent on the children's success in their education. She expressed:

> I used to go and do piece jobs in other people's fields so that I could get school fees until I could not do it anymore My grandson eventually dropped out of school and I cannot fault him, it was not out of choice but he got stressed as he was always out of school until he decided it was better for him to stay at home with me and also do field piece jobs because he saw how much I was suffering and when he was now in grade 7, he reasoned that it was better to leave school and also source piece jobs so he could help with food as well. I also worry a lot about my grandson leaving school (Grandmother B, 2017)

Although the reasons for this boy's leaving school differ between the mother on one hand and the caregiver on the other, the caregiver emphasised this as her grandson's decision as solely a response to his mother's failure to pay his school fees that had been the situation for years. She went on to explain as follows:

> I also worry about my grandchild who dropped out of school so I am always crying because it is too much for me. I called his mother and told him the child had quit school. I explained to her that her son was now feeling embarrassed because of being constantly suspended from school for failing to pay school fees. Even my grandson admitted to me that even though he knew he was dull in class, but if he had at least continued schooling, he was bound to get something right and also find something better to do, no matter how slow he was academically. He however explained that it had not been his intention to quit but the odds had been against him for a long time and he was now tired and decided to give up pursuing his schooling (Grandmother B).

Significant in her narrative is her suggestion that the decision to leave school was the boy's choice and not hers and also reveals her lack of power in making a decision regarding the education of her grandson. Likewise, for Grandmother T, her narrative also underscores the value that she placed on her grandchildren's education and she also insinuated that difficult conditions in Botswana were the reasons for her daughter's failure to remit and effectively mother from a distance:

> My daughter delays in sending money because she is living in a very difficult country and what I want for my grandchildren to be able to go to school but I can see that their mother's financial resources in that country are limited so I don't know what I can do so that my children can complete school. "My biggest concern is how I can ensure that my grandchildren complete their education. I really want them to go to school so that tomorrow these children will also take care of us tomorrow (Granny T, 2017).

Similarly, for Caregiver E, the burden of school fees was a constant situation in her household. Of the three children left under her care by the migrant mother, two were in school in form three and grade six respectively. The other one was barely five years old and therefore stayed at home as there was no money for her to attend crèche. On the other hand, the mother in Botswana was constantly telling her that there is no money in Botswana and as such, the children spent more time out of school than attending school:

> The children always get suspended from school for school fees debts and then by the time my sister sends money, I now have to cover the outstanding bills like fees leaving no money for food. Like right now as we speak, they have already begun the term by being sent back home because the fees have not been paid. And like this term, most of the time, the children are home as the school sends them back home because of fees and this affects the children negatively. If only the children could go to school, especially the older one so that they can have bright futures and also help with their younger siblings (Caregiver E, 2017).

Overall, I interpreted that the high value caregivers' places on children's education were closely ties to expectations of future reciprocity and also as a way of securing some social capital which would cushion them in their older ages. Therefore, I argue that caregiver's expectations of return underpinned their motivations in advocating for left-behind children's education.

6.4.1   Productive roles of care-giver.

In order to mitigate the lack of remittances from migrant mothers, caregivers devised ways and means of sustaining the children under their care. Some of the strategies they employed in order to provide for the family are discussed with particular reference to the three maternal grandmothers in this study. Despite their old age and frail health, grandmothers resorted to doing piece jobs in other people's fields. Grandmothers T, J and B employed various strategies to come up with resources to take care of the children even though these were not their original responsibilities. Caregiver T had to sell her cow for example, whilst caregiver B worked in other people's fields and caregiver J went to do manual jobs at the schools' grounds where her grandchildren attended school.

In response, they all admitted that whilst it was hard for them, they had to do it for the children, and they did not mind doing so because the same children would take care of them in future.

The findings have so far shown that caregivers were under-resourced yet over-burdened with the responsibilities of care-giving. However, there are certain accounts that I discuss in this

section in order to show that caregivers were engaged in both reproductive and productive care of left-behind children.

This aspect also shows that remittances did not flow in one direction i.e. from the migrant to the care-givers. Their accounts overturn the common assumption of the migrant as the provider of social protection whilst those that remain at home are cast as receivers of social protection (Dankyi et al., 2017). In my study, I adopt the standpoint that caregiving is a form of social protection (Dankyi et al., 2017) that care-givers provide to migrant mothers and their children. Therefore, in the present study, caregivers also provided social protection through a process Mazzucato (2011) has described as reverse remittances, even though these remittances were in response to the difficulties imposed on them by caring for left-behind children, hence they had to come up survival strategies by assuming breadwinning roles when they were faced starving or out-of-school children.

For example, for one grandmother, her strategy was to go and negotiate directly with the school's headmaster. In response to her plight, the school where her grandchildren attended would often offer her piece jobs to clear the school fields and work in the school gardens in lieu of school fees owed. Her strategy entailed direct engagement with an institution (the school) to negotiate the children's school-fees debt, which ideally was the migrant parent's responsibility. Such strategy gave her reprieve as her grandchildren could at least attend school and she was hopeful that in future, they would also look after her. The excerpts below explain this strategy further:

> J sends money for school fees but it's not enough because I have to subtract some for food so I take my hoe and go and weed the school grounds so that I can reduce the fees owed to the school my grandchildren attend. This work-for-fees programme is meant for families living in extreme poverty like me so when we attend school meetings, they tell us that if we cannot pay the fees, then we can go and work at the school (Granny J, 2017).

In addition to doing piece jobs in other people's fields, Grandmother T also resorted to selling her cows in order to cover her grandchildren's food and school needs.

> I have my few cows, just three of them and I also sold one so that my grandchildren could go to school. I want them to go to school especially and when I hear of any piece job, I go for it so that I can help my daughter with the children in order for their future to be better. As for food, I can at least plant in the fields and we feed on the harvest (Granny T, 2017).

The foregoing further lend support to Baldassar and Merla's (2014) care circulation framework and particularly places emphasis on the multi-directionality of care (Baldassar, 2007; Baldassar

& Merla, 2014), and the flow of material and non-material resources across space and time between family members at different points in their life-courses. I also borrow the concept of reverse remittances (Mazzucato, 2011) as a way in which those who stayed behind provide support to those who left or the migrants (Boccagni, 2015). The findings have important implications as they give credence to my argument that care-giving is not only as a reproductive role but also as a responsibility that installs some financial responsibilities on caregivers.

Their role as emotional pillars for children are thus intertwined with their financial roles when mothers fail to fulfil their material obligations towards family. Overall, I argue that transnational mothers also receive social protection from caregivers back home. The actions by grandmothers using their own resources thus dismantle the common assumption that remittances flow in one direction (from the migrants to the stayers). Consequently, the broader social context within which caregiving takes places in transnational families is a significant factor in understanding the caregivers' frustrations and challenges (Bonnizoni & Boccagni, 2013), a position that resonates with this study.

I therefore argue for continuously linking the caregivers and left-behind children's experiences to the migrant parent in the households in question. The experiences of caregivers are shaped by the resources (material and non-material) that flow from migrant mothers and vice versa, suggesting that even care-giving and care-circulation is affected by the migrant's legal status, labour market position, policies in the receiving context and equally important, economic conditions in the sending context. The economic downturn that has characterised Zimbabwe for the past two decades since the land reform programme in the year 2000, serves as a useful reference to understand the difficulties of child raising and care-giving for women and the detrimental effects on both adults and children alike.

Therefore, whilst care-giving centres around individual family members exchanging care across space and time, it is situated within broader institutions in both the sending and receiving contexts (Bonnizoni & Boccagni, 2013) and negotiated at the intersections of individual choices, as well as formal and informal infrastructures (or absence of them) at meso and macro level (Baldassar, 2008a). These factors, in my view are quite significant to situate the experiences of caregivers in this context.

6.5   Role of biological mothers

At the beginning of this chapter, I alluded to the similarities in perceptions of motherhood by left-behind children, transnational mothers and the care-givers. One of the key convergences

raised had to do with specific roles that only a mother could do. Crucial to these specificities was the way in which all participants felt that discipline was the role of the mother. I used discipline as a lens through which I can unpack power relations and dynamics between caregivers and left-behind children, in particular. Although most caregivers agreed that a child needed to be disciplined, they felt it was not within their mandate or power to do so.

They felt that some of the misbehaviour displayed by left-behind children was because they were not the biological mothers. Their narratives therefore reified essential motherhood. Furthermore, in my view, this links back to care-giving as a gendered obligation that female kin-relatives undertake to fulfil cultural expectations and not necessarily by choice. Women therefore continue to be trapped in care-giving roles even though they know and even judge that such arrangement will not work without the mothers. Gendered normative expectations make it extremely difficult for women to refuse to take up care duties or complain about these impositions on them.

According to caregivers, discipline was a maternal role that ideally should be provided for by the actual biological mothers of the children, hence there was reluctance on the part of caregivers to discipline children.

> Children need to be given time to play with other children but at the same time they also need time to study. I face the challenge that this child is too relaxed and loves to play too much. He does not want to study. I always have to put pressure on him to study his books instead of watching TV and playing soccer, if I see him ignoring my advice, I become hard on him and will not allow him to watch TV or go out and play soccer. When I give him pressure, it now appears as if I am harassing him (Diary – Caregiver C – July 2017).

Firstly, her narrative describes her notion of what a child essentially is – a human being who needs time to play but who also needs discipline in order to study. However, she essentialises biological relations disciplining children. Her position also demonstrates how she perceives motherhood – a mother as being responsible for the discipline of her children and not the caregiver. She further explained that in some instances, she would resort to calling the mother in Botswana when the child's deviance became too much:

> When his waywardness became too much, I would call the mother and she would tell me that he is also my child, I am the one living with him and know what he is doing. So, she would tell me it was up to me to see how I would handle it as he was also my child (Caregiver C, 2017)

In the previous excerpt, we see two contesting perceptions of motherhood. Firstly, from the caregiver who thinks that the child's deviance should be reported to the mother in Botswana as the biological mother and secondly, the mother who perceives the opposite – she feels that the caregiver is actually the physically mother who should deal with the child's issues as the one who is in physically proximate to him. By virtue of her caregiver role, the mother feels the aunt should fully embrace the mother's role. Essentially, the mother's stance is one that represents a re-working of motherhood in the face of migration, hence the mother's justification that the care-giver should be responsible for disciplining her child because she is now too far to manage that herself.

On the caregiver's side, by being reluctant to discipline, this may very well signify a rejection or rather lack of acceptance over how the family has had to be reconstituted in response to migration. Migration therefore engenders tensions and conflicts in families as they attempt to rework ways of doing family, especially when a mother leaves her home as this presents challenges of role re-allocation. Caregiver C was still reluctant to discipline her nephew, yet the mother had been absent for more than ten years, potentially implying the possibility of some care deficit in some aspects of child-raising.

Similar to Caregiver C, Caregiver F shares similar sentiments regarding the disciplining of her brother. She diarised that only the mother could discipline her truant brother. As a non-biological mother to her brother, she feels her power to discipline him is limited thus revealing her bias towards normatively prescribed notions of parenting. Moreover, during our second interview, she also attributed her brother's deviance to her mother because it was her mother who had spoilt him in the first place, right from when he was young by always giving in to his demands.

She therefore blames her brother's indiscipline on their mother and she therefore saw the biological mother as the only one who could sanction her brother's wayward behaviour:

> I had a fight with my brother today, only my mother can control him, I can't take it anymore, he is a spoilt brat. Today, T did not sleep at home, where is he now (Diary – Caregiver F – May 2017).

There is however some rationale however in caregivers C and F's stances regarding discipline as a mother's duty, particularly when one tries to relate this to the case of caregiver B, whose grandchild threatened to beat her up for disciplining her. She narrated the following incident

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which I have quoted verbatim in order to give the full picture of disciplinary challenges that can be faced by caregivers as this may possibly explain the reluctance by care-givers to fully embrace discipline as their role.

> When she started form 4, my granddaughter started behaving badly and began an affair with a taxi-driver who we all know to be married and also living with HIV. From school, she would not walk back home but come in this taxi and during weekends, she would now lie to me that they were extra lessons at school. I saw her being dropped by this taxi and I then beat her up with a stick (Granny B, 2017)

> When I spanked her with a stick, she then went and went up that rock there [pointing at a nearby rock in her yard] and shouted at me:

> Hey you, if it were not for the fact that you gave birth to my mother, today I   wanted to beat you up, I wanted to beat you up like you have never seen before "I responded to her and told her she could go ahead and beat me up, no problem. She continued shouting and insulting me and I just kept quiet. After this incident, she became worse in her bad behaviour, like she was possessed (Granny B, 2017).

Insinuated in this account was the manner in which the child differentiated on respect she accorded her grandmother based on her mother's relationship to her. Her caregiver is only saved from her beating by the mere fact that she bore her mother, implying that only her mother has a right to discipline her as she gave birth to her. This also suggested the lack of power caregivers may have on children under their care as child did not assign discipline as the caregiver's responsibility. Although this situation presents as conflict between a care-giver and the child but importantly, there is yet again reification of the hegemonic discourse on motherhood in the sense that they both perceive the mother as the instrument of discipline in the family.

Essentially, caregivers were not fully empowered to make decisions of the children they cared for and in difficult moments, they would call on biological mothers to resolve some issues. An exception was caregiver J, though. She maintained the upper hand in discipline through strategies of punishing, such as withholding meals, if the children strayed. She did not see the role of disciplining only as the mother's domain but hers too, by extension as a caregiver. For her, discipline was also linked to their living conditions. In other words, she felt that she had to discipline them strictly so they would not stray, given the hard-economic position of her family.

> I have a rule in this house, if any of them misbehave or refuse to listen to me, I tell them even my food you will not eat in this house and if they stay out too long, I tell them they better eat where they have been and sleep outside as well. I tell them how I struggle to feed them and then they choose to be wayward so they eventually listen to me and when they don't, I sometimes punish them by sending them to bed on empty stomachs

and they know they will have wronged me so they kneel down and apologise (Granny J, 2017)

My grandchildren even know they have to come back home on time because whoever comes after that time, they know I will not open the door, they know it so they come back home on time so. They see how we are suffering so they try to behave (Granny J, 2017).

In order to exert control over children's behaviour, caregivers employed various strategies as already illustrated above. For example, Caregiver C would not allow her nephew to watch television or go out to play soccer with his friends, which happen to be two of his favourite activities. Granny J would discipline by not giving them food when they misbehaved or locking them out if they did not come back home on time. In some instances, misbehaviour also resulted in some care-givers resorting to extreme measures, showing the strains that the role can exert. When caregiver B's grandson, who was usually reliable amongst her other grandchildren, began the habit of disappearing and coming home late and neglecting his home chores, she had to come up with a strategy to correct his behaviour as she could not confront him directly.

The work of tending to the onion garden they had started in order to generate some income began to suffer as a result of her grandson's absence and he would not listen to her appeals and cries. This behaviour stressed her and when she confronted him, he would simply not respond so she ended up crying. However, that was not the end of it, and she decided to pretend like she was going to commit suicide:

So, after crying, I realised I could not beat this boy as he was now too big but rather let me instil some fear in him so I took a chain and left the homestead. This boy now thought I was going to kill myself and I could see he was following me from a distance. When I saw him, I began to cry whilst chanting his name, asking him what wrong I had committed to warrant such behaviour. To dramatise it further, I went back home and took some clothes that had been passed down to me when my sister passed on. I told my grandson I was going to throw the clothes and shoes in the river first and then kill myself. I continued walking towards the river and my grandson began to weep. He said I had not wronged him in any way and it was him who was immoral. He wept uncontrollably and I then returned home. He then came to apologise and swore he will not misbehave again, since that day, everything is fine and he is behaving well. Maybe it was his friends that were influencing him (Granny B, 2017).

Caregiver C presented a somewhat different view. Although her sister's children did not present any serious disciplinary challenges to her, she still felt that children needed to live with their biological mother.

Most of the time, the children fail to listen because they are not living with their real parent but because I am an adult, I understand they are kids and I try to control and guide their behaviour so that they grow up with good morals. But sometimes I can see

that when I am trying to correct them, they give you some kind of funny attitude and I end up asking myself what exactly these children take me to be. In the end, I just tell myself they are just children but children just need to live with their real mother who gave birth to them. That is why I always wish if only their mother could also try to visit them often but then she is unable to do so, because of money challenges, she is not managing to visit them often (Caregiver E – Interview).

Furthermore, for this caregiver, although she had accepted without questioning the burden of looking after her sister's children albeit under difficult circumstances, her sentiments exposed her gendered expectations regarding the care and raising of children. She also revealed her lack of power on her sister's children because she simply was not their mother.

Children just need to live with their mothers, they need to see their mothers so that they can be happy. Yes, they are happy but not as happy as they would be if their real mother was present (Caregiver E – Interview 2017)

Her sentiments represent a disjuncture between the reality she has to contend with daily and the ideal she wishes for her sister's children. Her wishes are directly linked to the moral expectations of mothering that are driven by dominant gendered notions of motherhood which privilege physical proximity as ideal for parenting children.

6.6   Concluding remarks

This chapter set out to examine the experiences and perceptions of care-giving by female kin relatives of migrant mothers. Using a multi-perspective theoretical framework, namely care circulation framework (Merla & Baldassar, 2014), intersectional theory (Crenshaw, 1989; Yuval-Davies, 2006) and global care chain theory (Hoschild, 2000; Yeats, 2009), I advanced a number of arguments which adds on existing extant literatures in transnational care-giving. By bringing in the perspectives of caregivers, often muted voices in the bulk of research, I have contributed to existing knowledge on transnationalism by triangulating knowledge sources from family members situated across different transnational spaces through a multi-sited methodology.

Firstly, drawing insights from the care-circulation framework (Baldassar & Merla, 2014), I have argued for caregivers' lived experiences to be situated within a life course perspective of care. I have also reasoned that expectations of reciprocity harboured by caregivers are underpinned by informal social contacts and expressed through caregivers' desire for children's education as well as through strategies they devise to mitigate limited flows of remittances. I have shown that caregivers are not only receivers of remittances but also providers of social protection to migrant mothers and their left-behind children.

Within the broader theoretical framework of global care chains (Hoschild, 2002), this aspect on social protection given by caregivers adds on to existing knowledge by showing that the woman at the bottom of the care-chain is not a passive victim, but can use her agency in various ways and means. This study therefore enhances the understanding of global care chains operating in a unique context – that is South to South migration and significantly, brings in the notion of material reverse remittances (Mazzucato, 2011) into the theory on global care chains, hence adding to existing knowledge. Furthermore, I have also demonstrated the necessity of locating the experiences of caregivers within the context in which care-giving takes place.

This position grants merit to intersectional theory (Crenshaw, 1989; Yuval- Davis, 2006) as a lens through which we can unpack their experiences and understand their narratives contextually. Consequently, I argued for the experiences of caregivers to be analysed by taking into account caregiver experiences at the intersections of gender, age, class, migrant social location and class positioning, economic and political context in the sending and receiving context in order to gain an holistic understanding of how this links to remittances that ultimately form the backbone of transnational families. I have concluded that care-giving, motherhood and childhood are shaped by these broader factors.

Although the present study did not evaluate the effects of care-giving on the health of participants, there is considerable evidence to suggest that caregivers were over-extended and under-resourced in their roles. The reasons for this, as I have consistently argued, significantly lie out of the household but within broader structural systems and dynamics, suggesting that family life is regulated by institutional infrastructures and factors, hence challenging binaries of private/ public sphere dichotomies in family life. Lastly, gender stands out as a key factor in care of left-behind children. The fact that they are no male care-givers in the picture demonstrates that caregiving continues to be women's domain even under migration.

Dominant constructions of gender have not transformed due to transnationalism but instead, have reinforced. The huge concentration of women in global care chains as domestic workers gives credence to this observation. More so, global care chains, though occupied by women in different class positions i.e. disadvantaged at the bottom of the care chains and privileged at the top, gendered ideologies of care still hold women, regardless of class position to care and nurturing of men. As such, women remain obligated to care even when they lack the capacity to do so, as findings in this study have illustrated. Similarly, for the privileged women who employ migrant domestic workers, the obligations remain the same as they are also compelled

to seek the services of other women to care for their children, again leaving men out of the equation of child care and raising.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

"When we identify where our privilege intersects with somebody else's oppression, we'll find our opportunities to make real change." (Oluo, 2018)

7.1   Introduction

In this chapter, I summarise the main findings of this study and reflect on the methodological, empirical and theoretical debates in relation to this thesis. I also show the main contributions and significance of the present study and finally, make recommendations for further studies. I expand on this by giving my recommendations emanating from this study, as well as indicating the specific areas for possible future research on the subject.

7.2   Summary of my main findings

In coming up with this study, I adopted a multi-sited research approach with migrant domestic workers in Botswana and their left-behind families in Zimbabwe. As I was keen to understand the transnational processes and practices of motherhood that span the borders of these two territories, this thesis considered this research approach to be the most appropriate in examining and understanding the processes of simultaneity of transnational families (Basch et al., 1994). In addition, my thesis also considered the call of migration studies to desist from methodological nationalism by privileging the nation state as the natural social and political form of the modern world i.e. limiting analysis to a single nation. (Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2002).

Using this approach, I summarise the main findings from the three different groups of participants, namely mothers, caregivers and left-behind children. After summarising, I also discuss what the present study has established, the limitations encountered and recommendations and directions for the future. I then briefly touch on policy implications and close this thesis with my perspective on social justice for the people who committed their time and opened their homes for this study to materialise.

In chapter 4, I highlighted the patterns of distant care-giving i.e. mothering practices that the migrant mothers exercise in Botswana and how these are mediated and constrained by many structural factors in the country of reception as a consequence of their illegal status, which was central in shaping their experiences of motherhood. In this study, nine of ten mothers held an 'illegal' status whilst one, though legally resident, I would argue was also illegal given that she was using a fake resident and work-permit, designated as a 'herd-girl' when in fact, she was

not a farm-worker. With such a scenario, transnational mothering practices were severely constrained and affected the pattern and flow of remittances to their country of origin. In addition, the mothers in question were not in a position to frequently visit or communicate with their families back home. Due to the structural vulnerabilities imposed by an illegal status, migrant mothers were exposed to physical and emotional abuses on crossing the borders and in their everyday work as invisible workers in private homes.

Given that their presence in Botswana was highly dependent on human smugglers and bribing officials, this study revealed how migration governance in Botswana does not solely lie in the hand of the state but is a hybridisation of formal and informalised practices of governance (Kihato, 2007), a finding which questions the notion of the hegemonic state and challenges the common view that territorial power is held in the hands of the state. Furthermore, this also reveals the violent nature of precarity as an everyday lived condition for migrant mothers in Botswana because it exposes them as a highly disposable and deportable migrant population. The findings therefore interrogated the often-under-emphasised hand of the state in shaping family trajectories, particularly in transnational families whose members carry an illegal status in the reception context.

Palmary (2006) and Palmary et al. (2010) emphasise the state's role and make us aware how this significantly influences the way families are shaped, based by state laws and practices. As a consequence of these state practices, migrant mothers in this study occupied a positionality that imposed structural vulnerabilities of physical and emotional suffering on them (Quesada, Hart & Bourgois, 2011, p.3) and left them barely able to fulfil their productive and social reproductive roles as breadwinners and emotional supporters of their children. Added to these vulnerabilities were the structural inequalities and a failed economy in their country of origin which failed to provide opportunities for mothers to pursue livelihoods and care for their families in their home-country, ultimately leading to family separation.

However, the study also revealed the need to discount our often taken for granted assumptions that being family necessarily implies 'doing family' in one place by looking at the new geography of family life (Jastram, 2003). Contrary to such normative thinking, the study revealed that families can be spatially dispersed and in order to fulfil familial obligations, proximity is not fundamentally a precondition for 'doing family'. A further finding of this thesis revealed the power and extent of influence of dominant hegemonic discourses of doing family and motherhood. In as much as this study discounts the rationale for privileging such

discourses, these discourses appeared to regulate not only the migrant mothers but their left-behind children and caregivers. The study showed that transnational mothers were under pressure to conform to the 'good mother' image (Glen et al., 1994, Phoenix et al. 1994).

As such, the mere fact that they were parenting from a distance made them feel guilty and less adequate as mothers. They viewed themselves as 'mothering from the margins' (Carpenter & Austin, 2007), a strategy that was less desirable to them, their children and even the caregivers, as well. As such, my participants' narratives often revealed instances of self-stigmatisation because they viewed their statuses as transnational mothers as devalued social identities (Goffman, 1963), in relation to what mainstream society deems appropriate and adequate mothering where proximity is socially valued as a necessity for doing family. As a result of this pressure, most narratives were more often than not characterised by justifications to me of why they had left their children.

Migrating to Botswana was thus often represented as nothing short of 'self-sacrifices' for the sake of their children. I believe my own positionality as a researcher who is married and legally residing in Botswana with her husband and children partially accounted for the performativity they often displayed when narrating their transnational mothering practices. Many times, their narratives were emotionally charged with tears, tales of suffering and over-justification of why it was necessary to leave their children back home. I say over-justification, given the length of time taken to justify why they were separated from their children without any prompts or challenge from me. Significantly, on my side, it merely revealed the power and damage caused by hegemonic discourses and how they serve to regulate women, even in circumstances where co-residence may not be an option, like in the cases I researched.

Evidence revealed how dominant discourses of motherhood transcend borders to govern how mothers in the receiving countries were affected. It reinforced findings from previous studies which revealed that even when a mother migrates, she is still expected to fulfil both the breadwinning and caring roles (Parrenas, 2005, Schmalzbauer, 2004; Fresnoza-Flot, 2009; Hondagneu- Sotelo & Avila, 1997; Falicov, 2007; Raijman et al., 2003). The study also showed that there is no single model or universalised motherhood or childhood. Childhood and motherhood thus all shift, are not static, but shift their meanings and how they are experienced across different spaces and times.

Yet another key finding of this thesis centred on the concept of liminality. The mother's liminality in this instance was closely linked to their precarity, again as a consequence of their

illegal status in Botswana. As such, the mother's positions both in the private homes of their employers and outside made them a highly disposable and deportable (De Genova 2002; Anderson, 2000) migrant labour force, which meant that liminality was an everyday condition for them in the host country.

Yet, at face value, although this condition may appear as negative or bad for the mothers, a deeper analysis further revealed that migrant mothers endured by turning these places and spaces into 'transitory dwelling places' (Shortt, 2015) because of the meaningfulness attached to being present in such places, hostile as they were, but they were meaningful because the places and spaces in Botswana were closely tied to their livelihoods. As such, they had to endure all sorts of vulnerabilities e.g. violence at the borders, human smugglers' demands, employer abuses, state officials, arrests, deportations or demand for bribes, etc. because their livelihoods were ambiguously tied to the very same places and spaces in which they had to endure all forms of violence.

Subsequently, they had mastered the art of resistance through counter strategies they employed to circumvent laws and mitigate violent practices against them because it is what was productive for their livelihoods (Shortt, 2015) although this came at great personal cost. It is precisely Shortt's concept of transitory dwelling places that was useful in analysing how and why their illegal presence had endured in Botswana for so long (+10 years on average). In trying to understand their practices of motherhood, I concluded that it was indeed difficult for the migrant mothers to successfully fulfil their breadwinning and maternal roles at the same time. Instead, their motherhood was characterised by the irreconcilability of the two roles, leaving them with no choice because, in order to fulfil one role, it appears they had to forego another.

I also argued that although most of my participants' accounts showed a pattern of failed motherhood as expressed in their narratives and in so far as fulfilling their motherhood obligations was concerned, it was not adequate to account for such failures based on individual accounts and experiences only. Rather, there was a need to fully examine these within the lens of a multi-scalar analysis which would take into account individual and structural factors in both the sending and receiving context. In this vein, to clearly demarcate between the private domestic sphere and the public sphere was not feasible because, as the results revealed, the two spheres were closely intertwined and related, leaving blurred boundaries of separation between

the two. More evident was the impact of structural factors into the everyday mothering practices of mothers in the study.

I argued that much of what occurs in the private domestic sphere and how families ultimately emerge is a result of the policies and structural conditions that emanate from the public sphere though state laws and policies, labour market conditions and processes of globalisation (Orozco et al., 2002) which have led to the commodification of care labour and created global care chains (Hochschild, 2002; Yeates, 2004; 2009) based on class, race/ethnicity, legal status, skills nationality and gender, among many other axes of difference, thus calling for analysis using an intersectional analysis (Crenshaw, 1991; Yuval-Davis, 2006).

Both macro and micro factors helped to analyse the production of illegality (De Genova, 2002) in Botswana and how this in turn, shaped mothering practices in and outside the receiving context, filtering back to the left-behind in Zimbabwe. Furthermore, although unofficial, the complicities of extra-legal actors in this study shaped their migration trajectories and families back home significantly, hence the necessity of incorporating this factor into analysis. With the foregoing in mind, I now move on to summarise the findings of chapter 5, which focused on discussion of the children left-behind. In Chapter 5, I argued that children's acceptance of maternal absence was closely linked to the remittance patterns of their absent mothers.

If a mother remitted often and the children were able to identify difference(s) brought about as a result of remittances, then they were able to link migration of their mothers to their livelihoods. Findings revealed that children were able to make a connection between migration and survival and that is why they were grudgingly able to accept maternal absence as it was the only means of a livelihood strategy. However, the thesis also showed that whilst children recognised that they could not enjoy both privileges i.e. living with their mothers and livelihoods, this linkage was not sufficient to erase feelings of loss, abandonment and stress.

Consequently, children displayed high levels of ambivalence towards maternal absence, with some of the children openly showing resentment towards their mothers. Furthermore, feelings of ambivalence were further intensified by paternal absence in the children's lives. None of the children had an active father presence in their lives due to a variety of reasons. Some children revealed that their mothers never spoke about who their fathers were whilst others were told that their fathers were deceased. As such, the children felt that this absence was the cause of maternal separation because, as they reasoned, if their fathers were there to help their mothers financially, then perhaps they would be living with their mothers.

It was therefore interesting to note that although the children often associated maternal absence with abandonment and lack of care, when it came to their fathers, they associated this role synonymously with that of breadwinner, again suggesting the power of hegemonic discourses in influencing gendered codes of care i.e. the mother's role often associated with care and emotional labour, whilst the father's role often associated with that of breadwinner. This observation would explain why children often blame their mothers to account for being away from home.

Closely tied to this finding and similar to the findings in Chapter 4 on mothers was the power that hegemonic public discourses of family strongly influenced the narratives of the children in this thesis. This was exposed through how children expressed feeling envious towards those children who lived with their parents. It was further revealed, for example through the visual drawings in some of the children's diaries, showing their obvious preference for a nuclear type of family. For example, child J pasted a picture of a mother and father seated on the dinner table with their children sharing a meal. To that child, that is how family should be. However, the disjuncture between this picture (hegemony) and their obvious reality of being mothered distantly by single mothers aggravated their sadness and feelings of inadequacy.

Importantly, it revealed how the children's immediate environments also served to reify nuclear family models at the expense of other forms of family i.e. transnational family, because they drew their preferences from their main social and cultural environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). I argued that the children displayed a strong inclination towards intensive mothering (Hays, 1996) where they saw proximate motherhood as the only form of privileged ideal family, thus shunning any other alternative forms. There were also indications of agentic capacity shown though some of the actions or decisions the children took in relation to their everyday lives in the absence of their mothers, for example, taking up piece jobs to supplement the family.

In the families cited in this thesis, migration signalled raptures to family roles and decision-making processes. However, within these small actions of agency, the important issue to note was how this agency came about or was exercised. In other words, it was borne out of desperation and necessity for the families, hence I found it to be a very constricted and limited agency. In working with children, I adopted the New Sociology of Childhood stance that children are agentic beings, capable of telling their own experiences independently from adults (James & Prout, 1997) but the key position I adopted here was that even where there may have

appeared to be some forms of agency by the children, the analysis needed to be cognisant of the environment in which such agency was being applied or attempted.

The wider structural and contextual factor remained key in understanding children's experiences and how they responded to them. Another interesting dynamic to children's agency was projected as future agency in cases where children were independently able to realise that they were not able to change their present circumstances. Instead, they chose to project their agency by making future plans which would ease them out of poverty for them and their migrant mothers. Seemingly, the children's future plans were also influenced by their own feelings of guilt. There was an overriding narrative from the children which indicated that they, like their mothers, also harboured feelings of guilt for their mothers' migrations.

As such, a common narrative was told by the children suggesting that their mothers had migrated in order to work for them, further suggesting how the children also endorsed the self-sacrifice narrative that was characteristic of the transnational mother's narratives. Consequently, left-behind children felt like they 'owed' their mothers and were required to repay this debt through future reciprocity. Interestingly, there was an observation that showed how in the midst of all their dreams and imagined futures, none of the children expressed any desire/interest to follow their mother's migration trajectories.

To me, that was indeed telling enough because it showed how the mothers' migration outcomes had not invoked any desires by their children to emulate them and I would argue, this was based on the multiple incapacities by their mothers in fulfilling material and care obligations towards them through regularly remitting, visiting them often and frequently communicating with them. Regular remittances, in particular, were a source of constant disgruntlement from the children as well as the caregivers, especially given that in transnational migration, "remittances become the currency of contact across borders" (Dreby & Adkins, 2010, p.680) and they represent the sweat and tears of separation and are a currency of love (Tilly, 2007; Castaneda & Buck, 2011).

I have worked from the standpoint that childhood is not universal but relatively contextual and dependent on cultural, social and historical contexts of the environment in which the children are raised (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Therefore, in further extending Bronfenbrenner's ecological model, I also linked the individual narratives of children's separation from their mothers as emanating not only from the private domains i.e. their homes as families but effectively from the broader structural and macro conditions which shape their daily lived experiences of

maternal separation. The mothers' class positions coincided with immigration laws and labour market practices in the receiving context that placed them at a disadvantage i.e. as readily available cheap disposable labour and deportable subjects.

This in turn, inhibited their ability to fulfil financial and maternal obligations, resulting in their families back home being deprived of both emotional care and material resources. What I have intended to illuminate on this point was how the class positioning of transnational mothers in both countries had direct effects on the families left-behind i.e. the transnational disadvantages faced by mothers directly impinged on the welfare of those left-behind. Earlier on, I have argued that the nature of transnationalism exhibited by the mothers in this thesis mimics a 'forced transnationalism' (Horton, 2009; Benhard et al., 2009; Raijman et al., 2003) and in this case, for the reason that it was summoned by structural conditions in the sending country that were not favourable to the survival of families in Zimbabwe, forcing mothers to leave their homes in pursuit of livelihoods.

In this vein, I would then extend my argument to conclude that beyond the circulation of material resources, care and other goods, what was also evidently circulating across and within the transnational social spaces of migrant families were a variety of disadvantages that affected all the family members differently, based on their spatial locations in the transnational spaces. I argued that mothers were in effect remitting back transnational disadvantages vis-à-vis their class positions. Although both parties felt the pains of these transnational disadvantages, I also found that their nature and the way they experienced them depended on their spatial location, suggesting the importance of context, geography and temporality in examining transnational families. Context therefore, remains key in understanding transnational family dynamics and how it shifts depending on location.

Another major finding emerged in relation to the care-giving. The findings discussed in this thesis illustrate that, contrary to popular perceptions where children are often assumed to be recipients of care or rather in need of care, this again is contextually determined. Findings suggested that children are also regularly engaged in giving care in transnational families to their elderly caregivers and/or siblings. There was evidence of children looking after their ailing grandmothers and in the process, overturning or changing the care arrangements that mothers had left in place. The role of care-giving thus emerged as a fluid role circulating to and from both directions and was not necessarily a one-way street. Children often took on those

roles that would normally have been performed by their mothers in the absence of migration, pointing to how familial roles had to be re-worked and re-configured as a result of migration.

In summing up, I also concluded that childhood, like motherhood is not a universal concept but how it is experienced is heavily dependent on the socio-political, economic and cultural context in question - factors which I argued, should be key considerations in understanding transnational families. In this study, universalism was challenged across the board. Moving to caregivers, when I presented findings in chapter 6, I began by alluding to the paucity of scholarly and academic work on the role played by caregivers in the context of transnational families. Often, research has tended to be heavily focused on either the experiences of the migrant away from home or in some cases, on the left-behind children.

However, rarely has research focused on bringing the voices on caregivers into migration research, yet as Leinaweaver (2009) rightly acknowledged, they occupy an important and special care slot in the formation and analysis of global care chains (Hochschild, 2002). This thesis thus sought to bring together all the voices that make up the transnational care triangle (Graham et al., 2012) in order to get more nuanced insight into the experiences of care-giving and maternal separation from the perspectives of caregivers that has largely been invisible in scholarship and policy. The findings that emerged from the caregivers indicated how care was yet again closely tied to gendered obligations.

This was illustrated firstly by how care of left-behind children was sole concentrated in the hands of female kin and how caregivers took assumed these roles out of gendered obligations despite their capacities to do so. Results showed that when mothers migrated, they had sought to place/leave their children under the care of their female relatives, most notably maternal grandmothers, sisters and aunts. Secondly, the gendered nature of care was revealed through how some female relatives felt obligated to assume care on behalf of migrant mothers, even under circumstances that were not ideal for such an arrangement. For example, in chapter 6, I discussed the care-arrangement that caregiver E suddenly woke up to find herself in.

She had to take in her sister's children without any prior planning or agreement after her sister's relationship went sour and her children were asked to leave by their step-father. These gendered obligations are subtly revealed through the care-arrangements of caregivers T, B and J, who were elderly and ailing. Although their physical conditions revealed some deficits in care as there were clearly some duties they could no longer perform for the children, they still felt obligated to continue to care for their grandchildren indefinitely, suggesting how care is highly

gendered and operates along gendered obligations of care, based on kinship ties. Apparent in the care-arrangements was the total absence of any male figure in care-giving of left-behind children, in particular, their fathers. Their absence was not only physical but financial as well.

Furthermore, the odd jobs that grandmothers took up in order to pay school fees for their grandchildren further supported the circulation of care framework (Merla & Baldassar, 2014) as it showed the flow of care from the stayers to the migrants, again overturning the common assumption of financial resources flowing from the migrant back home. Even those back home also remitted in some ways, borrowing from the notion of reverse remittances (Mazzucato, 2009). Another finding that emerged and along very similar lines as the transnational mother and their children was the high level of conformity displayed by caregivers to hegemonic discourses of gender and motherhood.

Although they were caring for the children mainly out of a sense of obligation, they still prescribed to intensive motherhood (Hays, 1996) which privileges proximity as a condition for good mothering. As such, their narratives were full of expressions about how children need to live with their mothers. This was also demonstrated by their reluctance to take charge of some matters in the children's lives such as discipline and also their hesitation in making some decisions, suggesting the essentialisation of biology in care and possible deficits of care in some aspects as a result of maternal absence. As discussed in prior chapters, it so emerged that care-giving duties, such as discipline, were best done by the mother, as indicated by caregiver C, for example who felt that if she disciplined this child, it would be misconstrued as maltreatment because she was simply not the biological mother.

This indicated her reification of biology in bringing up children. The same was displayed by caregivers B and E who felt that some issues regarding children required maternal presence. Yet again, the power of hegemonic discourses of gender and motherhood in regulating women's lives was revealed through caregiver narratives. Another finding that converged with the mother's narratives revealed that care-giving, gendered and kin-related as it may be, was not performed without any expectations. Caregivers' narratives showed how they were doing care-work but at the same time, harboured future expectations of reciprocity when the children transitioned to adulthood.

Therefore, I often heard grandmothers telling me how they desired for the children to complete school and get good jobs so that they would also look after them. This expectation was therefore closely tied to the caregiver's value for education of the children. The value that caregivers

placed on education was revealed through the actions of grandmother T, for example, who had to sell her cow in order to pay school fees and purchase uniforms for her grandchildren. Similarly, grandmothers B and J, though frail and old, took up piece jobs in people's fields and at the school respectively, to cover for their grandchildren's education and food.

Of note were the underlying expectations of role reversal in future where these actions of care would reap some rewards for them, hence my argument that in taking care of left-behind children, caregivers were also actively building social capital which they could draw on later when the children grew up and hopefully got good jobs. This point explains why education featured centrally as a caregiver concern in their narratives. Earlier on, in chapter 4, I discussed the concept of liminality (Turner, 1979) of transnational mothers as a positionality of being neither here nor there (Kihato, 2013) but trapped in between uncertainty and 'stuckness'. This discussion was extended following empirical findings that emerged from the caregivers' stories.

Their narratives similarly displayed conditions of liminality whereby they were stuck or trapped in the care-giving relationship indefinitely. This condition was further aggravated by poverty and daily struggles to meet the basic needs of the children and themselves. Entrapment was thus a recurring theme across all caregiver narratives, but because of their gendered and kinship obligations, they had to endure, no matter the circumstances. Consequently, some chose to endure in silence and deliberately withheld some of their daily realities in order to avoid worrying the mothers or to maintain peace. The care-giving relationship, particularly between transnational mothers and the caregivers, was characterised by family secrets and silence as strategies of managing or maintaining cordiality between the parties in question.

The geographical separation of families was instrumental in hiding the actual realities of how either of the parties were living or experiencing life on a day-to-day basis and creating information gaps amongst geographically dispersed family members. For example, caregiver B saw it fit to withhold information from her daughter regarding how the remittances she was sending were not sufficient to even cover what she would instruct them to do. This caregiver reasoned that she would just play along, pretending to follow what she had been instructed to do with the remittances even though, in reality, she chose to protect her daughter from the truth because it would just trouble her.

Besides, she reasoned that telling her daughter the truth was fruitless because the daughter had no capabilities to meet her obligations in full anyway. The ambivalence I feel over some of the

secrets I have had to keep remains troubling to date, a discussion that is well beyond the confines of this paper. I do not intend to digress here but feel it is imperative to mention that the position I found myself in as a repository of transnational family secrets has undoubtedly influenced the way that I have had to choose what to present to my research audience, but most importantly, what not to reveal, in keeping with my obligations to protect privacy and confidentiality. I have had to be prejudiced in order to keep up with fidelity towards my participants, above anything else.

7.2.1 Convergences and divergences

In summarising my findings, I drew out a lot of similarities where the narratives of the mothers; caregivers and children appeared to converge. Based on the findings with the three participant groups, there were commonalities that emerged from participants in which they shared similar perceptions, particularly on their meaning-making processes of mothering. However, there were also divergences across narratives which I will briefly touch on in this section. Similarities were many, key among them being my observation that mothers, caregivers and children were all under the 'spell of hegemony,' if I may express it that way. All participants, across the board, in spite of their realities which differed from the public and dominant notion, all expressed their preferences for co-present mothering, albeit in different ways.

This finding suggested that all parties were actively contributing to the perpetuation of normative ideologies against which they constantly judged themselves (Choi, Henshaw, Baker & Tree, 2005; Arendell, 1999; Carpenter & Austin, 2007). A second confluence spoke to the notions of expectations of reciprocity characterising mothers and their children, as well as between the caregivers and the left-behind children. There appeared to be a general consensus in the narratives that indicated that mothers and caregivers harboured expectations of reciprocity in future from the children. Mothers' narratives of self-sacrifice, it appears, were also internalised by the children, leading them to feel guilty and appreciative of their mothers' sacrifices.

As such, the children often expressed the desire to 'pay back' their parents by looking after them in future. This was not only expressed verbally but, in their diaries, and journals, suggesting children also felt obligated to repay debts in future for the sacrifices. Likewise, caregivers also harboured similar expectations, in particular, grandmothers who had high hopes for their grandchildren's educational outcomes in the hope that they would get good jobs in future and be in a position to look after them. Beyond this convergence, what the findings

proved was that care-giving was not neutral but fraught with expectations of future reciprocity. In extending the notion of reciprocity, I also observed that there were expectations of reciprocity harboured by all participants towards me as the researcher.

Seemingly, it appeared that the time I spent with my participants and the data I collected from them was somehow used as a platform to make requests and sometimes even demands in return. I have therefore acknowledged in Chapter 3 on methodology the complications of maintaining neutrality in, during and after data collection as my participants also harboured personal expectations in return, usually of a financial nature, which often left me in moral and ethical dilemmas, a debate which falls beyond the current discussion. Another convergence was observed in the manner in which mothers and children all displayed high degrees of ambivalence towards migration. Often, they battled to reconcile maternal absence with breadwinning, leading children to feel abandoned and neglected.

Hence some children expressed feelings of resentment towards their mothers but nonetheless, had never expressed them directly to their mothers. On the other hand, although mothers recognised that securing livelihoods for their children required them to migrate for domestic work, yet this did not stop them from feeling guilty about leaving their children. Most mothers recognised they had missed out on their children's milestones, such as the beginning of a menstrual period or birthdays, for example. They often apportioned the blame on themselves for disciplinary challenges faced by their children, choosing to believe that if they were present, their children would be well behaved.

Thus, both felt ambivalent towards migration on one hand yet on the other, it was their only source of livelihoods, meagre as the financial rewards may have been. Despite the convergences that emerged, the findings also revealed common divergences. I have already stated that with these divergences, my aim was not to seek nor separate the truth from the false but rather the different perspectives afforded me the possibilities of understanding matters and the reasons why from a multi-perspective. The main reason for divergences, especially with regards to migrant mothers hinged upon self-presentation and preserving / upholding a good family image to me as I was the audience.

This was usually characterised by performative narratives which were meant to appease or seek approval from the audience, in this case, myself. Moreover, in managing such narratives, I also observed how they were subtly directed to be in mutual synchronisation with hegemonic discourses of a good mother, in this case, often represented by the self-sacrificing narrative,

which I equated to be motivated by their one desire to redefine what a good mother was so that this would conform to the standard (Hays, 1986).

In doing so, they represented good-enough mothers through the narrative of self-sacrifice and the persistent anguish they experienced as migrant domestic workers. Moreover, in representations of their families, some narratives, they told me would be judged as less truthful by those back home. I argued along such lines, given how the children decided to tell me their own truths, despite their mother's efforts to control their narratives. Furthermore, it also revealed that families, when living together, may share a common narrative which speaks to how they manage their family image. However, in the context of migration, shared narratives of how to manage the external image of the family become challenged as a consequence of being spatially dispersed or displaced from one another as family members.

The case of mother F and her daughter, who was a caregiver at the time but had also been a left-behind child in the earlier years comes to mind here. When I initially interviewed the mother in early 2017, she told me that she had left behind three children and during the course of her absence, had then made her eldest daughter the caregiver of the two younger children. She went on about how responsible her daughter was and that she was an indoor person who always at home looking after her siblings. At that time, I just wondered why her narrative was so much about her well-behaved daughter. It only emerged when I went to Zimbabwe to meet her daughter that she was actively managing her family image when she was telling her story.

The daughter however overturned this, when she swore me to secrecy first before telling me her story. I promised I would stand by my ethical obligations of confidentiality. She then felt free to tell me that she knew her mother had not told me the truth about her family. Firstly, she told me that her mother had five children, from at least three different fathers. Secondly, she told me that she herself had become pregnant as a teenager following a rape through which she had conceived a daughter. She also told me she had a baby (who was five months at the time) from her boyfriend but the key issue was that her mother had requested that she hides her children when we met so that I would never get to know the true situation of this family.

In telling me all this, she swore me to secrecy many times because if her mother got to know she had told me the truth, she would be angry and that could jeopardise her livelihood as she depended on food and rent from her mother.

Even though I have attempted to account for the reason why some similar stories were told differently by participants, I have emphasised that this was not an exercise to fish out lies and

separate truths from lies. Rather, I have adopted the stance that the approach I used of deploying multi-site research afforded me the possibility to get data from a multi-perspective. In doing so, I have also acknowledged that the divergences in accounts may be accounted for by the way participants are differentially located, spatially or otherwise. I have also alluded to the notion of self-representation as a way of accounting for how some narratives were told differently and, in some cases, why some family truths were strategically withheld or partially divulged to me.

I have reasoned that it had to do with how mothers in particular wanted to manage the external images of their families in a specific way, a desire that was challenged however, by the physical separation of families which made it difficult for families to cohere and present a united family narrative or image. The lack of cohesion also supported the growing calls for children to be recognised as informants in their own rights and desist from trying to understand children through adult perspectives. This was laid bare when children used their won agency to reveal some secrets that they were initially warned by their mothers not to mention, but they still went ahead in opposition to their mothers.

7.3 Contribution to knowledge

The aim of this section is to identify how my empirical findings contributed to the wider debates empirically and theoretically. In order to do so, I begin by focusing my gaze on transnational literature, global care-chains and motherhoods. In doing so, I make reference to key insights emanating from extant literature and critique those in relation to my study. Significantly, in doing this study, I have contributed towards transnational literature in the Global South. More often than not, transnational literature has been biased towards Asian and Latino migration streams to Europe and America. Due to this Eurocentric focus, the bulk of these studies cannot be interpreted to be similar to transnational migration within the Global South, a paucity to which this study has responded.

7.3.1 Transnationalism

The transnational paradigm popularised by Basch, Glick-Schiller and Szanton- Blanc (1994) in the 1990s defined transnationalism as the processes by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement, pointing to a simultaneous embeddedness in more than one nation state (Glick-Schiller, 2003). Vertovec (1999, p.456) also conceptualised transnationalism as a social formation that spans borders; as a site of political engagement or as a reconstruction of place or locality through

which social fields have been created which connect and position some actors in more than one country.

In addition, transnationalism is seen as a highly gendered process (Huang & Yeoh, 2005), suggesting that migrants who undertake transnationalism experience such processes differently based on their gender, among many other vectors of difference. The transnational approach also arose at a time when there were calls to look at migration processes beyond the nation state in order to do away with what has been termed as methodological nationalism. Methodological nationalism has been defined as an "intellectual orientation that assumes national borders to be the natural unit of study, equates society with the nation state and conflates national interests with the purposes of social science" (Glick-Schiller, 2005, p.439).

The proponents of transnational theory (Basch et al., 1994) had earlier on criticised methodological nationalism for its epistemological tendency to assume the nation state and its boundaries as defining objects of social inquiry. Similarly, Vertovec (2001) prioritised the necessity to look at both the sending and receiving societies as a single field. This corresponded with Marcus (1995) in calling for the deployment of multi-sited ethnography which could look at evidence from 'pluri-local social spaces' (Pries, 2004) because if research fails to look into both the sending and receiving contexts, it would be difficult to then understand how migrants circumnavigate across transnational social spaces (Lutz & Palenga-Mollenbeck, 2011).

Based on Basch et al.'s (1994) seminal work on transnationalism, migrants came to be viewed as de-territorialised agents who were effectively embedded in political, economic and social processes of more than one nation state, thus transcending borders freely. This briefly sums up the transitional theory that I deployed to anchor my study as part of my theoretical framework. I found it necessary to use this theory because of the transnational processes I sought to understand that were effectively across two nation states i.e. Botswana and Zimbabwe. In line with Marcus (1995), I used a multi-site research method as a way of avoiding framing this study within a 'container approach' i.e. within the boundaries of a single nation because I intended to examine motherhood in transnational contexts which made the approach a necessity in seeking multi-dimensional viewpoints.

I anchored my study on the stance that transnational migrants did not only mean those who had physically moved away from home but also incorporated the views of those who stayed behind i.e. children and caregivers; transnational theory allowed me to examine the processes that governed the day-to-day experiences of family members across national boundaries in order to

fully understand how family dynamics were re-shaped in response to transnational migration. In fact, it was through a transnational lens that I was able to give a nuanced analysis of its efficacy and applicability, hence making an empirical and theoretical contribution.

With this in mind, I also critique transnational theory guided by the findings that emerged. In this section, I also base my arguments on the premise that transnational motherhood was shaped by class and social location and determined by multiple state and non-state actors who ultimately shaped the kind of motherhood and childhoods experienced in this context. Although I critique this theory, I am also aware that I would not be the first to do so (Portes *et al.*, 1999; Bailey, 2001; Wimmer & Glick-Schiller, 2002; Waldinger & Fitzgerald, 2004; Pratt & Yeoh, 2003). However, my analysis emerges from a different context where I used the theory in south to south migration processes as opposed to the usual application which normally focuses on migration processes of the Global South to the Global North.

From this angle, I provide a unique perspective from which to critically analyse this theory with a different context in mind. Before going into my own empirically based critique, I briefly touch on what other scholars have critiqued regarding transnational theory. For instance, Bailey (2001) has criticised transnational research for its lack of attention to space and temporality. He critiques it for its failure to account for how these two dimensions are experienced under conditions of transnationalism. Wimmer and Glick-Schiller (2002, p.234) have also criticised transnational research for being too bound to conceptual and analytical tools which reproduce the bounded national container society.

They further criticise transnational theory for the way it approaches transnational networks and diasporas as 'communities' which tends to essentialise these communities in similar ways that previous approaches have reified the nation state (Wimmer & Glick- Schiller, 2002). Other scholars have questioned the efficacy of transnationalism in transcending sovereign power of the state as evidence shows that nations continue to impose restrictions on human mobility (Waldinger & Fitzgerald, 2004). Likewise, Pratt and Yeoh (2003) also question if the nation state can effectively be discounted in transnational experiences that are mediated by differences in class, gender, race, etc. In this study, although I applied transnational theory in order to understand the processes of motherhood and maternal separation across the borders of two countries, the approach was not a neat fit as a theoretical framework.

There are two key characteristics that underpin transnationalism, notably the notion of simultaneity and de-territorialisation. The first characteristic essentially refers to how

transmigrants can be simultaneously embedded in social, economic, cultural and political processes in both their country of origin and in the host nation. In other words, they may be well integrated in the host nation but continue to be rooted in their origins.

As a consequence, such transmigrants then become de-territorialised because their nation becomes one where its people may live anywhere in the world and still not live outside the state (Basch et al., 1994, p.269) because wherever the transmigrants in question go, so does their nation. It is precisely with these two characteristics that my study failed to resonate with transnational theory. The migrant experiences of the families I researched did not augur well with the celebratory nature that transnational theory appears to impose. I argued that the theory in its original form was not conceptualised with undocumented migrants in mind. It exudes patterns of independence and freedom that transnational migrants supposedly enjoy, freely crossing national boundaries without paying due regard to the sovereignty of nation states.

I worked with mothers who were undocumented and hence lived under precarious working and living conditions, structurally constrained by nation states in their origin and destination countries. They were highly deportable subjects (De Genova, 2002; Galvin; 2015) who had to toil daily to circumvent state surveillance and deportation through the use of various strategies of invisibility. It is precisely this empirical background that gives me the panacea from which to critique the transnational paradigm which in this case, appears too celebratory by casting migrants as global subjects that successfully defy state sovereignties.

My misgivings with transnational theory was due to its failure to acknowledge transnationalism as a non-uniform process that is experienced differently according to gender and class position among other differences in the social hierarchy (Salih, 2001; Pratt & Yeoh, 2003). The assumption that transnational migrants are actively involved in social lives of two or more countries (Basch et al., 1994) did not hold much ground in this thesis. Zimbabwean migrant domestic workers in Botswana were not legally integrated nor assimilated in the host nation to enjoy the privileges of political, social, economic or civic engagement in Botswana. To a certain extent, they had been driven into transnationalism as a result of Zimbabwe's failure to provide them with opportunities for livelihoods of their families in their own country.

The intersections of illegal identities with an economically failed state in the home country and a harsh mobility regime hardly presented any fertile conditions for them to be 'truly transnational', to celebrate their freedom as de-territorialised citizens, nor to reap the benefits of simultaneous rootedness in two nations. It is on this basis that I strongly view transnational

theory as being readily applicable to skilled and legalised transmigrants who have the freedom and usually better resources to cross the borders, thus taking advantage of being rooted in more than one nation.

Furthermore, the mobility regime in Botswana, comprising immigration laws, state surveillance through immigration officials and extra-legal actors in the form of human smugglers across the two nations also revealed that the nation state alongside extra-legal actors are still very much in control of its borders. Transnational theory appears to underestimate the power of the nation state whilst also overlooking the emotional, social and financial costs of transnationalism (Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avila, 1997). Even though illegal migration persists, much of the resources earned by migrant mothers are still used to pay informal actors in order to evade authorities, pointing to the ever-present gaze of the nation state on its borders and their power in choosing who to admit or not as a member in their territory, illustrating that transnationality has different motives and consequences that differ according to gender, class, age (Fauser, 2018).

Moreover, and crucially so, mothering is affected by decisions and actions that occur in the public sphere (Glenn, 1994). As such, transnational theory though relevant to this study merits caution in its application. Its failure to demarcate between a transnationalism of the elite from a transnationalism of the poor hence undermines its applicability in fully examining experiences of transnationalism across different social hierarchies. Arguably, a theory of transnationalism that incorporates the 'poor struggling undocumented migrant' would be a better fit as that takes into account not only illegality, but the actual factors that drive it, the processes that are unique to undocumented migrants and the nature of embeddedness that their migration takes, why and how they are embedded.

For this reason, a framework of transnational theory that incorporates transnational poverty, liminality and migrant invisibilities through a multi-scalar intersectional analysis that incorporates all factors in the origin and host nations is called for. Given that transnational labour networks end up in the public domain, although essentially, they commence in the private household (Dunaway, 2001), in the case of migration, they begin in one country and end up in the public sphere of another country. Consequently, a multi-scalar intersectional framework Mahler, Patil & Chaudhuri, 2015) would also be gender sensitive as it recognises the process of migration as highly gendered for those who migrate as well as those who stay behind taking care of families. Furthermore, this framework can account for experiential

differences of transnational migration based on time and place whilst also privileging context as a key factor in analysis thereby allowing a more nuanced understanding of the transitional processes that characterise migrant spaces across nation states.

This framework, I argue, would illuminate the fluid and changing positions of migrants, based on spatial and temporal dimensions of their movements, further demonstrating the privileges and disadvantages that confront their kind of transnationalism spatially and temporally. I have underscored their transnationalism as liminal subjectivities, who are structurally and at times physically invisible, inhibiting an undermined and socially ambiguous status (Turner, 1979, p.95). It is precisely this characterisation that begged me to question if there was anything to celebrate for this kind of transnationalism where day-to-day experiences are characterised by impositions of physical, social and economic vulnerabilities.

Elsewhere in this chapter, I have made mention of the precarious position of Zimbabwean domestic workers in Botswana in relation to how their precarity transfers as 'transnational flows of disadvantage' from mothers back to their children/families in Zimbabwe. I further want to critique transnational theory in reference to the left-behind children and briefly touch on two opposite concepts of separation and re-unification. Having dedicated chapter 4 and part of this chapter to critique transnational theory vis-a-vis the position of migrant mothers in this study, I have avoided the risk of repetition in making my current point, suffice to mention that the nature of transnational activities that migrant domestic mothers do is performed under a cloud of precarity and illegality, making it very difficult for them to fulfil their transnational obligations towards their left-behind children.

Therefore, if the mothers in question find it difficult or at times impossible to remit funds to their children, let alone visit them frequently or communicate with them regularly, it immediately becomes clear that the children left behind also suffer as a consequence of their mothers' statuses. That is why I view this scenario as a case of migrant mothers remitting transnational disadvantages with very minimal financial benefits back to their children at home. As mothers who are engaged in a transnationalism of the poor for the livelihoods of their families, it was rather humbling to note that the families I researched in this thesis would be counted lucky if they managed to see their mothers at least once a year.

In this study, remittances often flowed haphazardly and were usually insufficient to cover their needs. None of the children were in constant communication with their mothers at all and only one child had a cell phone showing that transnational communication is also classed.

They do not match the kind of transnationalism that is represented by Basch, Glick-Schiller and Szanton's (1994) transnational theory. Instead, what flows across their transnational social spaces is a whole lot of drawbacks which reveal a constant discourse of misery and poverty, with both parties suspended in limbo, imagining, or at least hoping, for better futures but without any guarantees of achieving that. The elite middle class, as it appears, are those who can be labelled truly transnational, given that they have the resources to be such (Kuhn, 2011). For the structurally vulnerable migrants, their realities as the nobodies of neo-liberalism whose poverty has been produced out of the new capitalism (Green, 2011).

Given these realities, it is somehow unsettling to accept the commonly held assumption that has often conceived transnationalism as something to celebrate as a form of emancipatory action or as a form of popular resistance from labour (Guarnizo & Smith, 1998), especially in the face of structurally mediated experiences of transnationalism by nation states and globalisation forces which limit and control mobility choices, prevent family reunification and in so doing, separating families whilst from a continuous supply of a cheap, invisible and disposable labour force with minimal, if any, rights.

On the other side, if transnationalism means to be simultaneously embedded in both the sending and receiving countries, then the findings of this thesis argue that for the undocumented mothers in this study, they are simultaneously embedded in transnational inequalities of poverty and unequal power relations, further adding to calls for a revisionist approach to transnational theory that is cognisant of the aforementioned factors.

7.3.2   Global Care Chains and Migrant Domestic Work

My theoretical approach also drew insights from the Global Care Chain theory. Literature on global care chains has primarily focused on migrant women in domestic contexts working as maids and nannies and is particularly strong in analysis of the experiences of Filipino women (McGregor, 2007). This observation provided the impetus for this research, as a way of contributing to and expanding on the global care chain (GCC) by focusing on care chains that begin and end within the South to South context. Care labour extraction across borders is what has been described by Hochschild (2001; 2003) as global care chains. The global care chain concept "captures a process in which several phenomena, such as capitalism, globalization and the feminization of migration interact with gender relations, care and emotional work" (Lutz & Palenga-Mollenberg, 2012, p. 17).

Global care chains have been created as a result of importing care and love from poor to rich countries which facilitate the transfer of those services normally associated with the traditional roles of wife or mother. As a result of this importation, 'care drains' are experienced in the countries of origin, in the Global South (Hochschild, 2000; Ehrenreich & Hochschild, 2003; Parrenas, 2001). Ideally, a global care chain has been described as one where "an older daughter from a poor family who cares for her siblings while her mother works as a nanny caring for the children of a migrating nanny who in turn cares for the child of a family in a rich country (Hoschild, 2000, p.131).

Typically, global care chains are three-tiered, and usually with the woman at the bottom of the chain giving unpaid labour and typically, many care chains begin in poor countries and end in rich ones (Hoschild, 2000). Global care chains therefore reveal the links that exist between children of service providers and children of service recipient, thus indicating the link between personal lives and global politics (Yeates, 2004). Consequently, global care chains reveal the blurred boundaries that exist between the private/public sphere dichotomies (Dunaway, 2001). Typically, when one looks at the definition of global care chains, they may look straightforward and linear in nature.

However, there is a myriad of factors that mediate these chains, producing different patterns of care chains. In Chapter 1, I justified this study by recognising the scholarly need to De-Westernise, De-Latinise and De-Asianise transnational academic and scholarly work by casting attention on care chains produced in the Global South. The care chains in question differ from those of Asian and Latino migration streams, mainly from the Philippines, Sri Lanka and Mexico, particularly when it comes to access capacity and capabilities regarding modern communication technologies. The care chains in question are unique because of their production within a Global South context i.e. from South to South.

As opposed to the popularised migration streams of Filipinos and Mexicans that have dominated the bulk of transnational research, the care chains in this thesis emerge from an entirely different context where migrant domestic work is not organised through formal brokerage services. Therefore, I particularly referenced this in relation to this study where the nature of the care chains produced by Zimbabwean migrant domestic workers is of an illegal/irregular nature. Furthermore, the nature of child-raising and care is contextually and culturally shaped differently, such that separation may not be as badly pathologised as in other contexts. In Africa, for example, the extended family has always played a significant role in

child-raising. As such, in my opinion, separation, though it was considered as problematic by participants, was not the real issue in the present study. To me, the two issues that made separation to appear problematic were the dominance of hegemonic motherhood ideologies, and the lack of adequate financial resources for the families left-behind. Without these, separation would be readily acceptable.

The foregoing justifications also serve to inform my critique of the global care chains theory in relation to my study. I therefore argue that if there was a regular flow of remittances, frequent visits and communication in these families, separation may possibly have been less problematic, or rather its effects may have been mitigated. The pressure to appear to fit in with dominant gender ideologies also accounted for why separation was treated as problematic, an issue already discussed in detail in previous chapters. Given this scenario, I have also advocated for a shift in ideologies at societal levels which can begin to recognise distant motherhood as just an alternative way of mothering, without pathologising those women who are otherwise structurally constrained to practice co-presence.

What I found problematic with GCC theory in relation to my study adds to already existing literature in recognising that women's emancipation is still very far off, especially in the family sphere where women take up the bulk of care-work which is lowly paid or unpaid. The invisibility of men in care-arrangements in this study attest to this fact. Furthermore, the fact that GCC theory views all migrants as economically driven and responding to global forces underpins the weakness of this approach (Wilding, Isaksen et al., 2008, p.419-420) as it fails to recognise migrant agency in determining their own trajectories (Yeates, 2009). It therefore lacks as an approach that recognises intra-group differences, a weakness that can be remedied by other approaches, such as multi-scalar intersectional analysis (Mahler, Chaudhuri & Patil, 2015).

Whilst I agree with this analysis, my empirically based critique of care chains stems from its presumption that migration takes place in response to globalisation forces. Yet migration also has very much to do with local level experiences and influences at household level. In doing so, the theory does not pay homage to the role of the state as a key player in the functioning and the experiences of domestic workers in the global chains. Nicola Yeates argues that in GCC theory, the state is an important player that either had to be avoided if one is illegal or managed through legal institutions in cases where one is a legal migrant (Yeates, 2004). Like the transnational approach (Basch, Glick-Schiller & Szanton-Blanc, 1994), the theory

underplays the role of the state in determining migration outcomes and experiences. Likewise, the role of extra-legal actors in engendering global chains is less emphasised yet that was a huge component for sustained care chains and transnationalism in the present study.

In addition, the role of the sending state (Zimbabwe) is also highly complicit in shaping the current motherhood of undocumented migrants from Zimbabwe. Moreover, the role played by other informal actors, besides the employers in the care chain is rarely acknowledged nor implicated in migration experiences. Here I refer to the role played by human smugglers and other extra-legal actors in illegal migration who successfully run a parallel immigration system serving the livelihoods needs of undocumented Zimbabweans in Botswana. Hence, I argue that the role of these particular players, beyond globalisation forces, largely influences migration of domestic workers to Botswana for it is through their services that the women in question are able to participate in illegalised forms of GCCs.

The care chains in this study, given their illegal nature, operate within a network of various links in Botswana and Zimbabwe which are organised. Arguably, it can thus be concluded that they do have a role to play in globalisation, in facilitating human mobility and in sustaining care chains, through informal, though often effective, channels as revealed by this study. Arguably, these actors have shaped motherhood for Zimbabwean migrant domestic workers on a significant scale. What I found unique to the specific care-chains in this thesis is the day-to-day actions of the state in its attempt to dismantle an illegal workforce in Botswana against the counter-strategies of those the law has deemed as outsiders and therefore illegal.

The social interactions produced out of this care-chain reveal transnational processes that operate outside the law but are paradoxically enabled by the state as well as the women who sit at the top of such care-chains i.e. those that employ foreign domestic services. Essentially, the role of the privileged woman in that care chain is also crucial to the survival of the said care-chains, suggesting that women in GCCs are not only linked through the provision of care but also through their sustained efforts in maintaining illegality for the benefit of the entire care chain. On one hand, their employers benefit from having unregulated labour in their homes which allows them to leave their homes and go to work.

Yet the other side relates to how these women also benefit by working in the private homes of other women whilst being kept hidden from surveillance forces, regardless of how unequal this relationship may be in terms of working hours, wages, etc. Both women in this care-chain use the invisibility of migrant labour for their mutual benefits, with neither questioning the

structural unfairness and barriers encountered by women. For example, in chapter 4, I made reference to one migrant domestic worker whose employer assisted in acquiring a legal resident and work-permit, albeit under a false job category as a 'herd-girl'.

Thirdly, global care chains have been held responsible for reinforcing uneven development globally, extracting care labour as emotional surplus value from developing countries and giving 'surplus love' to children in developed states. Thus, GCC's have been conceptualised with a one-sided view that gives the impression that care deficits are inevitable in the Global South because of the transfer of care to the Global North (Hochschild, 2000). This particular assumption then reifies and further reinforces normative motherhood discourse which privileges a form of motherhood that is in situ/ co-present (Madianou & Miller, 2011). The results emanating from this study beg to question the assertion of surplus love.

For example, the migrants I interviewed, especially those who were live-in domestic workers, spent much of their time working, usually overtime doing house-hold chores and taking care of children, with their daily duties extending into overtime (unregulated working hours). Evidence from their narratives suggests that they spent most of their time with children of their employers, something that I can attest to myself, at least for the period I interacted with them. I recall having to meet two of the mothers with the children of their employers because the mothers were not available, even though it was on their scheduled off-day. I also recall one mother, N who spoke of how her employer's children call her 'mum' such that for outsiders, they would normally think they are her children, unless she herself chose to disclose the real nature of her relationship to her employer's children. I recall the encounter where I witnessed the two children affectionately calling her "mum".

Assuming then that these are the common scenarios, then it also casts doubt on the 'surplus of love' scenarios cast by GCC theory (Hoschild, 2000) simply because the real mothers of such children are also rarely present. The assumption is that children in the Global North benefit from a surplus of love, presumably from their mothers as well as the migrant worker who looks after them yet in reality, the privileged women are also absent from their homes, hence casting aspersions on the notion of surplus love. That appears to be a simplistic assumption because evidently, if the privileged woman has to hire a migrant worker to enable her to work outside her home, then it also follows that her own children, class differences aside, also experience a deficit of direct maternal care, perhaps not to the same extent as the migrant's children because at the end of the day, the employed woman possibly returns to her home.

Secondly, the role of the extended family in child raising in many African contexts, Zimbabwe not being an exception, casts further doubt on the notion of surplus love. In this study's context, maternal separation is not a new phenomenon given the role the extended family has always played in raising children. In addition, the assumption that GCCs disrupt emotional bonds between children and their migrant mother may be true but not only for migrant workers but also for the top woman in the GCCs in the Global North who is also leaving her children in the hands of a nanny. The foregoing example I have given of children calling their nanny 'mum' has implications for the real mother as well, as she now shares the affection of her child with her nanny. Arguably, this also brings into question the manner in which biology is essentialised in dominant motherhood ideology.

Furthermore, this implores a deeper interrogation into understanding the meanings of motherhood from the perspectives of the privileged child precisely because it also questions the privilege that GCCs theory bestows on children of the Global North as receiving surplus love and affection. The severity and degree of disruptions is what may ultimately vary but nonetheless, there are family disruptions and family re-configurations at all levels of the care chains. Maher and Chavkin (2010, p.7) have observed that "both women employing nannies and the nannies themselves are giving their own children less direct mothering in exchange for increased earnings", a position I strongly identify with.

I therefore maintain that all women in the GCCs are disadvantaged, although to different degrees because they all have to continue to perform social reproductive roles, even when they take up reproductive / breadwinner roles, suggesting the persistence of gendered discourses of care and motherhood, even in the face of globalisation. What differentiates the women in the GCC are class positions which differentiates them based on class privilege or disadvantage (Maher & Chavkin, 2010) but all of them are still expected to be primary carers. Ultimately, motherhood emerges at the intersections of external conditions i.e. at the intersections of institutions of gender, family, the market, the state and women's located experiences (Maher & Chavkin, 2010, p.18).

In addition, GCC theory in its original form, presents a very gloomy picture of migrant domestic workers, mainly as passive victims of globalisation (Yeates, 2009) with little or no choice except to migrate for their own survival. Palmary (2010, p.59) in her analysis of anti-trafficking discourse has rightly argued that "women's movement in migration studies has been mainly treated as a problem or indicative of a crisis at 'home'". Palmary (2010) further posits

that "home is associated with the well-being of the family such that its association with the well-being of the family makes women's migration a particular source of anxiety" (Palmary, 2010, p.59). It therefore falls short by ignoring the agentic capacity of women by problematising migration of women and absence from their homes.

There are some studies that have shown that when women migrate for care work, that has not always been the primary motivator. In some instances, studies have proven that women migrate to escape patriarchy, abuse in marriages or to seek marriage partners, etc. This suggests the need to question the factors that invoke women's transnationality because transnationalism is driven by different motives (Fauser, 2018) and does not necessarily equate to victimhood for all women. The GCC appears blind to other motivations behind women's transnationality and instead, privileges poverty and inequalities as the drivers of migration. Yet even when women migrate purely for domestic work, there is an element of agency that is present in their decisions to move or to stay, the routes to use and how to survive and pursue their livelihoods in the receiving context. The theory would do well to contemplate further that the everyday actions of women are as a result of their own agency and not always because of globalisation forces.

My argument contends that transnationalism and global care chains are shaped by both micro and macro dimensional factors, suggesting the need to analyse the process from both above and below because this helps to understand relational power relations in the transnational arenas (Smith & Guarnizo, 2008). Moreover, even though all participants were mothers, largely due to the purposeful sampling strategy I used, this does not mean that all migrant care workers are necessarily mothers. Even those who do not have children migrate and that further weakens the GCC theory, based on its assumption that not all women who migrate are necessarily mothers (Yeates, 2012) and neither are all migrant care-workers female. Hence, an expansion of the theory to incorporate women who are not necessarily mothers would further strengthen its effectiveness (Parrenas, 2001).

7.3.3   Motherhood

The institution of contemporary motherhood is shaped by at least three different but interrelated ideologies, namely, the ideology of patriarchy; the ideology of capitalism and the ideology of motherhood, which all intersect to shape the fabric of motherhood (Rothman, 1994). Dominant motherhood ideology is underpinned by intensive mothering (Hays, 1996) with an emphasis on the ever-present maternal figure and proximity between mothers and their children. Yet when mothers find themselves in situations where they may have to mother their children from

a distance, such normativity is challenged for the mere reason that it deviates from the dominant socially ascribed norm of motherhood.

In Africa, motherhood is placed at the centre of representation of the African woman (Clark, 2001) with the black woman presented as strong, ever-nurturing mother and self-sacrificing. It is the idealisation of women that can deny or challenge acceptance of other forms of mothering or those aspects of motherhood that are deemed difficult (Nicholson, 1986) because those mothers who are not in synchronisation with idealised mothering are constructed as the 'other'. As a consequence of such normative practices that rely on producing binary distinctions between what is normal versus what is abnormal (Melhuish & Phoenix, 1987), mothers who find themselves mothering from the margins often feel pathologised and internalise dominant discourses which they use to engage in self-stigmatisation (Goffman, 1963) as they feel less adequate as mothers.

Such was the reality of mothers in this study who also formed part of that group that 'troubles the boundaries of mothering' (Carpenter & Austin, 2007) as they were all engaged in distant mothering yet what has often remained unappreciated is the fact that ideal motherhood was premised on a white bourgeois family model (Melhuish & Phoenix, 1987) that was presumed to be a superlative family model founded on some historical events in the West. In reality, motherhood is contextual and intersects with cultural, social and economic factors, suggesting that context is key in determining how a child is raised and mothered. The idealised form of motherhood does not represent the entirety of all forms of motherhood but is merely part of what motherhood can be, determined by one's class and social position.

In spite of this, the mothers in this thesis often judged themselves harshly for their failure to conform to the ideal for the mere reason that motherhood reinforces gender-based divisions of labour (McMahon, 1995). This was evident in their narratives where they expressed guilt and regrets for leaving their children under the care of other mothers, again demonstrating the unnecessary pressures of dominant ideologies. Self-blame attitudes by mothers emanated from the seemingly damaging hegemonic discourse of motherhood and crucially illustrated the extent to which public discourses are damaging to society as a yard-stick for measuring what is deemed good by society, in this case, the best form of parenting/raising children.

Secondly, hegemonic discourses are unrealistic in so far as they fail to acknowledge the existence of other forms of mothering, yet it is not every woman or child who has the privilege of being raised in a nuclear family. According to Goodwin and Huppartz (2010a) in western

societies, the good mother is usually identified by the way she dresses and presents herself in public, by how her and her children are well groomed and by the baby products her family purchases. This presumption is premised on middle class standards and is a life-style that can only be possible to women who are economically privileged. By all accounts, this is not a standard that all women can remotely meet. Yet, against this ideal standard, a different reality emerged in the context of this study.

The main drivers of migration for the women in this study were to fulfil financial obligations towards their children as they were effectively the breadwinners. However, becoming transnational informal undocumented workers meant their income capacities were severely undermined. Meagre as their earnings were, they were their only means of livelihoods which in turn, required them to be away from their homes in order to fulfil them. Effectively, transnational mothers were then confronted with a situation where the role of breadwinner could simply not be reconciled with that of ideal motherhood because if they had decided to be co-resident mothers, their livelihoods would be at risk.

The study thus exposed the irreconcilability of the two key roles i.e. as breadwinners and as primary carers. Additionally, the research has also shown how difficult it was for the mothers to fulfil their transnational obligations, given their class and social position as irregular migrants in Botswana. The study has thus pointed out the need to apply an intersectional analysis to understand how the social and class position of these transnational mothers are maintained or shift, according to their transnational location i.e. in Zimbabwe or Botswana. Most importantly, the results also add credence to calls for the role of the state to be interrogated and further theorised in transnational families.

Previous calls to re-think the role of the state and its relationship to the family (Palmary et al., 2010) resonate with the findings of this thesis because intimate family relationships are constrained and governed by the state for migrants (Palmary et al., 2010). Additionally, the results cast attention on the global and local nexus and how global forces manifest on the local i.e. the relationship between globalisation, the state and the family (Palmary et al., 2010), again bringing into question the separation of the domestic from the public spheres without questioning their connection and effects on families. The study has thus revealed the necessity to deconstruct motherhood, in order to understand it as a socially and culturally determined process i.e. there is no universal motherhood.

Motherhood is a social construction which should be understood from the realities and points of views of transnational mothers. For example, a study carried out in Cape Verde showed that flexible arrangements of care are generally accepted in this group and mothers' migration is seen as a good act by mothers doing their best to provide for their children (Akesson *et al*., 2012). As such, maternal separation is not highly stigmatised but is rather seen as a normal activity in that society. The key interesting finding also pointed to how the transnational mothers were themselves responsible for denouncing transnational family arrangements, yet this was their reality. This denunciation was linked to their romanticising of nuclear family forms (Falicov, 2007).

Consequently, disapproval of separated families was not only confined to the migrant mothers but also extended to their children and some caregivers. Evidence showed that in spite of anticipated remittances by the families, psychological traumas engendered by migration and family separation prevailed (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1984), mainly because "the separation of mothers and children runs counter to hegemonic discourses on the mothers as the primary carers of her children, and the emotional, physical and geographic closeness that is claimed and naturalised by such discourses" (Erel, 2002, p.132). The pressure to conform to the ideal caused traumas for both mothers and their children, especially against broader society values that seem to dictate a general blanket agreement on how children ought to be raised.

Hestbaek (1998, p. 487) has reasoned that "although there are distinct differences in practical parenthood between social groups, but when it comes to attitudes, there appears to be 'a normatively founded ideal on how to act, a kind of political correctness". This argument represents precisely what transnational motherhood represented to the mothers in question – a kind of failed motherhood and inadequate form of parenting that they were engaged in out of lack of choices. As such, there was always an underlying factor in their narratives that drew them to compare themselves against public norms or against those kinds of families that they regard as conformist.

Reality, however, draws attention to motherhood as a contextually and spatially determined factor which goes well beyond the mother-child dyad and influences the form and outcomes of motherhood. For instance, when mothers make a 'choice' to migrate and separate from their children, although they are driven by the need for remittances which they would otherwise not get in their own countries, the consequences that ensue from the pursuit of remittances are often negative and unintended because, as argued by Haley (2018), the choice to leave one's family

is often seen as a personal choice and is often delinked from the broader structural and social problems. The separation of the private from the public further gives an impression of a clear divide between the spheres when, in reality, the separation is blurred and not so clear-cut.

My findings also served to further expose the power of hegemonic discourses, particularly in cases where research subjects interact with a researcher who by normative standards, also appears to be conformist to such discourses. In my reflections of Chapter 3, I mentioned how my own positionality intersected with my participant's identities as single transnational mothers. In a sense, by virtue of my identity, my presence could be deemed as having been intrusive. Bourdieu (1999) has argued that the more the researcher is linked to the participants by social proximity and familiarity, the less intrusive the research is. By sharing a similar national identity and language with participants, I was able to come close to them but other hand, despite these commonalities, I was also viewed differently in my position as a married woman who lived legally in Botswana with my children.

As such, some of my identity markers positioned me as either an outsider/ insider, reflecting my different positionalities during the research process. For instance, I was an insider when participants realised that we were of the same nationality and that I was also a mother. However, I was viewed as an outsider the moment they realised that I live with husband and children in Botswana, facts they came to know through our interactions. I therefore argued that how I was positioned in the field by virtue of these identities had implications on the narratives I got from the mothers, in particular. Perhaps out of fear of judgement from a researcher that was an epitome of conformity in their eyes, the mother's narratives were, to some extent, performative for my sake, as the primary audience at the time of data collection.

For example, there was often over-justifications of why they had to leave their children behind, how they had to sacrifice and why it was not right for their children to be raised by either their mothers or other caregivers. The three mothers whose children were under the care of grandmothers all alluded to the shame of leaving their children with their mothers when they themselves were raised by their mothers. Besides, they felt that it was their duty to look after their mothers and not to throw them back into the cycle of child-raising yet again. My own positionality, I argue, had an influence in the way the narratives were given to me, a position that would no doubt have been different if I had been a transnational mother myself, for example.

Accordingly, in analysing the mothers' narratives, I argue that their stories were positioned in performative ways with the aim of ensuring that their stories were told in ways that they wanted them to be understood. It illustrates how narratives are always characterised by the speaker's subjectivity, suggesting the need to analyse narratives as performances (Daiute & Lightfoot, 2004, p.153) and within the context from where they are emerging (Bakhtin, 1975, 1981; Glenn, 1992, Phoenix et al., 1991; Holland et al., 1997; Hill-Collins, 1994; Maher & Chavkin, 2010; Freeman, 2001; Kihato, 2010). In other words, the mothers were positioning themselves, as subjects that agentically constructed their situations and positions, and in the process, "both normative discourses and their individual sense of self are called into existence" (Daiute & Lightfoot, 2004, p.154).

The findings showed that it is crucial to consider the immediate and broader social contexts when telling stories, notably the broader ideological context from which the stories are emerging (Bamberg, 2004) because in telling stories, people are simply performing their identities that are embedded with particular social contexts (Daiute & Lightfoot, 2004; Essers, Doorewaard & Benschop, 2013). The mothers in this thesis, just like the children and the caregivers, were seemingly drawing from the publicly available ideological narratives i.e. publicly shared socio-cultural normative discourses because the self is always in constant relation to the generalised other (Mead, 1934). Therefore, this study drew attention to how stories may actually reveal troubled subject positions because the mothers' personal narratives were in rivalry with the public moral and social narratives (Breheny & Stephens, 2011).

Their own stories as single transnational mothers were alternative narratives that ran in contrast to publicly shared narratives, hence the performativity (Butler, 1990, 1995) as they were continuously striving to maintain 'moral' positions in their stories as women who were mothering from the margins (Carpenter & Austin, 2007) and actively engaged in the process of shaping their narratives in ways by which they wanted to be perceived (Goldstein, 2002). The presentation of their stories was told within what would appear to be a liminal space, a position that showed that their stories were being told within a context of 'what is and what could actually be' (Bakhtin, 1981).

The presentation of the self is about presenting the self in ways that are in conformity to mainstream cultural ideas (Harre & Langenhoeve, 1999), purely because of the damage and pressure that hegemonic discourses place on those whose lived experiences are otherwise, hence the negative or difficult aspects of their personal experiences as transnational mothers

are either denied or pathologised (Nicolson, 1986). In analysing the narratives, I then had to be alert to what the essence of their stories was conveying, firstly, to myself as the primary researcher and secondly, to broader society, as their narratives were value laden with their own aspirations as well as those of their societies.

Their stories inevitably functioned to justify and moralise their absence whilst simultaneously repairing their identities as well as narratively lobbying validation for their transnational statuses as distant mothers from a researcher who was positioned as the privileged other. Stories, particularly vulnerable storytelling, thus served varied functionalities depending on the context in which they are told and to whom they are told - audience (Holloway & Freshwater, 2007a). Interestingly, although patriarchy is often blamed for the persistence of idealised notions of motherhood, my findings of my study expose the complicity of women in the reification of hegemonic gendered ideologies.

Strangely, women in this study did not reject or condemn idealised notions of mothering but instead, felt the need to justify their own mothering through performative story-telling because their lived realities failed to meet expectations of good mothering. I take Therborn's position (1980) that people have the agency to accept, alter or reject dominant ideologies. However, in reality, such a progressive stance is yet to materialise, when perhaps ideology will cease to regulate women's lives by dictating what they should do with their children or how they should raise them. Accordingly, this was revealed in the fashion through which respondents articulated their stories in this study suggesting that telling stories is never neutral - it is always a dialogic process, with the self and also with others, drawing from the socio-cultural environment (Holland & Skinner, 1997).

This resonates with Goffman's earlier assertion of individuals as social actors who perform differently in different spaces. Goffman (1959) thus conceptualises spaces as either 'front stage' or 'back-stage'. For my argument here, I make reference to the front stage where individuals actively and agentically manage the presentation of themselves according to the audience before them. In this study, we were in a space where I was their 'front' stage, where they had to ensure they managed my perceptions of them and this was driven mainly by the power of idealised motherhood and their desire to conform/emancipate/validate their form of mothering as equitable to the mainstream standard. Exoneration of their identities was very much of what influenced the type of data I got/did not get.

Beyond this performativity, it brings back into focus the debate of the private domestic versus the public sphere dichotomy, revealing that the two spheres are and cannot be clearly demarcated because mothering, as it shows when mothers migrate, this does not occur in one sphere per se, but takes place in all the spheres i.e. the productive and reproductive spheres. Arguably, families, though artificially regarded as private, are very much shaped by the public sphere.

Furthermore, although the findings continuously reflect on the power of hegemonic discourses in regulating women's lives, there is another aspect that these findings support. In as much as these discourses wield so much power, but they are also not static and therefore malleable. Transnational mothers have demonstrated this flexibility as they have had to restructure their roles as mothers in line with the resources or lack thereof at their disposal, suggesting that traditional norms of motherhood can indeed be deconstructed according to one's circumstances (Kaplan, 1992). Ideological motherhood is anchored in economic privilege and also within the assumption that it occurs within a context of marriage (Dow, 2016), an assumption that is of course, unrealistic as it excludes many women who do not fall within such utopian standards.

The study thus adds to research that calls for recognition of others forms of motherhood beyond ideological motherhood by desisting from using physical presence as a yardstick against which to measure good/bad mothering. If anything, the study has revealed that there are equally important attributes by which to measure motherhood, if there is ever a need to do such an exercise, e.g. financial provisioning. For my research context, hegemonic motherhood was not relevant because its geo-political origins did not speak to my context with regards to the day-to-day motherhood experiences of participants. The findings hence add to theoretical debates on transnational and motherhood studies and further enrich debates in this field.

Lastly, another aspect of transnational parenthood that has gained popularity in transnational literature relates to the positive outcomes brought about by advancement in information technologies which have simply made it easier to parent from a distance through virtual presence (Wilding, 2006; Madianou & Miller, 2011; Parrenas, 2005; Schalbaumazer, 2004; Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avila, 1997). Advancements in technology have also made sending remittances home easier (Ritzer & Dean, 2015). In short, globalisation is recognised as having brought advantages to transnational families by increasing the interconnectedness between people in different transnational spaces (Haley, 2018) with new technologies holding the promise of freeing people from the tyranny of space and time (Suarez-Orozco & Qin, 2005).

Furthermore, ICTs is viewed as affording women the role to participate in care-giving, thus retaining familial bonds (Bacigalupe & Lambe, 2011). Academically, the field of transnational migration is largely Asianised and Westernised. Thus, the claims for virtual parenting, have often been proven in transnational studies, that have been so far been conducted in mainstream migration streams from Asia i.e. the Filipinos, Indonesians, Mexicans, etc. who have migrated to the Global North for domestic and care work.

In reality however, as shown through the results of this thesis, such benefits of globalisation are not evenly distributed across the world, leaving some countries behind in celebrating virtual technologies as 'assistive parenting devices.' My results showed very limited to non-existent communication between mothers and their children or caregivers. As already indicated, although the mothers had cell-phones in Botswana, their uses were mediated by resources which were grossly low, due to their migration statuses and class positioning. On the other side of the border, none of the children had cell-phones at the time of field-work except for one child who got access to her phone during the holidays as she was in boarding school.

The rest of the children only wished they had cell-phones and if ever they were lucky to have few words with their mothers on the phone, it was usually done through the caregiver's cell-phone. Moreover, the mother's contact with the caregiver was also limited due to limited resources, such that their calls to caregivers were usually hurried conversations, usually to check on the children and to let the caregiver know when they had remitted money. Communication in this context was thus mediated by lack of resources and access to technology. The participants in this study barely fitted into the group of migrants that celebrate information and communication technologies as easing the pain of separation from their children and vice versa.

This again demonstrated the practicality of analysing at the whole scenario from an intersectional analysis by incorporating the host and sending factors at individual and structural levels. It also revealed class differences even among those groups that may at face value appear homogenous i.e. for example the difference between a domestic worker from the Philippines in the USA and a domestic worker from Zimbabwe in Botswana. It reveals regional differences in access to technologies and uneven development at international level. Hence to assume that domestic workers are the same is simply false and only by using an intersectional analysis can such intra-group differences become clearer.

Most importantly, this study therefore contributes to debates on transnational motherhood in the global South and offers comparative insights with other global contexts. What has emerged is that benefits of globalisation and ICTs are contextual, and evidence shows that for many transnational families, its perceived benefits are unequally balanced and remain utopian. Perhaps as a result of not relying heavily on ICTs or prolonged separation which had ultimately normalised maternal absence, this study did not perceive communication as a priority for mothers, rather, what was key was to ensure remittances flow to their families. On the other hand, the children did not also seem to prioritise virtual communication but rather the material resources that they anticipated from their mothers.

This scenario is emblematic of the power of globalisation which lies in its manufacture of both hope and despair (Suarez-Orozco & Qin, 2005, p.4). In this case, my argument is that for those with access to it, they can have hope in using technologies to bridge the gap of physical separation. However, for those without access, despair continues to reign and the experience of ICTs as vessels of 'absent-presence' (Pertierra, 2005) is non-existent for some migrants. Another recognition though, is that even for migrants who are privileged enough to have unlimited access and coverage of information and communication technological tools, such privileges are not able to overcome the difficulties, in this case, separation of issues that are fundamentally social (Madianou, 2014, p.667).

We also need to appreciate the other dark side of communication tools as mediation apparatuses in transnational family separation – they do not automatically entail advantage. In this thesis, most mothers bemoaned the fact that even if they gave instructions to their children or caregivers over the phone, be it in relation to how remittances are to be used or disciplinary matters, geographical distance was still a barrier because their instructions would simply be ignored. They were not in a position to influence decision making in their homes via communication tools, especially when cell-phones were also used as tools to either tell lies, withhold truths regarding the actual daily realities on the ground, etc. Celebrating ICT's thus merits caution in recognition of their accessibilities to some transnational families as well as in recognition of the damages that they may also bring into spatially dispersed families.

In summing up, I want to discuss the notion of agency just briefly because the debate of agency is well beyond the confines of this thesis' objectives lest I digress from the key topic of motherhood. Nevertheless, the way transnational women interact with the national and global structures in place also reveals some level of agency in the decisions they have made from

when they departed from Zimbabwe around 2007/2008. Granted, they may be powerless to change some factors, but within that powerlessness, there are varying degrees of agency in their actions, agency which has successfully led them to remain undocumented in Botswana more than a decade, despite the costliness of their statuses. This agency, in my view needs to be recognised be paying attention to factors that have sustained their illegalities as well as acknowledging their resilience in the face of multiple adversities.

7.3.4   Childhood

There is a growing recognition for children to be seen as independent thinkers in research and as capable enough to have their own voices heard and to speak for themselves (James & Prout, 1990; Alderson, 1995; James et al., 1998; Qvortrup et al., 1994; Corsaro, 1997; Scott, 2008; Mayall, 2008; Christensen & James, 2000; Punch, 2002). Despite this growing realisation, context or the immediate environment of the child also influenced the narratives given by children (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). As such, when children act as informers in research processes, there is need to recognise that:

> Children are motivated to understand the social rules and relationships of their cultural world because they need to get things done in their family relationships. What we see …is the child's increasing subtlety as a member of a cultural world- a subtlety achieved in part because of the individual's needs and relationships within that world (Dunn, 1998, p.189).

In line with this, the children in this thesis, much like their mothers, suffered from a desire of hegemonic conformity. Specifically, they desired to belong to nuclear families, with an ever-present mother. I argued that this desire was a result of the environments in which their childhoods were rooted i.e. in a society where motherhood is revered and proximate motherhood is idealised. As such, the children in this study felt abandoned and to a certain extent, stigmatised for belonging to non-conformist families, a situation that would be intensified by seeing their peers at school with their parents on consultation or sports days at school, invoking feelings of envy towards other children.

The realities of their childhoods were however, embedded in their social context, in which it was not feasible to 'do family' in one geographic location. The study thus illustrated that childhood is not a fixed construct nor is it universal, but rather how it is experienced is contextually shaped by economic, cultural and social factors in the child's environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Furthermore, the study showed that in as much as the New Sociology

of Childhood recognises agency in children, their agency was restricted, again by factors in their immediate environments which mediated their capacity for agency.

Elsewhere, I have already mentioned that their mothers' transnationalism disadvantages them i.e. those disadvantages that emanated from the mothers positioning in the reception context. For instance, the mothers' class position left the children with very few resources, if any, to make their own independent decisions. Their lack of access to technological devices meant they could not initiate communication with their mothers, even on matters that they felt they could only discuss with their mothers. For example, two of the girls felt that there were issues that they could only share with their mothers, yet they could not.

Therefore, I argue that inaccessibility to communication tools further incapacitated their agency to initiate contact with their mothers. Again, broader economic and structural conditions in Zimbabwe left them vulnerable to poverty, factors which were beyond their capacity to resolve. However, in spite of these limitations, they were able to project future agency based on imagined futures they envisioned after successfully completing their schooling especially so after realising they were powerless to change their current circumstances. They held various aspirations which included working hard at school, then becoming doctors/ microbiologists, among many other careers. Power to be agentic is therefore not static but shifts across space and time.

Interestingly though, none of the nine children expressed any desire to migrate to Botswana where their mothers were. Another finding unique to the children in relation to survival strategies also questioned the often-hegemonic view of what a child is. By Western standards, a child is often viewed as someone in need of care and protection, yet in this study, some of the children challenged this assumption. For example, some were in fact, taking care of their siblings or grandmothers due to frailty. In addition, some of the children, five to be specific, often took up piece jobs in people's fields or homes for income and livelihood purposes in their households, suggesting the importance of context in studying children.

The dominant assumption of a child as someone in need of care (O'Dell, Brownlow & Bertilsdotter, 2018; Mahati & Palmary, 2017; O'Dell, Crafter, de Abreu & Cline, 2017) was unbefitting in this thesis, demonstrating that childhood is not universal but rather context specific. Yet again, this underscores context as a determinant of how childhood is experienced and also begs us to question the notion of separation of the domestic versus public sphere whilst also questioning universalism.

When a mother and breadwinner departs from her home (in the domestic sphere) to migrate, she intersects with the public sphere through migration regimes in the reception context, her experiences in the labour market are shaped by the global demand of supply and labour and her departure in the first instance was initiated by the difficult structural economic and political conditions in her nation of origin (Zimbabwe), which failed to provide opportunities to make a living in her own country. Transnational family separation in this study began as individual/family decisions that were taken in response to factors outside the home. It is for these reasons that I continue to advance the argument of childhood as externally mediated and experienced differently in diverse contexts.

Although neo-liberalism's rationality privileges individual responsibility and self-management of families, with little to no intervention of the state (Wall, 2004), paradoxically, it is national boundaries that impose important experiential relations within the global context (Anthias, 2012). Without the powers of the state and globalisation, there would be no 'forced' family separation or unlawful mobility. As reasoned by Anthias (2012, p.102), "transnational migration is to be framed within a contextual analysis that recognises the interconnectedness of different identities and hierarchical structures relating to gender, race, ethnicity, class and other social divisions at local, national, transnational and global levels". Interactions between the household, the national, regional and international processes offer a well-informed analysis of transnational families.

7.4 Methodological Contributions

7.4.1 Multi-site research

Globalisation calls for the necessity to look within and beyond the nation state. Through the use of a multi-site research design, I was able to connect local, national, regional and global processes (Fauser, 2018) in understanding how they have shaped families in the age of globalisation. Furthermore, the approach recognised the extent and nature of transnationalism in which participants were engaged, adding to existing literature on illegality and associated consequences of transnationality under such identity. Overall, the method revealed the necessity to look at transnationality according to class, gender, age and legal status and most importantly, to do so beyond the confines of a single nation state – methodological nationalism (Marcus, 1995; Wimmer & Glick-Schiller, 2002; Beck, 2007; Amelina, 2010).

This approach added to the existing body of knowledge because theoretical and empirical insights were not restricted to the nation state by recognising migrants as people who possibly

hold multiple memberships in different locations. In so doing, transnational lifestyles were observed from local to national to transnational and global levels, illustrating how migrants are affected at each level of analysis (Amelina, 2010) from the micro to the macro-level constructions of social order (Marcus, 1995). Furthermore, by looking at the day-to-day experiences of transnationality from below (Smith & Guarnizo, 2008), the method laid bare the subjective experiences and meanings of both migrants and non-migrants, affording the opportunity to compare their subjectivities, ambivalences and shared understandings of transnationality (Fauser, 2018).

In short, multi-sited research (MSR) afforded the opportunity to investigate shared or divergent perspectives of people who belonged to the same families and the knowledge gained offered insights into further understanding how spatially dispersed families are responding to the challenges of globalisation (Falzon, 2009), hence further advancing knowledge in transnational research. Multi-sited research afforded this research the opportunity to understand how maternal separation affected family relationships, adaptation and coping strategies from all angles i.e. in Botswana and Zimbabwe. By triangulating data sources through the use of data from both migrants as well as non-migrants (those who stayed behind), this study surpassed the usual bias of looking at migration experiences only from the view of the migrant in the receiving context.

This allowed me to triangulate both the sources of data as well as the interpretations. Additionally, due to the fact that I did not only triangulate data sites but also data collection tools, through the use of narrative and semi-structured interviews, diaries and participatory visual tools, namely, cameras and drawings, the data that emerged was rich. The combination of various data collection tools afforded the opportunity to understand and capture participants' experiences from multiple dimensions. Moreover, the fact that I succeeded in matching the samples across sites by using participants from the same families – at least for eight out the 10 families, was a further advantage which allowed for analysis of complex transnational linkages between migrants and non-migrants across different geographic sites (Marcus, 1995; Mazzucato, 2008, 2010; Amelina, 2010).

Practically, this also allowed me to trace their family practices, ties, exchanges and different perspectives of the stayer and those who left (Mazzucato, 2008, 2010). The insights I got were thus complementary as they allowed me to focus on a specific phenomenon from different angles with the same family members, which in this case, was motherhood. Most important, I

was able to map how care circulated between the two sites, what and how it was exchanged thereby increasing methodological reflexivity (Beck & Sznaider, 2006) by mapping (dis)/continuums of family relations across space and time. Overall, the method added to existing understandings of transnational families in the Global South context and the approach filled in methodological gaps in the field, which, as I have already alluded previously, continues to focus more on migrant experiences in the countries of destination.

Such approach neglects a crucial aspect of migrants i.e. the families they have left behind and often the reason for their departure in the first place. An understanding of migrant experiences is thus only fractional/ incomplete if research neglects to look at their origins by framing in their contexts of departures (Boyd & Grieco, 2003) and the families that they left-behind. The method used for this thesis has attempted to bridge such weaknesses, hence adding to knowledge, theory and methodology in transnational research.

7.5   Significance of the study

This study has been significant in adding to world views from a Global South perspective, by bringing into scholarship views and voices of people from Africa. By doing so, this thesis can engender comparative research in migration studies between the Global South and Global North. Moreover, due to the nature of the methodological approach adopted of triangulating data from members of the same families across two different sites, the thesis has provided fresh insights into researching transnational families by capturing diverse experiences and perceptions in different geographical locations. Welz (1998) has conceptualised migrants as moving targets that should be studied through what he has termed 'roving ethnography' resonating with Marcus (1995) who advocates an approach of following the people, hence my approach of interviewing family member in two countries.

The present study's design thus incorporated these insights in order to gain multiple perspectives from different spatial and temporal locations of participants. My study also challenges the often-rigid categorisations of migrants as either forced/voluntary movers. As the study has established, the dichotomy is blurred and fraught with contradictions, forcing us to reconsider what the category of economic migrant really entails. Furthermore, the study is also important as it challenged dominant hegemonic discourses of motherhood and childhood. Firstly, by pointing at the variations of these experiences, my study has pointed out the limits imposed by normativity as a standard of rightness and normative conformity.

Secondly, it has also suggested the necessity to critique dominant world views by questioning normatively imposed gendered codes and reconceptualising the meanings of motherhood in the age of globalisation and neo-liberalism at the intersections of migration, gender, class and ethnicity/nationality, amongst other factors. Additionally, the study significantly draws attention to the necessity to interrogate and question the meaning of sovereign power. By elucidating on the informalised ways of migration management in Botswana, this study also casts attention on the question of who makes claims of sovereignty on Botswana.

The study showed how individuals can possess sovereign power without necessarily being backed by formalised power structures, again bringing to attention institutional weaknesses of formal structures in managing human mobility in Botswana. Furthermore, policy incoherencies in dealing with migrant illegalities in Botswana are exposed through a hybrid model of managing mobility through formal and informal parallel governance structures. This incoherence is further shown through the paradoxical nature of physical borders which are enacted to act as barriers or architectures of immobility and sovereignty on one hand, and on the other hand, they represent their porous nature as architectures that in fact enable illegal mobility across them.

As such, the way the state impacts on families and reshapes them is highlighted, but most importantly, the study has also highlighted how transnational migration also impacts on the state by bringing to light the everyday micro strategies of undocumented migrants, which in turn, shapes state responses to their activities. The study has therefore added to global debates on gender, motherhood and care. By de-centring the debates away from the Eurocentric and Asia-centric views of transnational mobility, the study has avoided the pitfall of automatically making dominant views the default views in migration studies. My study therefore sought to contribute to further theorisation of transnationalism beyond the dominant Asian and Latin American cases. In addition, I also sought to include the voices that are often neglected in research, such as children's voices and caregivers. That is so because most migration studies have predominantly focused on researching migrant experiences, usually in the country of destination, at the neglect of the migrant's family members who stay behind. Hence, a multi-site research was adopted in order to give a holistic perspective on transnational motherhood, thus avoiding the common weakness of methodological nationalism which largely rests on the assumption that the nation state is given natural social and political form of the modern world (Wimmer & Glick-Schiller, 2002). As such, this study

makes a significant contribution to migration research by going beyond one nation and following the migrant and their families (Marcus, 1995).

7.6 Limitations of the study and areas for future research

In spite of the contributions of this thesis to empirical, theoretical and methodological insights, it would be remiss of me to overlook the weaknesses that emanated from the overall study. Inevitably, the present study, though significant in many ways, also had limitations that require mention. Firstly, although the study focused on the perceptions of the three main players in the care triangle (Graham et al., 2012), the weakness of this study stemmed from its failure to include other equally crucial players in the migration care triangle. The perceptions and experiences of teachers in relation to left-behind children (LBC) would have given more holistic perspectives of how children were coping in the absence of their mothers, particularly in a key factor like education, which appeared to be the main driver behind their mother's transnationality especially given that the issue of non-payment of fees and continuous suspensions from school was often raised by children. There is therefore a gap left in our understanding of children's experiences of distant motherhood and how this factored into their educational outcomes hence opinions from their teachers would have closed such gap in this study.

As such, key personnel such as teachers or school heads would have been better positioned to shed further light on such dimensions. Secondly, the thesis is based on field work that began in 2017 and was completed in 2018. Although the findings that emerged were invaluable and insightful, a longitudinal research approach, were it not for time and resource constraints, would have produced a more informed analysis that incorporated different spatial and temporal dynamics. The migration trajectories of transnational mothers and left-behind family members would have been better elaborated through a longitudinal study approach by tracking the changes that had occurred over the years. This was particularly crucial when you look at how some of the children had transitioned over time, for example from their statuses as left-behind children to become adults who then assumed care-giving for their younger siblings.

Instead, a longitudinal approach would have accounted for such experiences to be mapped over time and to understand how motherhood experiences changed over time and space i.e. taking

into account the children's different transitions even into adulthood. Such an approach would have also allowed for a more nuanced understanding into the notions of reciprocity for instance, in order to understand fully how transnational family care changes over time in these specific families.

A longitudinal approach would also have been able to track the changes in caregivers over time, how relationships played out and with what effects on children and mothers. For example, some of the children had been under different caregivers' over time. Even for those caregivers who had been with the children from the beginning i.e. since 2007/2008, a longitudinal approach would have been key in understanding the nature of care-giving and how it had transformed oven the years, especially bearing in mind the aging of caregivers and its implications on capabilities and care given to LBC e.g. grandmothers.

Even more imperative would have been the need to assess the children's ages at different times and examine how and if their perceptions of maternal separation had changed over time and if age was an influence on their perceptions. Here I have in mind children who were left as infants or toddlers yet when I went to meet them, they were now well in their teenager years. For example, T's mother migrated when the son was seven months old and I met him when he was 12 years old. Likewise, B was five years old when his mother migrated and when I met him, he was a 16-year-old boy.

Another example is that of E's family, whose two children I met had been under at least four different care-giving arrangements at the time I met with them in 2017, meaning they had been exposed to four different home environments. This would have further allowed analysis of how the immediate context of caregiving impacted on both the mothers and children (domestic environment). The implications of changing caregivers, the reasons for changes and ways in which all players in the care triangle responded to such would have further added a rich layer of analysis to this study. Essentially, tracking of their experiences of separation over time would have enriched this study, but again this was constrained by time, resources and institutional regulations in relation to my enrolment.

Additionally, although I drew from Marcus's approach (1995) of following the people and I did so by following members of the same family, a further limitation was presented by my failure to use a simultaneous matched sample - SMS (Mazzucato, 2009a). This type of matched sampling would have required that I have assistance from a research assistant so that we could collect data from the same family members simultaneously/ at the exact same day and time. In

turn, this would have allowed for sharing and cross-checking of data across the two countries and eliminated this weakness in the design of this study.

Tracing the individual connections, relationships and experiences across transnational social spaces at the exact same time would have further validated my findings as opposed to visiting the two sites sequentially. My first site was in Botswana followed by Zimbabwe. The time that elapsed between the two sites was a weakness in the sense that it gave transnational mothers ample time to script and influence the narratives that would emerge from the other side of the border. The limitation arose as a result of my failure to follow the simultaneous matched sampling approach (Mazzucato, 2008, 2010) whereby I would interview all participants across the different transnational social fields at the same time. The efficacy of such an approach would have ensured that I get real-time experiences of all participants and draw in-depth comparisons of the phenomenon under investigation.

 The approach would have also limited distortions of narratives as real time investigations would have minimised or precluded collaboration of narratives between family members. I have discussed this scenario in Chapters 3 and 7, particularly in reference to communication tools (cell-phones) to influence the way their family narratives would be presented. This precise weakness was beyond my control as real-time narratives would have required hiring research assistants, which was constrained by resources and time on my part. In a way though, the mothers' efforts to manage their family presentations were not wholly successful and the children's honesty essentially revealed further insights into self-presentation and performativity, hence contributing to further insights into narrative story-telling as a method of research. Another limitation arose in relation to the sample I used.

Although when I started sourcing participants through a snowball approach, the only criterion I followed was to search for migrant domestic workers who had left their children in Zimbabwe. Therefore, I used factors of nationality, gender, motherhood and nature of work as my criteria. I did not use marital status yet by coincidence, the sample was made up of single mothers only. In hindsight, I realised the sampling could have been improved by including mothers who were married or at least living with their partners even though that was not the original intention of the study. That angle would have allowed me to interrogate the distribution of care in families from a gendered perspective. Furthermore, the role of fathers in care would have been better understood. Beyond knowing that all fathers were absent for my participants, I could not examine this scenario further and perspectives of men would have produced richer empirical,

theoretical and methodological insights. Additionally, perhaps a comparative sample could have provided further mileage for this research as well.

By this, I mean a comparative approach between families whose mother is absent with those whose mother is ever-present. That would have produced insights which either reified ideal motherhood or disapproved this, based on children's experiences and outcomes. Another way of gauging the absence of key members in transnational families could have even been to use a comparative sample with transnational fathers in Botswana to serve as an impetus for understanding separation from a gendered perspective and its implications on children.

Nonetheless, in spite of these limitations, the study still provided significant insights into transnational families that illustrated perceptions of motherhood from a bi-national perspective beyond a single nation state. Thus, the study was able to demonstrate that doing family was not geographically bounded in a single physical location or a single nation state. The strength therefore lay in its design which moved beyond methodological nationalism (Wimmer & Glick-Schiller, 2002) thus contributing to rich insights into the phenomenon of transnational motherhood and patterns of care.

7.7   Conclusion

By exploring motherhood through the lens of irregular migration, this research has been able to shed light on variations of motherhood and how families are shaped by class and social location of mothers. The study has also pointed to the necessity to use multi-sited research approaches in studying transnational families in order to fully understand the continuum of relations across different geographical spaces and most importantly, how migration intersects with structural factors and produces varied effects on the families left-behind. Although the study's focus was on understanding the everyday experiences and perceptions of transmigrants – transnationalism from below (Smith & Guarnizo, 2008), the study's findings suggest a multi-level/multi-scalar approach in order to understand transnationalism by looking at how the local, national, regional and global forces all interact and how families respond to such factors.

Significantly, the research also pointed to the need to adopt a continental approach in studying transnationalism given the uniqueness of Africa, culturally, economically and socially, which has a different set of realities that are different from the Global North, given uneven development between the North and the South. The multi-sited approach allowed for the exploration of transnational migration from a different angle than what other studies have yielded before. The role of the sending and receiving countries in influencing the experiences

of motherhood as well as childhood were brought into perspective through the examination of micro individual and structural factors that impact on transnationalism, particularly that of undocumented mothers.

Most importantly, the thesis has further cast attention on the artificiality of separate boundaries i.e. the private/public sphere. Instead, what has emerged is how the two spheres are intertwined as families are shaped and respond to global forces as well as polices, laws and regulations that are decided in the public sphere. Furthermore, although the thesis has noted the weaknesses of transnational theory, the strength has been in approaching this study by focusing on transnationalism from below (Smith & Guarnizo, 2008) as a way of mitigating its weaknesses. Faist (2008) has made calls on the necessity of researchers to focus on migrant centred narratives in order to be better understand the interplay between structure and agency.

Essentially, because migration studies are situated within the tenets of everyday life (Halfacree & Boyle, 1993), a focus on everyday migrant experiences captures the connections between the local and global as well as the importance of specific places in mediating individual experiences (Ley, 2004). By taking into account the everyday localised experiences, we are then able to understand their interaction with the national and global. It is thus through studying the localised experiences of migrant mothers, their children and caregivers in their context in Botswana and Zimbabwe that I have been able to demonstrate the paradoxical nature of migration in this context.

For instance, on one hand, transnational migration challenges conventional images of motherhood (Lutz, 2011) that positions women as service providers to their children's needs whilst their own needs remain secondary (Hays, 1996), yet on the other hand, even under the context of migration, mothers and their children sustain and perpetuate the very same ideology that the departure from their homes indirectly challenges. Consequently, they contribute by reproducing the beliefs that oppress them and consciously seeking validation of their statuses as transnational mothers. By far, the often-sad day-to-day lived realities of the migrant mothers, left-behind children and caregivers in this thesis cast a different light on migration, challenging notions of universal motherhood, childhood and the notion of proximity in doing family by questioning how motherhood and childhood are produced in different contexts.

Both experiences are classed, nationalised, spatially and temporally mediated, and thus calling for context in understanding them. Furthermore, the glaring absence of fathers in transnational family care in this study has revealed, firstly, the persistence of gendered obligations to care as

evidenced by the complete absence of fathers or male kin in reproductive responsibilities. Lastly, fathers, though absent in this study, their importance in children's lives has been underscored by the children's desires to have their fathers present, though interestingly, fathers' are perceived more as providers in the family, pointing again to the perpetuation of gendered norms as dictated by hegemonic ideologies. By extension, it has further proved persistent gendered inequalities in child-raising and care-giving, with women expected to take up responsibilities of child-care.

In looking at the nature of relationships between transnational mothers and their left-behind children, there is a high level of ambivalence which is compounded by the limited physical visits, limited/absent communication and haphazard remittances. Although such is the case, the study has also pointed to the importance of the state (receiving state) in shaping intimate relations between mothers and their children or in preventing reunification through legal policies and laws. On the other hand, the state (the sending state) is also complicit in separating families. By failing to provide sustainable opportunities for their citizens to work in their own countries - in proximity to their families, the state inevitably leads mothers to 'decamp' from their homes in pursuit of transnational livelihoods, in order to overcome economic challenges (Moroksavic, 1994).

Effectively, it is the state that initiates or sets up conditions of displacement for migrant mothers – displacement from their homes and children by virtue of forcing mothers to move in response to economic challenges. In bringing up displacement in this thesis, I adopt the view that displacement is not confined to refugees or internally displaced persons but also encompasses economic migrants, whose conditions force them to move from their homes, calling into question the forced/voluntary dichotomy. Inevitably, by virtue of the intricate relationship between migrant status and motherhood, both states i.e. Zimbabwe and Botswana, through their actions or inactions, incapacitate mothers as their agency is met with varied constraints, which, though produced at national or global levels, directly encroach into their private/domestic sphere i.e. their families.

This thesis puts the state at the centre of shaping the migrants' life courses and those of their families and at the same time, militates against the perceived or imagined gains of migration, particularly for migrants in precarious legal conditions. Finally, I make reference to the terms I used in this thesis to refer to transnational mothers as either undocumented, illegal or irregular. I deliberately did not choose a specific term to apply to them but instead used them

interchangeably throughout the thesis. Although that may appear indecisive, my standpoint was deliberate for a number of reasons. Firstly, my participants addressed themselves as 'illegals', a term which they seemed to have internalised without showing any outer signs of being offended or degraded.

In fact, upon first contact, most of them introduced themselves and openly declared their status as illegals. None of them attempted to hide this reality. Secondly, I am aware of scholarly debates around the use of the term 'illegal', with some scholars condemning its use as exclusionary, xenophobic/racist or discriminatory because it is a term that is mostly associated with criminality and denies people their humanity. Hence, Koser (2007) for example resorts to use the term illegality whilst Lutz (2011) prefers to refer to them as "being illegal". My use of the term was used to be deliberately in synchronisation with how the migrants referred to themselves as well as how they are officially referred to in media and public discourse in Botswana. I did not use the term in order to be purposely complicit in criminalising or denying them their humanity.

Contrarily, I did so and mention this in closing this chapter as a way of provoking further debate within the public and policy arenas in Botswana, where this term has been normalised, yet in effect it is loaded with a myriad negative insinuations on the one who is labelled as such, in the way they are treated by officials, employers, the general public and media at large in Botswana – commonly referred to as the "Zimbabwean problem". If indeed the perception in the region is that of Zimbabweans as a problem, then that also brings into question SADC responses to migration in the region. Particularly when it comes to the plight of undocumented female migrants, it appears the regional body apples a gender-neutral approach in their policies.

Seemingly, it falls short in implementing gender-streaming policies that target vulnerable women with a view to their safety and protection, especially given the violent nature of borders. To extend my argument, despite their knowledge regarding the porosity of borders in the region and the extent of undocumented migration streams from Zimbabwe to neighbouring countries, there is a lack of sufficient legal channels of remitting money home meaning from a policy perspective, only a few sectors benefit from migration. This is exacerbated by the region's lack of efficient tracking mechanisms i.e. the immigration systems are only able to track movement at entry and exit points to the neglect of tracking once one is inside the receiving country.

That in itself, suggests a policy gap in South to South migration management, which in turn fails to initiate targeted policies at female migrants as is the case in this study. Thus, the

participants in the present study are rendered invisible at state policy level as well as at regional policy levels. As a parting shot, I also want to provoke further debate around notions of social justice and human rights by raising a few concerns. Firstly, transnational mothers are members of two societies yet poorly supported by neither (Isaksen *et al*, 2008). If that is the case, does this not call for public recognition of a social justice issue for women yet structural vulnerabilities that migrant women face can be ameliorated with political will, resource allocations and legislative oversight (Quesada *et al*, 2011) but it appears there is no willingness at state level initiate social justice measures for these women.

In my view, it is not enough for social justice to be addressed at state level only. I have spoken at length about the complicities of the state in family disruptions but that is not to claim it is the entire picture at play. I maintain that it is not only the state that is a structure of exclusion but also women themselves because for women in the GCC that employ other women, it should be worrying that women with limited options resort to crossing borders through violent routes and women remain silent about this.

I believe it constitutes an injustice when another woman emerges from violent forests directly into another woman's home, as cheap labour yet women still remain silent on this matter. It also means that the battles of emancipation that women fight for lose value when it is privileged women that are easy vehicles of engendering oppression of other women when they allow other women to be labelled as illegal trespassers yet they are labourers in their homes. As these circumstances prevail for illegal mothers, so too do women normalize such social injustices because the challenges faced by migrant domestic workers stem from women's acceptance of conditions that marginalize other women.

With the different waves of feminism, what has been common is the call for the emancipation of women yet women are unwilling to fight for their counterparts who are in no position to fight for themselves, for example migrant domestic workers.. The question is how those in privileged positions use their power and the choice, as it appears is to either use that power to emancipate fellow women or to oppress them. My opinions cut across all levels of women from the private families who employ domestic workers, to women in civil society spaces and in state positions. Particularly for those women in state ministries of women and gender in Botswana and elsewhere, the question remains whether it is enough to think and device policies for women at the exclusion of the migrant woman that lives in your midst especially given that a migrant woman is a woman first before she is a migrant.

Can social justice not be engendered through institutions of service? As women, there is need to question what it implies to underpay another woman or deny another woman her basic rights. My sympathy for migrant domestic mothers is no secret and hence my aim in raising concerns over social justice has been my personal appeal to feminist sisterhood. Without equality for these women, arguably as women, we may be regressing into post-colonial slavery. Evidently, my position is not even about targeting immigration laws but rather a matter of what can be done individually and collectively as women to emancipate the other, particularly by those women in positions of privilege.

I do not believe the injustices faced by MDW should be relegated to individual choices only. As such, it is my hope that my undertaking of this study, though in a small way, makes their conditions more prominent for through silence, women are legitimising injustices and through globalisation, the notion of sisterhood advocated for by feminists is regressing. After all, violence to one woman is violence to reproducers of nations. At individual level, women in GCC's need to question their roles in the oppression of other women.

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APPENDICES

TABLE OF APPENDICES FOR THE ETHICS APPLICATION PROCESS

MOTHERS	CAREGIVERS	MOTHERS ON BEHALF OF CHILDREN	CAREGIVERS ON BEHALF OF CHILDREN	CHILDREN 7-12 yrs.	CHILDREN 13-17yr
Appendices 1a – 1d	Appendices 2a – 2d	Appendices 3a-3c	Appendices 4a-4c	Appendices 5a-5e	Appendices 6a-6e
1A). Participant Information Sheet	2A). Participant Information Sheet	3A). Consent for child to participate in study	4A). Consent for child to participate in study	5A). Assent sheet	6A). Assent sheet
1B). Participant consent	2B). Participant consent	3B). Consent for child to be audio-recorded	4B). Consent for child to be audio-recorded	5B). Participant consent	6B). Participant consent
1C). Audio consent sheet	2C). Audio consent sheet	3C). Consent for child to use visual methods	4C). Consent for child to use visual methods	5C). Audio consent sheet	6C). Audio consent sheet
1D). Diary consent sheet	2D). Diary consent sheet			5D). Diary consent sheet	6D). Diary consent sheet
				5E). Visual methods consent	6E). Visual methods consent

APPENDIX 1A: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET FOR TRANSNATIONAL MOTHERS

TITLE OF PROJECT:

Transnational mothers in domestic work, everyday practices and caregiving strategies in Botswana and Zimbabwe: A multi-sited approach

Student name : Joyce Takaindisa

Student email : 1233711@students.wits.ac.za

Student Contact number: +267-74230363

Supervisor name : Professor Ingrid Palmary

Supervisor email : Ingrid.Palmary@wits.ac.za

Supervisor contact number: +2711-7174698

University of the Witwatersrand University Research Ethics Committee (non-medical)

Contact: Lucille.Mooragan@wits.ac.za Telephone +27117171408

My name is Joyce Takaindisa. I am a postgraduate student registered for a Doctor of Philosophy in Migration and Displacement with the African Centre for Migration Society at the University of the Witwatersrand in South Africa. As part of the requirements for the degree, I am conducting research into the mothering practices and coping strategies of migrant mothers who are employed as domestic workers in Botswana.

Purpose of the study

I therefore wish to invite you to participate in this study as this will help me to understand your everyday practices of distant parenting, the consequences as you experience them as well as the coping and caregiving strategies you employ in your specific case. In this context, I wish to focus on how the meanings of motherhood have transformed in the context of migration. Please note that your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and refusal to participate will not be held against you in any way. I would like to provide you with more information about my research project and what your participation may entail if you decide to take part.

What will be required of you should you wish to participate?

If you agree to take part, I shall arrange to interview you at a time and place that is suitable for you. The first interview will take approximately one hour of your time minimum. The interview may not necessarily be a once – off event and may entail one or at most two follow-up interviews so as to fully understand your transnational mothering practices and strategies and how you feel your role as a mother had changed as a result of your migration to Botswana. With your permission, the interview/ interviews will be audio–recorded in order to ensure that the information I collect will be accurate and that it will be available to be used for my analysis after data collection. In addition to the interviews, I also request that you utilise written diaries which will be provided by me for your use. In these diaries, you will be required to document any information you may wish to share with me regarding your mothering role

from a distance. For example, this may include but may not necessarily be limited to diarising events such as when you communicate with your children back home or their caregivers, when you call them, when you visit them, when you remit money or goods back home for their use. It may also involve just you documenting your feelings, or anything you feel relevant to this topic as there are no limits nor are there wrong or right entries. The same pseudonym you adopt during our interviews will be the same one used to identify your diary in order to ensure confidentiality and anonymity. In all instances, even I as the researcher do not need to know your real name.

Confidentiality

All the information you give me in connection with this research and your identity will be kept confidential. No one other than my supervisor will have access to the written reports, field notes, diaries and audio-tapes as these will be kept in a locked cabinet on site at the university. The audio recordings will be destroyed after 3-5 years after any publication arising from the study or six years after completion of the study if there is no publication. Please be assured that your real name will not be used and instead, you will be given the option to choose a pseudonym for yourself. Your name and personal details will be kept confidential and no identifying information will be included in the final research report.

Rights to withdrawal

Since participation is voluntary, that does not mean you cannot withdraw from this study should you feel the need to at any time. You are free to refuse to answer any questions that may make you uncomfortable and still be free to continue participating in this study. You may withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequences by advising me as the researcher.

Potential risks or discomforts

There are no anticipated risks and if there are any, they will be minimal risks in this study. For example, you may feel uncomfortable sharing some of the details regarding your motherhood role and your migration. This may possibly invoke some emotional distress and I will be more than willing to refer you to a counsellor to talk about the issues at hand that may be affecting you as it may be beneficial to talk about it. There will be no physical risks or harm associated with this research.

What will be done with the information you provide?

The data that I intend to collect form you and others are purely for academic purposes. Therefore, the information that you share with me will be written up in my research report BUT you will not be identified by your real name in my thesis or in any reports or publications emanating from this study. I will not be using any of your personal details in any of my reports. Furthermore, the data gathered may be available for subsequent academic purposes or as reference for future research projects or academic teaching. The principle of anonymity will still prevail as everything will be made available for such purposes in an anonymised format.

What will be the benefits of my participation?

There are no direct benefits for participating in this study. However, it is a study that may potentially afford you the opportunity to share your story and to just talk about your circumstances in the context of your emigration to Botswana. In the event that we plan an interview and you choose a venue which may incur some transport costs, I will however reimburse your transport expenses as well as provide you with a meal, if necessary

After receiving this letter, please feel free to ask any questions regarding my study or if you have any additional information you may require in order to assist you in deciding whether or not to participate in this study, please feel free to contact me at any time. I shall answer all your questions to the best of

my ability. I may be contacted on +267 74230363 at any time. My email address is
1233711@students.wits.ac.za

Lastly, I would like to assure you that the proposed study has been reviewed and has received ethics clearance from the University's ethics clearance committee, details of which are provided above. Having said that, the final decision to participate in this study is solely yours and do not hesitate to share any concerns, questions or comments with me on this at any time you feel ready.

Thank you for taking the time to consider participating in the study.

Yours Sincerely

_____

Joyce Takaindisa

APPENDIX 1B: CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY - TRANSNATIONAL MOTHERS

TITLE OF PROJECT:

Transnational mothers in domestic work, everyday practices and caregiving strategies in Botswana and Zimbabwe: A multi-sited approach

- ☐ The researcher, Joyce Takaindisa, has provided me with the full details of the proposed project which is for academic purposes and been granted the platform to ask any questions or to seek further clarifications. I have thus read and understood the participant information sheet and have consented/agreed to partake in the interview.
- ☐ I understand that my participation in this project is voluntary and that I may refuse to answer any questions that I may not be comfortable with.
- ☐ I understand that I have the right to withdraw my participation from this research at any given time without any negative consequences or penalties.
- ☐ I am fully aware that my participation will involve being interviewed by the researcher at times, dates and place convenient to me.
- ☐ I understand that the researcher will anonymize my identity in the reports and further publications that may emanate from this study.
- ☐ I know that my confidentiality in this study will be assured through the use of pseudonyms in all written records emanating from this study.
- ☐ I further understand that this study has been approved by the University of the Witwatersrand Ethics Committee and that I am free to contact the researcher regarding any questions I may have

<u>Permission to be participate in the study</u>

Please tick one option

- ☐ I would like to be participate in the study
- ☐ I do not want to participate in the study.

Name of Participant: _____

Signature: _____   Date: _____

I further understand that this study has been approved by the University of the Witwatersrand Ethics Committee and that I am free to contact the researcher regarding any questions I may have.

Name of Participant: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX 1C: CONSENT FOR AUDIO-RECORDING OF INTERVIEWS - TRANSNATIONAL MOTHERS

TITLE OF PROJECT:

Transnational mothers in domestic work, everyday practices and caregiving strategies in Botswana and Zimbabwe: A multi-sited approach

My study will involve audio-recording of the interviews to be conducted. Your identity, name and any other information that might identify you, will not in any way be shared in any of the writings emanating from this study. Only I, the researcher and my supervisor will be able to listen to the recordings so as to accurately record your perspectives. The recordings will be used by the researcher for data analysis and your recorded interviews may be used in full or partially in the research report. However, neither your name nor your voice will be reproduced in research reports or publications that may follow from this study. Your identity will be protected through the use of pseudonyms.

AUDIO CONSENT:

By signing this form, I hereby give consent to the researcher to audio-record the interview so that my answers and responses can be correctly captured. I understand that my confidentiality will be maintained at all times and my true identity will not be revealed.

Please tick one option below:

- ☐ I agree to be audio-recorded during the interview sessions
- ☐ I do not agree to be audio-recorded during the interview sessions

- ☐ I agree to the use of verbatim quotes
- ☐ I do not agree to the use of verbatim quotes

Name of Participant: _____

Signature: _____   Date: _____
_____

.

APPENDIX 1D: CONSENT TO THE USE OF A DIARY - TRANSNATIONAL MOTHERS

TITLE OF PROJECT:

Transnational mothers in domestic work, everyday practices and caregiving strategies in Botswana and Zimbabwe: A multi-sited approach
.

Permission to use a diary

Please tick one option

    ☐ I agree to the use of a diary to be provided by the researcher
    ☐ I do not agree to the use of a diary to be provided by the researcher.

Name of Participant: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX 2A: PARTICPANT INFORMATION SHEET - CAREGIVERS

TITLE OF PROJECT:

Transnational mothers in domestic work, everyday practices and caregiving strategies in Botswana and Zimbabwe: A multi-sited approach

My name is Joyce Takaindisa and I am a postgraduate student registered for a Doctor of Philosophy in Migration and Displacement with the African Centre for Migration Society at the University of the Witwatersrand in South Africa. As part of the requirements for the degree, I am conducting research into the mothering practices, consequences of migration and coping strategies of migrant mothers who are employed as domestic workers in Botswana.

Purpose of the study

I therefore wish to invite you to participate in this study as this will help me to understand your everyday experiences, practices and coping strategies of caregiving during both the absence and presence of the migrant mother. In this context, I also wish to focus on how the meanings of motherhood have transformed in the context of migration. However, please note that your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and refusal to participate will not be held against you in any way. I would like to provide you with more information about my research project and what your participation may entail if you decide to take part.

What will be required of you should you wish to participate?

If you agree to take part, I shall arrange to interview you at a time and place that is suitable for you. The first interview will take approximately one hour of your time minimum. The interview may not necessarily be a once – off event and may entail may entail one or at most two follow- up interviews so as to fully understand your caregiving role, practices, strategies and how you view your role as a caregiver transforming or reconfigured when the mother of the child/children visits in comparison to when the mother is physically absent i.e. when she is in Botswana. With your permission, our interview/ interviews will be audio –recorded in order to collect all information to be used for my analysis after data collection. In addition to the interviews, I shall also request that you utilise written diaries which will be provided by me for your use. In these diaries, you will be required to document any information you may wish to share with me regarding your role as caregiver. For example, this may include but may not necessarily be limited to diarising events such as when you communicate with the biological mother of the children, frequency of communication, decision making regarding remittances, any issues about the children and anything else you feel necessary to share. It may also involve just you documenting your feelings, or anything you feel relevant to this topic as there are no limits nor are there wrong or right entries. The same pseudonym you adopt during our interviews will be the same one used to identify your diary, again so as to ensure confidentiality and anonymity. In all instances, even I as the researcher do not need to know your real name.

Confidentiality

All the information you give me in connection with this research and your identity will be kept confidential. No one other than my supervisor will have access to the written reports, field notes, diaries and audio- tapes as these will be kept in a locked cabinet on site at the university. The audio recordings will be destroyed after 3-5 years after any publication arising from the study or six years after completion of the study if there is no publication. Please be assured that your real name will not be used and instead, you will be given the option to choose a pseudonym for yourself. Your name and personal details will be kept confidential and no identifying information will be included in the final research report.

 Rights to withdrawal

Since participation is voluntary, that does not mean you cannot withdraw from this study should you feel the need to at any time. You are free to refuse to answer any questions that may make you uncomfortable and still be free to continue participating in this study. You may withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequences by advising me as the researcher.

Potential risks or discomforts

There are no anticipated risks and if there are any, they will be minimal risks in this study. For example, you may feel uncomfortable sharing some of the details regarding your motherhood role and your migration. This may possibly invoke some emotional distress and I will be more than willing to refer you to someone like a counsellor to talk about the issues at hand that may be affecting you as it may be beneficial to talk about it with a counsellor. There will be no physical risks or harm associated with this research.

What will be done with the information you provide?

The data that I intend to collect form you and others are purely for academic purposes. Therefore, the information that you share with me will be written up in my research report <u>BUT</u> you will not be identified by your real name in my thesis or in any reports or publications emanating from this study. The information may also be used by other academic colleagues but again, it will not identify you in any way. I will not be using any of your personal details in any of my reports. Furthermore, the data gathered may be availed for subsequent academic purposes or as reference for future research projects or academic teaching. The principle of anonymity will still prevail as everything will be made available for such purposes in an anonymised format.

 What will be the benefits of my participation?

There are no direct benefits for participating in this study. However, it is a study that may potentially afford you the opportunity to share your story and to just talk about your experiences as a caregiver to left-behind children.

After receiving this letter, please feel free to ask any questions regarding my study or if you have any additional information you may require in order to assist you in deciding whether or not to participate in this study, please feel free to contact me at any time. I shall answer all your questions to the best of my ability. I may be contacted on +267 74230363 at any time. My email address is 1233711@students.wits.ac.za

Lastly, I would like to assure you that the proposed study has been reviewed and has received ethics clearance from the University's ethics clearance committee, details of which are provided above. Having said that, the final decision to participate in this study is solely yours and do not hesitate to share any concerns, questions or comments with me on this at any time you feel ready.

Thank you for taking the time to consider participating in the study.

Yours Sincerely

_____

Joyce Takaindisa

APPENDIX 2B: CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY- CAREGIVERS

TITLE OF PROJECT:

Transnational mothers in domestic work, everyday practices and caregiving strategies in Botswana and Zimbabwe: A multi-sited approach

- ☐ The researcher, Joyce Takaindisa, has provided me with the full details of the proposed project which is for academic purposes and been granted the platform to ask any questions or to seek further clarifications. I have thus read and understood the participant information sheet and have consented/agreed to partake in the interview.
- ☐ I understand that my participation in this project is voluntary and that I may refuse to answer any questions that I may not be comfortable with.
- ☐ I understand that I have the right to withdraw my participation from this research at any given time without any negative consequences or penalties.
- ☐ I am fully aware that my participation will involve being interviewed by the researcher at times, dates and place convenient to me.
- ☐ I understand that the researcher will anonymize my identity in the reports and further publications that may emanate from this study.
- ☐ I know that my confidentiality in this study will be assured through the use of pseudonyms in all written records emanating from this study.
- ☐ I further understand that this study has been approved by the University of the Witwatersrand Ethics Committee and that I am free to contact the researcher regarding any questions I may have

<u>Permission to be participate in the study</u>

Please tick one option

- ☐ I would like to be participate in the study
- ☐ I do not want to participate in the study.

Name of Participant: _____

Signature: _____   Date: _____

APPENDIX 2C: CONSENT TO AUDIO-RECORD INTERVIEWS - CAREGIVERS

TITLE OF PROJECT:

Transnational mothers in domestic work, everyday practices and caregiving strategies in Botswana and Zimbabwe: A multi-sited approach

My study will involve audio-recording of the interviews to be conducted. Your identity, name and any other information that might identify you, will not in any way be shared in any of the writings emanating from this study. Only I, the researcher and my supervisor will be able to listen to the recordings so as to accurately record your perspectives. The recordings will be used by the researcher for data analysis and your recorded interviews may be used in full or partially in the research report. However, neither your name nor your voice will be reproduced in research reports or publications that may follow from this study. Your identity will be protected through the use of pseudonyms.

AUDIO CONSENT:

By signing this form, I hereby give consent to the researcher to audio-record the interview so that my answers and responses can be correctly captured. I understand that my confidentiality will be maintained at all times and my true identity will not be revealed.

Please tick one option below:

- ☐ I agree to be audio-recorded during the interview sessions
- ☐ I do not agree to be audio-recorded during the interview sessions

- ☐ I agree to the use of verbatim quotes
- ☐ I do not agree to the use of verbatim quotes

Name of Participant: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX 2D: CONSENT TO THE USE OF A DIARY IN THE STUDY - CAREGIVERS

TITLE OF PROJECT:

Transnational mothers in domestic work, everyday practices and caregiving strategies in Botswana and Zimbabwe: A multi-sited approach

<u>Permission to use a diary</u>

Please tick one option

- ☐ I agree to the use of a diary to be provided by the researcher
- ☐ I disagree to the use of a diary provided by the researcher

Name of Participant: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX 2D: CONSENT TO THE USE OF A DIARY IN THE STUDY - CAREGIVERS

TITLE OF PROJECT:

Transnational mothers in domestic work, everyday practices and caregiving strategies in Botswana and Zimbabwe: A multi-sited approach

<u>Permission to use a diary</u>

Please tick one option

- ☐ I agree to the use of a diary to be provided by the researcher
- ☐ I disagree to the use of a diary provided by the researcher

Name of Participant: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX 3A: CONSENT FORM FOR AUDIO-RECORDING OF THE INTERVIEWS: BY MOTHERS ON BEHALF OF THEIR CHILDREN

TITLE OF PROJECT:

Transnational mothers in domestic work, everyday practices and caregiving strategies in Botswana and Zimbabwe: A multi-sited approach

 My study will involve audio-recording of the interviews to be conducted. Your identity, name and any other information that might identify you, will not in any way be shared in any of the writings emanating from this study. Only I, the researcher and my supervisor will be able to listen to the recordings so as to accurately record your perspectives. The recordings will be used by the researcher for data analysis and your recorded interviews may be used in full or partially in the research report. However, neither the child's name nor the voice will be reproduced in research reports or publications that may follow from this study. The child's identity will be protected through the use of pseudonyms.

AUDIO CONSENT:

By signing this form, I hereby give consent to the researcher to audio-record the interview with my child so that the responses and can be correctly captured. I understand that my child's confidentiality will be maintained at all times and my child's true identity will not be revealed.

Please tick one option below:

☐ I agree to audio-recording of the interview sessions with the child under my care.
☐ I do not agree to the audio-recording of the interview sessions with the child

Name of Mother (pseudonym: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX 3A: MOTHER'S CONSENT SHEET FOR CHILD TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH PROJECT:

TITLE OF PROJECT:

Transnational mothers in domestic work, everyday practices and caregiving strategies in Botswana and Zimbabwe: A multi-sited approach

I have read the information regarding the research to be carried out by Joyce Takaindisa from the African Centre for Migration Society at the University of the Witwatersrand University.

 Please circle one option only.

I agree for my child to participate in this study   YES / NO

Informed Consent

That the dialogues between the researcher and my child will be audio – recorded and all or some of the direct quotes said by my child may be quoted verbatim in the academic report or publications that follow for academic purposes only

That all information obtained will be kept confidential through the use of pseudonyms and my child's identity will not be revealed.

I am fully aware that my child's permission may be withdrawn at any time during the study without any repercussions.

That my child may decline to answer any questions that may make him/her uncomfortable anytime during the interview.

This research though unintended, may invoke some emotional responses from my child and the researcher will offer to either end the interview if the child wishes or refer to a child counsellor if necessary.

I am aware that this study has been approved and cleared through the University's Ethics Clearance Committee I am also free to contact the researcher regarding any questions I may have.

Child's D.O.B: _____

Gender of Child: Male / Female

Signature of Mother: _____

Date of Consent: _____

CONTACT DETAILS OF RESEARCHER:

Joyce Takaindisa

Telephone +267-74230363

Email address: 1233711@students.wits.ac.za

APPENDIX 3B: MOTHER'S CONSENT SHEET FOR CHILD TO USE VISUAL ART SUPPLIES AND DIARIES

TITLE OF PROJECT:

Transnational mothers in domestic work, everyday practices and caregiving strategies in Botswana and Zimbabwe: A multi-sited approach

I have read the information regarding the research to be carried out by Joyce Takaindisa from the African Centre for Migration Society at the University of the Witwatersrand University.

Informed Consent

- ☐ I am aware that the child/children may be offered art supply packs with drawing and writing materials, such as diaries and writing pads and a disposable camera which they may choose to use during the research to express their feeling and experiences.
- ☐ That all information obtained will be kept confidential through the use of pseudonyms and the child's identity will not be revealed.
- ☐ I am aware that this study is for academic purposes and has no direct benefits or rewards for participation.
- ☐ I am fully aware that the child's permission may be withdrawn at any time during the study without any repercussions.
- ☐ This research though unintended, may invoke some emotional responses from the child and the researcher will offer to either end the interview if the child wishes or refer to a child counsellor if necessary.
- ☐ I am aware that this study has been approved and cleared through the University's Ethics Clearance Committee I am also free to contact the researcher regarding any questions I may have.

Please tick one option below

- ☐ I agree for the child to use visual art supplies
- ☐ I do not agree for the child to use of visual supplies

Gender of Child:

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

Child's Name: _____

Child's D.O.B: _____

Gender of Child: Male / Female

Signature of Caregiver: _____

Date of Consent: _____

CONTACT DETAILS OF RESEARCHER:

Joyce Takaindisa

Telephone +267-74230363

Email address: 1233711@students.wits.ac.za

APPENDIX 4A: CAREGIVER/ GUARDIAN CONSENT SHEET FOR CHILD TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH PROJECT

TITLE OF PROJECT:

Transnational mothers in domestic work, everyday practices and caregiving strategies in Botswana and Zimbabwe: A multi-sited approach

I have read the information regarding the research to be carried out by Joyce Takaindisa from the African Centre for Migration Society at the University of the Witwatersrand University.

Informed Consent

I have been made aware that the dialogues between the researcher and the child/ children I am looking after will be audio – recorded and all or some of the direct quotes said by my child may be quoted verbatim in the academic report or publications that follow for academic purposes only

That all information obtained will be kept confidential through the use of pseudonyms and the child's identity will not be revealed.

I am aware that this study is for academic purposes and has no direct benefits or rewards for participation.

I am fully aware that the child's permission may be withdrawn at any time during the study without any repercussions.

That the child may decline to answer any questions that may make him/her uncomfortable anytime during the interview.

This research though unintended, may invoke some emotional responses from the child and the researcher will offer to either end the interview if the child wishes or refer to a child counsellor if necessary.

I am aware that this study has been approved and cleared through the University's Ethics Clearance Committee I am also free to contact the researcher regarding any questions I may have.

Please circle one option only.

I agree for the child/children to partake in this study   YES / NO

Child's D.O.B: _____

Gender of Child: Male / Female

Signature of Caregiver: _____
Date of Consent: _____

CONTACT DETAILS OF RESEARCHER:

Joyce Takaindisa

Telephone +267-74230363

Email address: 1233711@students.wits.ac.za

APPENDIX 4B: CONSENT FORM FOR AUDIO-RECORDING OF THE INTERVIEWS: BY CAREGIVERS ON BEHALF OF THE CHILDREN

TITLE OF PROJECT:

Transnational mothers in domestic work, everyday practices and caregiving strategies in Botswana and Zimbabwe: A multi-sited approach

My study will involve audio-recording of the interviews to be conducted. Your identity, name and any other information that might identify you, will not in any way be shared in any of the writings emanating from this study. Only I, the researcher and my supervisor will be able to listen to the recordings so as to accurately record your perspectives. The recordings will be used by the researcher for data analysis and your recorded interviews may be used in full or partially in the research report. However, neither the child's name nor the voice will be reproduced in research reports or publications that may follow from this study. The child's identity will be protected through the use of pseudonyms.

AUDIO CONSENT:

By signing this form, I hereby give consent to the researcher to audio-record the interview with the child under my care so that the responses and can be correctly captured. I understand that the child's confidentiality will be maintained at all times and their true identity will not be revealed.

Please tick one option below:

☐ I agree to audio-recording of the interview sessions with the child under my care.
☐ I do not agree to the audio-recording of the interview sessions with the child

Name of Caregiver (pseudonym: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX 4C: CAREGIVER/ GUARDIAN CONSENT SHEET FOR CHILD TO USE VISUAL ART SUPPLIES AND DIARIES

TITLE OF PROJECT:

Transnational mothers in domestic work, everyday practices and caregiving strategies in Botswana and Zimbabwe: A multi-sited approach

☐ I have read the information regarding the research to be carried out by Joyce Takaindisa from the African Centre for Migration Society at the University of the Witwatersrand University.

Informed Consent

☐ I am aware that the child/children may be offered art supply packs with drawing and writing materials, such as diaries and writing pads and a disposable camera which they may choose to use during the research to express their feeling and experiences.
☐ That all information obtained will be kept confidential through the use of pseudonyms and the child's identity will not be revealed.
☐ I am aware that this study is for academic purposes and has no direct benefits or rewards for participation.
☐ I am fully aware that the child's permission may be withdrawn at any time during the study without any repercussions.
☐ This research though unintended, may invoke some emotional responses from the child and the researcher will offer to either end the interview if the child wishes or refer to a child counsellor if necessary.
☐ I am aware that this study has been approved and cleared through the University's Ethics Clearance Committee I am also free to contact the researcher regarding any questions I may have.

Please tick one option below

☐ I agree for the child to use visual art supplies
☐ I do not agree for the child to use of visual supplies

Child's Name: _____

Gender of Child:

☐ Male
☐ Female

Signature of Caregiver: _____

Date of Consent: _____

CONTACT DETAILS OF RESEARCHER:

Joyce Takaindisa

Telephone +267-74230363

Email address: 1233711@students.wits.ac.za

APPENDIX 5A: ASSENT FORM FOR CHILDREN 7 - 12 YEARS OLD

Informed assent:

- ☐ I have read the information sheet and the researcher has read it to me and explained it to me verbally so that I understand the project. I have asked all the questions I have about this project and I now know what this is about.
- ☐ I understand that my participation in this study is voluntary and I may refuse to answer any questions that I am not comfortable with
- ☐ I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the study at any given time without any negative consequences
- ☐ I know that I can stop the interview at any time and don't have to answer all the questions asked.
- ☐ I understand that the researcher will anonymise my identity in the reports and any publications that may come out of this study
- ☐ I know that my confidentiality in this study will be protected through the use of pseudonyms in all written records so my real name will not be used in any written records from this study.
- ☐ I understand the study has been approved by the University of the Witwatersrand ethics committee and I am also free to contact the researcher regarding any questions I may have.

Please tick one option:

_____

- ☐ I would like to participate in this study
- ☐ I do not to participate in this study

Gender of Child:

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

Child's Pseudonym (PRINT): _____

Date: _____

Age: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Declaration by Researcher:

I, Joyce Takaindisa duly declare that this child has been given the opportunity to read the information letter, to ask questions and to seek clarity. After reading the assent sheet, the details of the project were fully explained to the child verbally and this child fully understands what their participation will entail in this study.

Signature of Researcher: _____ Date: _____

CONTACT DETAILS:

Joyce Takaindisa

Telephone Number +26774230363

Email address: 1233711@students@wits.ac.za

APPENDIX 5B: ASSENT FORM FOR AUDIO-RECORDING: CHILDREN 7-12 YRS

TITLE OF PROJECT:

Transnational mothers in domestic work, everyday practices and caregiving strategies in Botswana and Zimbabwe: A multi-sited approach

My study will involve audio-recording of the interviews to be conducted. Your identity, name and any other information that might identify you, will not in any way be shared in any of the writings emanating from this study. Only I, the researcher and my supervisor will be able to listen to the recordings so as to accurately record your perspectives. The recordings will be used by the researcher for data analysis and your recorded interviews may be used in full or partially in the research report. However, neither your name nor your voice will be reproduced in research reports or publications that may follow from this study. Your identity will be protected through the use of pseudonyms.

AUDIO ASSENT: (CHILDREN)

By signing this form, I hereby give consent to the researcher to audio-record the interview so that my answers and responses can be correctly captured. I understand that my confidentiality will be maintained at all times and my true identity will not be revealed.

Please tick one option below:

- ☐ I agree to be audio-recorded during the interview sessions
- ☐ I do not agree to be audio-recorded during the interview sessions

- ☐ I agree to the use of verbatim quotes
- ☐ I do not agree to the use of verbatim quotes

Name of Participant: _____

Signature: _____

Date   :   _____

APPENDIX 5C: CONSENT TO THE USE OF A DIARY IN THE STUDY: CHILDREN 7-12 yrs

TITLE OF PROJECT:

Transnational mothers in domestic work, everyday practices and caregiving strategies in Botswana and Zimbabwe: A multi-sited approach

Permission to use a diary

Please tick one option

- ☐ I consent to the use of a diary that will be provided by the researcher.
- ☐ I do not consent to the use of a diary that will be provided by the researcher.

Name of Participant: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX 5D: ASSENT FORM FOR THE USE OF VISUAL ART SUPPLIES: CHILDREN 7-12 YEARS OLD

TITLE OF PROJECT:

Transnational mothers in domestic work, everyday practices and caregiving strategies in Botswana and Zimbabwe: A multi-sited approach

My study will be offering you the option of using other methods to tell me your story of living separately from your mother. This will be done so that your story will not only be told through interview conversations. Sometimes, you may want to tell me your story or feelings through other means such as drawing, or writing a letter to your mother or through photography. However, in using these options, your identity, name and any other information that might identify you, will not in any way be shared in any of the writings emanating from this study or displayed on your drawings or photographs or writings. Instead, they will all be labelled using a code name similar to the one we will be using in our interviews together. The images, photographs or writings you produce will be used by myself to analyse the information or data you will give me on the said topic. Your true identity will be protected throughout the research process. In the spirit of preserving confidentiality, what you give or discuss with me will not be shared or reported back even to your mother or caregivers unless it is found to be necessary and done with your consent.

I understand that my confidentiality will be maintained at all times and my true identity will not be revealed.

I understand that my participation in this project is voluntary and that I may refuse to answer any questions that I may not be comfortable with.

I understand that I have the right to withdraw my participation from this research at any given time without any negative consequences or penalties.

Please tick your preferred options below if you are interested in using the visual art supplies as stated below:

- ❑ I will be using the visual art and writing supplies provided
- ❑ I will not be using the visual art supplies
- ❑ I will be using some of the visual art supplies

I am interested in using the following options circle. Please circle your choices

- ❑ Art and drawing supplies
- ❑ Disposable camera
- ❑ Writing pads for poems and letters

Name of Participant: _____

Signature: _____

Date : _____

APPENDIX 6A: ASSENT INFORMATION SHEET CHILDREN AGED 13 – 17 YEARS OLD

TITLE OF PROJECT:

Transnational mothers in domestic work, everyday practices and caregiving strategies in Botswana and Zimbabwe: A multi-sited approach

My name is Joyce Takaindisa and I am a student from the University of the Witwatersrand University in South Africa. Your mother and your caregiver have allowed me to talk to you about my research project that I am working on. Research is a way of learning about something and understanding it. My project will focus on how mothers who have moved to Botswana are parenting and how they are coping leaving their children back home here in Zimbabwe. I would like to understand from you how you feel about the physical distance between you and your mother and how you cope with it. I would like to spend a little bit of time with you so that I can explain my project to you. After I explain the project to you, I am going to ask you to participate if you are interested. If you do take part, I will interview you about your mother and her absence from your home. After I explain the project, I am then going to invite you to participate in this project if you are interested. If you are interested, then you and I will engage in a series of dialogues and interview conversations specifically about your mother and her physical absence from you as a result of her moving in Botswana. In our discussions, we will interact verbally, as well as use other visual methods that may help you express your opinions and feelings through other non-verbal means such as art drawings, poems and letters and some photography with all materials that will be supplied by me. For example, you may also choose to draw how you lived before your mother moved to Botswana and even show how you live now with your mother away from home. This will enable me to learn a lot from you about this topic. I am also going to talk with your mother in Botswana while she works there.

WHY AM I DOING THIS STUDY?

I am doing this study to complete my studies with the University. This topic is very close to my heart. I am interested in learning from children like you, who do not live with their mothers in the same country and what this feels like. I want to get more information on how you live without your mother nearby and how you feel about this. I also want to get more information on how you manage your everyday life without your mother nearby and how you feel distant mothering i.e. about your mother parenting you from a distance. I would really appreciate if you could be free to share any feelings, opinions or views you may have on this topic. I can assure you that there no right / perfect or wrong answers in this study and you should feel free to express yourself or ask any questions any time that you and I interact. You can ask any questions anytime.

WHY AM I MEETING WITH YOU TO TALK AOUT THIS PROJECT?

I am aware through my conversations with your mother in Botswana that you have been living without her for a while she works in Botswana. I am therefore meeting with you so that I can explain my project and then invite you to participate. I am targeting children ranging from the age of 8 to 17 years old, who live in a different country from their mother and are separated physically from their mothers by the distance between the two countries, in your case Botswana and Zimbabwe being the two countries that separate you from your mother and vice versa.

WHAT IS EXPECTED FROM YOU IF YOU DECIDE TO TAKE PART IN THIS STUDY?

If you agree to participate in the study, I will interview you. In this interview, we will talk about how you feel about your mother being away from your home. This may mean we meet a few times to discuss about the study. While we talk, I will also record our discussions so that I record what you will have told me correctly. I will also give you a stationary pack with art and drawing supplies such as colours, pencils and stickers, writing pads and some disposable cameras which you may use to take pictures of what interests you or how you spend your time when your mother is away. You will be free to use the supplies as best as you deem fit in relation to this study.

WHAT QUESTIONS ARE YOU EXPECTED TO ANSWER?

The main question you will be expected to answer will be to tell me about your mother and how you feel about living separately from her while she is in Botswana and you are here in Zimbabwe. This question may be answered verbally and through other methods such as drawing about your feelings, writing poems or taking pictures. In other words, you may choose more than one way of answering the main question.

WILL THERE BE ANY HARM IF I PARTICIPATE?

My intention is not to harm you or to cause you any discomfort or sadness in anyway. As a researcher, I want to learn from you about your experiences of living away from your mother. If during our talks, you feel sad, you must feel free to tell me and I can stop the discussion.

WHO WILL KNOW YOU HAVE PARTICIPATED IN THIS PROJECT?

Whatever information you say to me or draw or write down will not have your name on it so no one except me, as the researcher will know your answers or the things that you will have told directly to me. It is my duty to make sure that no one else knows what we have discussed together, and I will protect your name and identity in my final research report. You will be free to choose a pseudonym for yourself so that your real name will not be shared with anyone else.

DO YOU HAVE TO TAKE PART IN THIS STUDY?

You do not have to take part in study. I will not be angry if you choose not to accept my invitation to participate in this study. If you do not want to be in the study, please feel free to tell me.

WHAT RIGHTS DO YOU HAVE IN THIS STUDY?

Even if you choose to participate in this study, you have the right to withdraw later on if you do not feel like continuing. You are free to tell me that you do not want to be in the study anymore. Also, if I ask you any questions that make you uncomfortable or are too difficult for you to answer, you have the right not to answer them. You do not have to force yourself to give responses if you do not want to.

WHAT BENEFITS WILL I GET FROM PARTICIPATING?

You will not get any direct benefits as such from this study, like a payment for example. However, you may benefit from talking about your mother and sharing your story about your experiences of living away from your mother. If you enjoy art and photography, you may also enjoy the relaxation you will derive from engaging with artwork and expressing yourself through other ways which are non-verbal. However, in some cases, due to the fact that I will be taking away some of your time, I will provide you with a meal if you feel hungry during our interview session.

NB: If you have any questions, you can contact me on the details provided below.

CONTACT DETAILS:

Joyce Takaindisa

Telephone Number +26774230363

Email address: 1233711@students@wits.ac.za

APPENDIX 6B: ASSENT FORM FOR CHILDREN 13 - 17 YEARS OLD

Informed assent:

- ☐ I have read the information sheet and the researcher has read it to me and explained it to me verbally so that I understand the project. I have asked all the questions I have about this project and I now know what this is about.
- ☐ I understand that my participation in this study is voluntary and I may refuse to answer any questions that I am not comfortable with.
- ☐ I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the study at any given time without any negative consequences.
- ☐ I know that I can stop the interview at any time and don't have to answer all the questions asked.
- ☐ I understand that the researcher will anonymise my identity in the reports and any publications that may come out of this study
- ☐ I know that my confidentiality in this study will be protected through the use of pseudonyms in all written records so my real name will not be used I any written records from this study.
- ☐ I understand the study has been approved by the University of the Witwatersrand ethics committee and I am also free to contact the researcher regarding any questions I may have.

Please tick one option:

_____

- ☐ I would like to participate in this study
- ☐ I do not to participate in this study

Gender of Child:

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

Child's Pseudonym (PRINT): _____

Child's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Age: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Declaration by Researcher:

I, Joyce Takaindisa duly declare that this child has been given the opportunity to read the information letter, to ask questions and to seek clarity. After reading the assent sheet, the details of the project were fully explained to the child verbally and this child fully understands what their participation will entail in this study.

Signature of Researcher: _____   Date: _____

CONTACT DETAILS:

Joyce Takaindisa

Telephone Number +26774230363

Email address: 1233711@students@wits.ac.za

APPENDIX 6C: ASSENT FORM FOR AUDIO-RECORDING: CHILDREN 13 -17 years old

TITLE OF PROJECT:

Transnational mothers in domestic work, everyday practices and caregiving strategies in Botswana and Zimbabwe: A multi-sited approach

My study will involve audio-recording of the interviews to be conducted. Your identity, name and any other information that might identify you, will not in any way be shared in any of the writings emanating from this study. Only I, the researcher and my supervisor will be able to listen to the recordings so as to accurately record your perspectives. The recordings will be used by the researcher for data analysis and your recorded interviews may be used in full or partially in the research report. However, neither your name nor your voice will be reproduced in research reports or publications that may follow from this study. Your identity will be protected through the use of pseudonyms.

AUDIO ASSENT: (CHILDREN)

By signing this form, I hereby give consent to the researcher to audio-record the interview so that my answers and responses can be correctly captured. I understand that my confidentiality will be maintained at all times and my true identity will not be revealed.

Please circle one option below:

- ☐ I agree to be audio-recorded during the interview sessions
- ☐ I do not agree to be audio-recorded during the interview sessions

- ☐ I agree to the use of verbatim quotes
- ☐ I do not agree to the use of verbatim quotes

Name of Participant: _____

Signature: _____

Date   :   _____

APPENDIX 6D: CONSENT TO THE USE OF A DIARY IN THE STUDY: CHILDREN 13-17yrs

TITLE OF PROJECT:

Transnational mothers in domestic work, everyday practices and caregiving strategies in Botswana and Zimbabwe: A multi-sited approach

<u>Permission to use a diary</u>

Please tick one option

- ☐ I consent to the use of a diary that will be provided by the researcher.
- ☐ I do not consent to the use of a diary that will be provided by the researcher

Name of Participant: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX 6E: ASSENT FORM FOR THE USE OF VISUAL ART SUPPLIES: CHILDREN 13-17 YEARS OLD

TITLE OF PROJECT:

Transnational mothers in domestic work, everyday practices and caregiving strategies in Botswana and Zimbabwe: A multi-sited approach

My study will be offering you the options of using other methods to tell me your story of living separately from your mother. This will be done so that your story will not only be told through interview conversations. Sometimes, you may want to tell me your story or feelings through other means such as drawing or writing a letter to your mother or through photography. However, in using these options, your identity, name and any other information that might identify you, will not in any way be shared in any of the writings emanating from this study or displayed on your drawings or photographs or writings. Instead, they will all be labelled using a code name similar to the one we will be using in our interviews together. The images, photographs or writings you produce will be used by myself to analyse the information or data you will give me on the said topic. Your true identity will be protected throughout the research process. In the spirit of preserving confidentiality, what you give or discuss with me will not be shared or reported back even to your mother or caregivers unless it is found to be necessary and done with your consent.

- ☐ I understand that my confidentiality will be maintained at all times and my true identity will not be revealed.
- ☐ I understand that my participation in this project is voluntary and that I may refuse to answer any questions that I may not be comfortable with.
- ☐ I understand that I have the right to withdraw my participation from this research at any given time without any negative consequences or penalties.

Please tick your preferred options below if you are interested in using the visual art supplies as stated below:

- ☐ I will be using the visual art and writing supplies provided
- ☐ I will not be using the visual art supplies
- ☐ I will be using some of the visual art supplies

I am interested in using the following options circle. Please circle your choices

- ☐ Art and drawing supplies
- ☐ Disposable camera
- ☐ Writing pads for poems and letters

Name of Participant: _____

Signature: _____

Date   :   _____

MOTHER 'S NAME	CHILD / CHILDREN	CAREGIVER
A	Child not interviewed	Caregiver not interviewed
B	Child B1; B2 & B3	Caregiver B (grandmother)
C	Child C1	Caregiver C (paternal aunt)
T	Child T	Caregiver T (grandmother)
M	Transitioned from child to caregiver	Caregiver M (elder sibling)
E	Child E1 & E2	Caregiver E (maternal aunt)
F	Child F	Caregiver F (elder sibling)
N	Child N	Caregiver turned down interview
K	Child K	Child lived alone – no caregiver
J	Child J	Caregiver J (grandmother)

Notes:

1. A total of 9 transnational mothers participated fully in this study
2. A total of 11 children were included in the study. All except 1 fully participated
3. A total of 7 caregivers partook in the study.
4. Two of the care-givers were initially left-behind as children and then took over as care-givers of their siblings when they became older.
5. All grandmothers in the study were maternal grandmothers
6. All care-givers were in fact from the maternal side with the exception of one paternal aunt.

MOTHER 'S NAME	CHILD / CHILDREN	CAREGIVER
A	Child not interviewed	Caregiver not interviewed
B	Child B1; B2 & B3	Caregiver B (grandmother)
C	Child C1	Caregiver C (paternal aunt)
T	Child T	Caregiver T (grandmother)
M	Transitioned from child to caregiver	Caregiver M (elder sibling)
E	Child E1 & E2	Caregiver E (maternal aunt)
F	Child F	Caregiver F (elder sibling)
N	Child N	Caregiver turned down interview
K	Child K	Child lived alone – no caregiver
J	Child J	Caregiver J (grandmother)

Notes:

1. A total of 9 transnational mothers participated fully in this study
2. A total of 11 children were included in the study. All except 1 fully participated
3. A total of 7 caregivers partook in the study.
4. Two of the care-givers were initially left-behind as children and then took over as care-givers of their siblings when they became older.
5. All grandmothers in the study were maternal grandmothers
6. All care-givers were in fact from the maternal side with the exception of one paternal aunt.